

Japan in the Age of Modernization

THE ARTS OF ÔTAGAKI RENGETSU AND TOMIOKA TESSAI

EDITED BY
FRANK
FELTENS



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Foreword

JAPAN'S NINETEENTH CENTURY was a time of unprecedented change—socially, politically, and culturally. Virtually all aspects of life were affected as Japan metamorphosed from an association of fiefdoms into a constitutional monarchy. The dawn of the country's modernization is often interpreted through the lens of Euro-American influence, a push-and-pull between the selection or rejection of Western technological innovations, law, social norms, and other aspects of culture. It is only in recent decades that the profound impact of the arts and cultures of East Asia upon Japan during its age of modernization have become the subject of research.

Within this context of recent reevaluation, the gift of the Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection to the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art marks a milestone in the display, study, and understanding of the role of Chinese arts and culture in the formation of Japan's national consciousness from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. This volume captures key facets of Japan's nineteenth century through two of its most influential intellectuals: the nun Ōtagaki Rengetsu (1791–1875) and her pupil and fellow literatus Tomioka Tessai (1836–1924). Their lives and work offer an artful window onto one of Japan's most tempestuous times. From Rengetsu's eye-witness account of soldiers marching into a Kyoto besieged by fragile governance to Tessai's embrace of the Song dynasty poet Su Dongpo as his spiritual avatar, Rengetsu and Tessai remind us that change happens as much in our own minds as it does in the events around us.

The Cowles' visionary collecting of Rengetsu, Tessai, and other key figures of Japanese art shows unparalleled expressions of an East Asian synergy during a time of turbulent change. As compelling as the artworks are, the essays brought together in this volume are equally eye-opening and prescient. Discussions of Ōtagaki Rengetsu and Tomioka Tessai in this volume remind us of the deep shared bonds that crossed East Asia for many centuries—indeed, millennia. As we have entered the third decade of the twenty-first century and attempt to navigate a time of significant change in the global order, the Cowles Collection and its interpretation gain ever more significance. I thank the volume's editor, Frank Feltens, and all contributors for sharing their valuable scholarship. My gratitude also goes to the staff at the National

Museum of Asian Art and the Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press for helping bring the book to fruition.

Above all, I am grateful to Mary and Cheney Cowles for their foresight and generosity, and I wish all readers of this volume many new insights into the countless complexities of modern Japan.

Chase F. Robinson
Dame Jillian Sackler Director
National Museum of Asian Art
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art
Smithsonian Institution

Acknowledgments

SINCE THE INCEPTION of the idea for this volume and its publication, the world has weathered a global pandemic that impacted and, not infrequently, upended many scholarly projects. I could not be more fortunate to work with a stellar team of researchers and colleagues who helped realize this volume against all odds. It has been a tremendous privilege to work with the seven contributors—all of them distinguished scholars in their fields of expertise—who graciously shared their research and made this book the first edited volume on Ōtagaki Rengetsu and Tomioka Tessai in English in more than half a century.

I am grateful to Christopher Harding, Paul Berry, Melissa McCormick, Tamaki Maeda, Tsukamoto Maromitsu, Michiyo Morioka, and Akiko Niwa for their essays, which individually and in combination attempt to add new facets to our understanding of modern Japan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I want to express my gratitude to Chase Robinson for offering the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art's resources in accessioning and researching the Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection. Thank you to Massumeh Farhad for believing in the value of this volume and for pathing the way to make it possible. Much gratitude is reserved to Kit Brooks and Sara Sumpter who not only provided excellent translations but also shared much support and collegiality in bringing this book together. I also thank Takako Sarai for securing reproduction permissions—no small feat—and to Sana Mirza for keeping the project on track. Andrew Hare kindly offered his insights into mountings and other matters of Japanese art conservation. John Carpenter shared his expertise and knowledge. Expert editing by Joellyn Powers and Ian Fry ensured a much-improved final product. The two anonymous peer reviews provided insightful feedback, and their close reading of each essay added much to the final volume. Ginger Minkiewicz at Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press made sure the project stayed on track, and I am grateful for the opportunity to work with her.

Finally, my special gratitude goes to Mary and Cheney Cowles and their visionary collecting of Japanese paintings and calligraphy that are inspired by Chinese art and culture. Their gift to the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art has

changed the way we understand and contextualize our collection and, by extension, the history of Japanese art from early modern to modern times.

Frank Feltens
Curator of Japanese Art
National Museum of Asian Art
Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Smithsonian Institution

Note to the Reader

CHINESE AND JAPANESE proper names throughout the volume are given in the traditional order, surname/family name followed by given name (except for instances where the holders use the Western form). Note that according to convention in Japanese art history (in both English and Japanese), artists are referred to first by their full name (e.g., Tomioka Tessai) and subsequently by their pseudonym or given name (e.g., Tessai).

Chinese and Japanese characters for names and specialized terms are included in the glossary. Wherever possible, romanizations of Chinese and Japanese terms appear in the text following the words' English translations. Poems and inscriptions are given in English translation, followed by Chinese or Japanese characters.

Chronology of Chinese Historical Periods

Neolithic period ca. 7000–2000 BCE	Tang dynasty 618–907
Xia dynasty traditionally 2205–1766 BCE	Five Dynasties period 907–960
Shang dynasty ca. 1600–ca. 1050 BCE	Song dynasty 960–1279
Zhou dynasty ca. 1050–221 BCE	Yuan dynasty 1279–1368
Qin dynasty 221–206 BCE	Ming dynasty 1368–1644
Han dynasty 206 BCE–220 CE	Qing dynasty 1644–1912
Period of Division 220–589	Republic of China 1912–1949
Sui dynasty 581–618	People's Republic of China 1949–present

Chronology of Japanese Historical Periods

Jōmon ca. 14,000–300 BCE	Momoyama 1568–1603
Yayoi 300 BCE–300 CE	Edo 1603–1868
Kofun 300–538	Meiji era 1868–1912
Asuka 538–710	Taishō era 1912–1926
Nara 710–794	Shōwa era 1926–1989
Heian 794–1185	Heisei era 1989–2019
Kamakura 1185–1333	Reiwa era 2019–present
Muromachi 1333–1568	



Figure 1. Tomioka Tessai, *Waves (Hato)*, 1910. Woodblock-printed book; ink and mica on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC: Purchase, The Gerhard Pulverer Collection—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries and the Harold P. Stern Memorial fund in appreciation of Jeffrey P. Cunard and his exemplary service to the Galleries as chair of the Board of Trustees (2003–2007), FSC-GR-780.616.1–2.

Introduction

WAVES OF CHANGE

IN 1910 TOMIOKA TESSAI (1836–1924) published a small book titled *Waves* (*Hatō*). The unassuming title conveys in simple terms the book’s content, a collection of images of waves. Arranged in circular frames with one watery formation per page, it seems at once like a book of textile patterns and also as if the viewer is looking at the ocean from a porthole (Figure 1). Tessai inscribes the volume’s cover with curvy brushwork. On the title page, he sets the stage for the book’s content by declaring its function in literary Chinese: two large, angular characters spell out *kantō*, or “gazing at waves.” Each of the twenty-two pages of the book that follow carries an imagined detail of the sea. On the book’s cover, Tessai also discloses his inspiration for the work: Tawaraya Sōtatsu (d. ca. 1643), a towering figure in Japanese painting who bridged the medieval and the early modern periods. Sōtatsu’s abstracted seascapes became a genre of Japanese painting unto themselves (Figure 2). Some of the images in Tessai’s volume have direct links to Sōtatsu’s surviving paintings, but others seem more closely related to models from medieval ink painting.

The prancing wave on the first page of the volume is seen in profile, rising high above the sea like a spectral rider attempting to defy gravity. It is reminiscent of the work of the famed medieval ink painter Sesson Shūkei (ca. 1492–ca. 1572) (Figure 3).¹ The iconic shape of the wave was also taken up later by artists such as Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716), who also drew inspiration from Sōtatsu and Sesson (Figure 4).² On the following page the reader’s sense of proximity to the water’s surface gives way to a bird’s-eye view of a spuming confluence of white-crested curls. A more stylized image follows, presenting a repetitive, coiffure-like water pattern that seems as if it has been styled with a comb (Figure 5 [a–c]). This woodblock-printed book is a tour de force in studying the sea by analyzing each wave’s mood in sequence. Among the disparate tempers and styles, the only unifier between each wave image is their watery nature—a feat that invites the viewer to imagine their individual sounds. But instead of simply serving as an ode to Sōtatsu’s watery artistry, the book effectively provides an anthology of the sea in traditional Japanese art. It also captures the ceaseless fascination with the past that—in spite of rigorous attempts by intellectuals during the early days of the Meiji era—always remained a touchstone for Japan in defining its presence.

Figure 2. Tawaraya Sōtatsu, *Waves at Matsushima*, early seventeenth century. Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, gold, and color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1906.231–232.



Waves presents a microcosm of that system of referentiality that helped carry Japan into the modern world.

The glistening pigment used to print the waves makes them seem as if struck by moonlight. In addition to the book's visual power, its referential veneration of the past combined with its both modern and traditional production background encapsulates key elements of Tessai's artistic practice. Produced at the height of Tessai's public fame, the book was printed by Unsōdō, a contemporary Kyoto press that was famous for its lavish art catalogs and for using traditional woodblock printing techniques. *Waves* is a luxuriously produced tribute to Tessai's belief in the relevance of the past for formulating the present and to his veneration of a shared pan-East Asian artistic tradition. The angularly inscribed title—emphatically written in literary Chinese—further unveils an important facet of Tessai's artistic personality: his deep affection for China and its role in the development of Japanese culture in both premodern and modern times.

In a more abstract sense, the sea is also a metaphor for the changing times experienced by Japan during the lives of Tessai and his mentor, Ōtagaki Rengetsu (1791–1875).



Figure 3. (Above)
Session Shūkei, *Qin Gao Riding a Carp*,
sixteenth century.
Set of three hang-
ing scrolls; ink on
paper. Kyoto National
Museum.



Figure 4. (Left)
Ogata Kōrin, *Rough
Waves*, ca. 1704–09.
Two-panel folding
screen; ink, color,
and gold leaf on
paper. Metropolitan
Museum of Art, New
York, Fletcher Fund,
1926, 26.117.



a



b

Figure 5 (a–c). Tomioka Tessai, *Waves (Hatō)*, 1910. Woodblock-printed book; ink and mica on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase, The Gerhard Pulverer Collection—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries and the Harold P. Stern Memorial fund in appreciation of Jeffrey P. Cunard and his exemplary service to the Galleries as chair of the Board of Trustees (2003–2007), FSC-GR-780.616.1–2.



c

The waves of different political, intellectual, and social movements throughout this period intersected with the paths of people from all walks of life. In a variety of ways, the biographies and psychologies of Rengetsu and Tessai summarize Japan's long nineteenth century—a time of ceaseless reshuffling of old norms and cultural paradigms. In the wake of the Tokugawa shogunate's downfall and Japan's reinvention as a constitutional monarchy, old conventions were questioned and new ideas were embraced and contrasted with ancient precedents. Over much of its history, Japanese society and culture had looked toward the past as an inspiration and measure for the present. Edo-period painting treatises are replete with admonitions to learn the mastery of bygone painters as the foundation for personal creativity in the present. As Christopher Harding lays out in his essay, the winds of change were blowing throughout Rengetsu's and Tessai's lives. As nascent modernity caused many Japanese to doubt, or to flat-out deny, the efficacy of such referential approaches to formulate contemporary culture, the very structure of Japan's intellectual framework was put into question. Western philosophy, science, and arts were adopted and promoted as new standards for informing and evaluating the accomplishments of Japan's past and present.

Instead, however, Tessai and intellectuals like him saw Japan's culture as a conglomeration of a shared East Asian tradition whose long-lasting efficacy would be the most suitable and effective framework for defining the modern present. From around the 1870s, intellectuals began to increasingly advocate for forging bonds with China. Even a staunchly pro-Western modernizer, Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), conceded in an 1878 essay that Japan needed China as an ally and trading partner to prevail against Western imperialist ambitions.³ On a cultural and artistic level, intellectuals like the art historian Okakura Kakuzō (1863–1913) extolled the mutual cultural bond across East Asia through nationalist rhetoric that placed Japan at the very center of that shared tradition. Through his English-language book *Ideals of the East*, Okakura deliberately sought an international audience for extolling his notion of Japan as a repository of continental traditions—an idea that reflected both the nationalist zeitgeist of his time and the presumption that Japan was but a product of a shared East Asian cultural sphere.⁴

Tessai and many in his circle embraced the reciprocity between China and Japan as a means of forging a modern identity that was both embedded in the past and inspired by the present. His stance was not one of cultural dominance but of parity and mutual veneration. More than any other historic event, Japan's entry onto the world stage through reaching beyond its shores and establishing itself as a modern nation-state with global ambitions marked a cataclysmic shift with deep implications for the country, for East Asia, and for the world. Rengetsu and Tessai were on the philosophical fault line during this time of tectonic change and framed their own positions within it.

Tessai was born in the ancient capital of Kyoto to a family tendering in Buddhist garments. As a teenager, Tessai was entrusted into the fosterage of the nun Rengetsu, a cultural figure and political activist who excelled in calligraphy, poetry, and pottery, and whose complex life at the fulcrum of important cultural and societal evolutions in nineteenth-century Japan is explored in detail in Paul Berry's essay. The

multivalence of Rengetsu's artistic skills, personal interests, and pro-imperial advocacy exposed the young Tessai to an amalgam of ideas and inspirations that would have a lifelong impact on his outlook on life and culture.⁵

Under Rengetsu's auspices, Tessai rubbed shoulders with some of the most important thinkers of his day and witnessed up close one of the country's most contentious political debates. Rengetsu's fervent endorsement of reinstating imperial power to usher in a time of peace and prosperity was as dangerous as it was reformist. Far from the right-wing politics this stance may seem to embody today, Rengetsu and her acquaintances were progressives whose vision for a return to an imperially ruled Japan put their lives at grave risk during the waning days of Japan's warrior-led system of governance. As the shogunate hoped to maintain the status quo by increasingly attempting to quell such factions, violent crackdowns like the Ansei Purge (Ansei no taigoku) of 1858–1860 ruptured the lives of Rengetsu, Tessai, and their acquaintances.⁶ For example, the famous *yamato-e* revival painter and fervent royalist Reizei Tamechika (1823–1864) sought refuge with Rengetsu while he was persecuted by the shogunal authorities. Like Rengetsu, Tamechika's politics were embodied in his reconfiguration of age-old painting styles and subjects that harked back to the Heian period. Such proximity to the schisms and volatilities of the time naturally steeped Tessai in Rengetsu's politics. Further, the 1858 inauguration of arrests and sometimes fatal incarcerations of such friends as Tessai's Neo-Confucianist teacher Umeda Unpin (1815–1859) occurred in large part as an expression of the shogunate's opposition to the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the United States and Japan. This dualism between domestic political unrest and Japan's increasing entanglement in geopolitics was emblematic of the nineteenth century that Rengetsu and Tessai witnessed firsthand and actively helped shape.

But their hopes for an idealized realm under imperial rule were cleaved by reality. With the Meiji Restoration of 1868, when Japan's shogunal system was officially replaced by a constitutional monarchy, Japan did not enter the time of harmony that Rengetsu and others had longed for. Instead, the country experienced a political factionalism whose competing forces pushed and pulled the government into different ideological directions. Blissful times, Rengetsu and Tessai came to realize, may need even more patience and continued efforts. A letter that Tessai wrote to the aging Rengetsu in 1868 encapsulates their deeply ingrained mentor-pupil bond. That bond was channeled through their shared politics, whose seeds Rengetsu had planted decades earlier.

I send you many greetings. The state of our dear country seems to be gradually decaying. But, even so, in the future, it will surely be a nation that is everlasting....

Achieving devotion [to the country] means to dispense with the challenges and difficulties [that face] it, discard [worldly] fame, and recognize personal responsibility. Thinking about this further, one will arrive at this by restraining [an ambition for] personal status and by nullifying the self. Studying Confucius is perfect for this. Be that as it may, if given the current state of our dear country some time, eventually the wise may prevail and ensure

that the country will embark on a road of just politics. If the people, too, soak themselves in the marsh of virtue, heaven might be within reach.

When nullifying personal ambition and easing personal status, a time of tranquility and peacefulness will come. Every day may not be described in the same way. Further, this should not be understood simply as eager vigor. This is the Way of the Emperor, and thus it is the teachings of Confucius and Mencius.

There will be clear skies and a bright sun.⁷

The text is sprinkled with references to Chinese literature and thought. For example, “Every day may not be described in the same way”—meaning that each day offers new opportunities and challenges—is a quote taken directly from *Records of the Great Historian* (Chinese: *Shiji*; Japanese: *Shiki*), a hugely important early history of China dating to the first century BCE. It becomes clear that Tessai’s points of reference for evaluating Japanese political efficacy were keystones of Chinese philosophy, such as Confucius and Mencius—thinkers to whom he was exposed early on through Rengetsu’s network. As Tamaki Maeda and Tsukamoto Maromitsu demonstrate in this collection, as Tessai grew older, this synchrony of China and Japan became ever more sophisticated, often incorporating utterly obscure sources that engaged Tessai’s audience in a referential game of hide-and-seek.

Rengetsu also exposed Tessai to an aesthetic system comprising her gently flowing calligraphy, her poetry composed on the basis of classical models, Chinese-style steeped tea (*sencha*), and her Buddhist religiosity. As Rengetsu made use of Tessai in firing her signature ethereal pottery or in immersing Tessai in the centuries-old Japanese culture that she embraced as inspiration for her calligraphy, her politics and art often went hand in hand. Melissa McCormick offers one of the most thorough analyses of Rengetsu’s poems in any language to date. She moves away from focusing exclusively on the immediacy or autobiographical aspects of Rengetsu’s poetry that often obscure its true intertextuality and sophistication. Instead, McCormick argues that Rengetsu’s *waka* theory can be understood through a “poetics of practice” rather than through a legacy of poetic treatises. This reading complicates the understanding of Rengetsu’s poetic output and, by extension, her calligraphic aesthetics. Most commonly, Rengetsu’s calligraphy is understood to follow the slender, elegant lines of court calligraphy of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a period that she and her associates considered the height of Japanese cultural achievements and political stability (Figures 6 and 7).

Against the backdrop of such turbulent times, figures like Tessai emerged by advocating not simply for a unison of past and present but for recognizing the reality of a centuries-old simpatia and synergy between Japan and the greater cultural sphere of East Asia. As Tamaki Maeda shows in her essay, the life and philosophies of Tessai’s practice can be vividly reconstructed from his artworks. For example, the interconnectivity between Japan and the East Asian continent that Tessai recognized as a timeworn pillar of modernity is embodied in artworks like *Su Dongpo in a Borrowed Hat*, the archetype of Tessai’s embrace of the Chinese statesman, writer, and philosopher Su Dongpo (1037–1101) as his spiritual avatar (Figure 8). Tessai

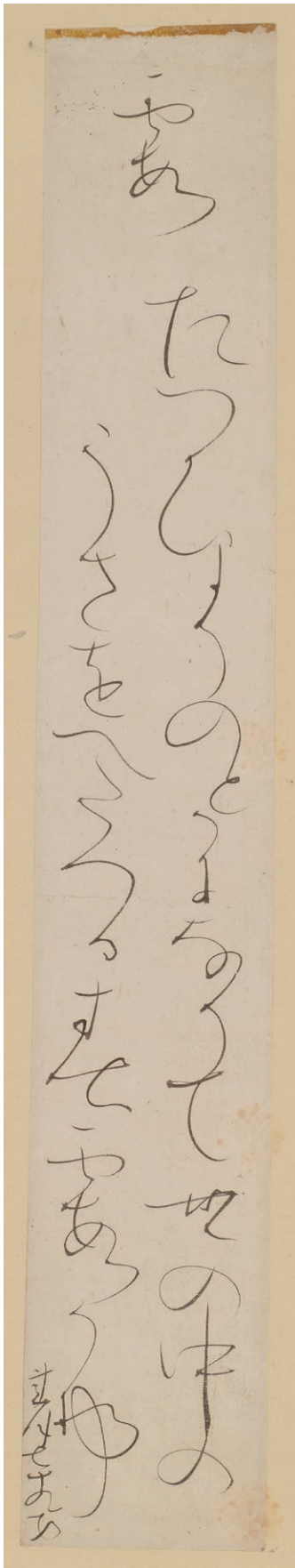


Figure 6. (Left) Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Tanzaku (Poetry Slip)*, 1869–1870. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Gift of Douglas and Sanae Reeves, F1998.307.

Figure 7. (Above) Attributed to Fujiwara Sadanobu, *Page from the Ishiyama-gire, Anthology of the Thirty-Six Poets: Ki no Tsurayuki*, early twelfth century. Album leaf mounted as a hanging scroll; ink on assembled dyed paper decorated with silver and gold. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1969.4.

immortalized that moment in his 1912 painting, made only two years after he published *Waves*.

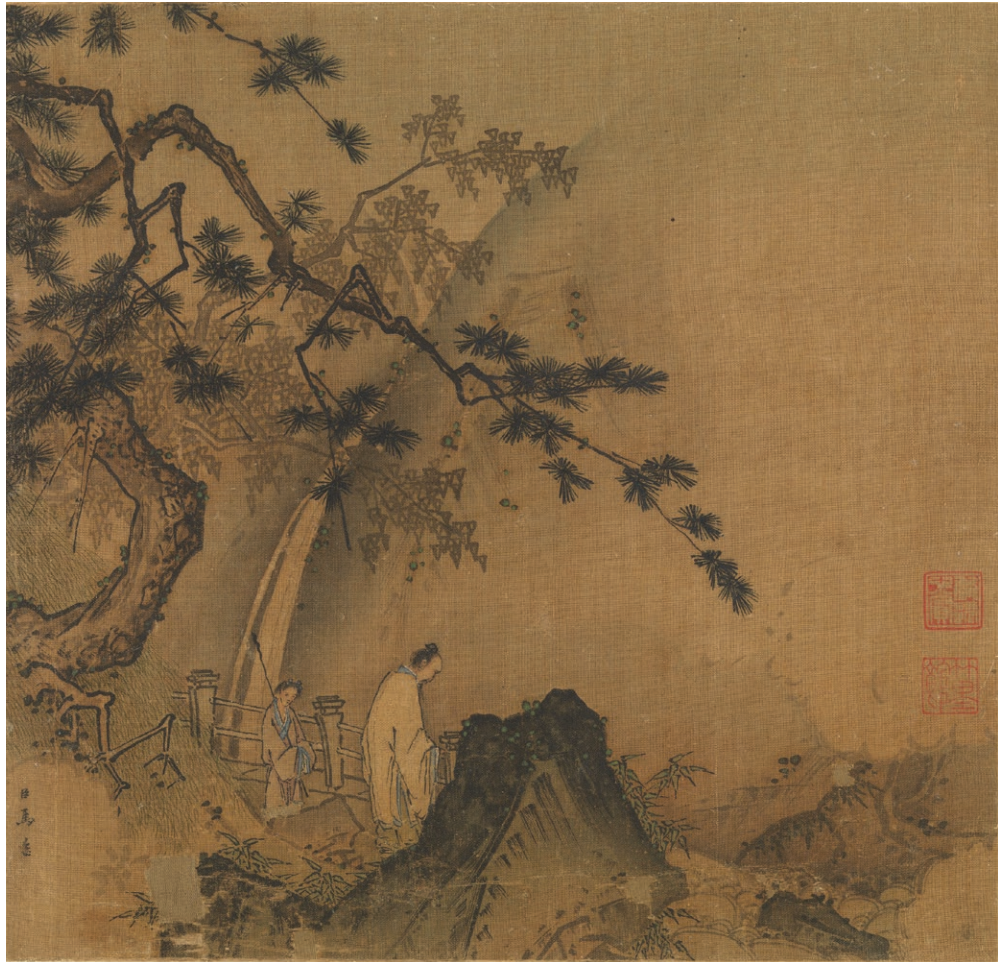
When Tessai created these works, he was at the pinnacle of his artistic development and cultural impact on Japanese society. At the time, he had risen from his beginnings as the Kyoto offspring of a Buddhist vestment trader and from his position as an apprentice to Rengetsu to become one of the country's most influential intellectuals. Tessai's embrace of Su Dongpo signals more than simply a quirky connection to a foreign past; the famous man of Chinese history and Tessai's self-drawn connection to him is a manifestation of Tessai's wholehearted ingestion of Chinese culture as a core component of modern Japanese culture and identity. That cultural fusion of past and present, of Japan and China, is artfully visualized not only in the paintings and calligraphy that Tessai and Rengetsu produced but also in their mountings. As Akiko Niwa reminds us, Tessai and Rengetsu can also be read through the aesthetics chosen in the cloth and paper mountings that frame, carry, and embellish their works.

Within his eclectic turn to the past, Tessai was decidedly modern. In this collection, Tsukamoto Maromitsu examines the networks, characteristics, and circumstances of Tessai's points of contact with China. Tessai imbibed Chinese art and culture through means and networks that were unavailable to the Japanese until the mid-nineteenth century. Historically, Japan had received artworks and other cultural items produced in China in roughly definable waves that corresponded with local tastes and levels of accessibility. The so-called old importations (*kowatari*) pieces were brought to Japan during the medieval period. These pieces formed the models of a significant portion of the ink paintings produced among a myriad of Japanese painters ranging from the monastic context of medieval Zen monasteries to professional ateliers such as those of the Kano school—a legacy that endured well into the nineteenth century. “Intermediate importations” (*nakawatari*), on the other hand, signified the second major point of contact with artistic production in China. Brought to Japan among the possessions of émigrés in the wake of the Ming dynasty's downfall and other avenues in the mid-seventeenth century, these works

Figure 8. Tomioka Tessai, *Su Dongpo in a Borrowed Hat*, 1912. Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2018.4.24a-f.



Figure 9. Ma Yuan, *Scholar Viewing a Waterfall*, late twelfth–early thirteenth century. Album leaf; ink and color on silk. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Ex coll.: C. C. Wang Family, Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973, 1973.120.9.



instigated a renewed fascination with Chinese artistic expression that was markedly different from their *kowatari* predecessors. A similar sense of exoticism and dumbstruck fascination was elicited by the “new importations” (*shinwatari*) works of Tessai’s day. Here, too, a shift in dynastic fortunes—the crumbling of the Qing dynasty—set in motion an exodus of art out of venerable collections and into Japan.⁸

The quantity of works that made their way on steamships from China to Japan displayed a mind-boggling variety of expressions never before seen by Japanese artists. The works’ colorful multiplicity is best embodied in the catalog of the collection held by Tessai’s close friend and seal carver Kuwana Tetsujō (1864–1938) titled *Kuwana’s Record of Painting Seals* (*Kyūka inshitsu kanzō garoku*, 1920). The book bears a lengthy preface written by Tessai in literary Chinese extolling the virtues of Tetsujō and his intrepid collecting. A far cry from the subdued timbre of Song dynasty painters like Ma Yuan (act. ca. 1190–1225) and Muqi (d. 1269), who were traditionally favored in Japan, the collection embraces works by artists of the Ming and Qing dynasties such as Shen Zhou (1427–1509) and Xie Shichen (1487–1557) (Figures 9 and 10). Although a commercial artist during this time, the impact of works by the likes of Xie Shichen on the circle of Tetsujō and Tessai is evident. Shichen’s style is illustrated by three works in the first volume of the catalog of Tetsujō’s collection as well as in some of Tetsujō’s other publications. An article on the modes found in new importations in



Figure 10. Shen Zhou, *Listening to the Spring in the Quiet Pavilion*, sixteenth century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. Present location unknown. Reproduced from *Kuwana's Record of Painting Seals* (*Kyūka inshitsu kanzō garoku*, 1920), image courtesy Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Properties.

the journal *Bijutsu shashin garoku* includes a work by Xie Shichen as the only painting from Tetsujō's collection that is cited.⁹ The apparent disconnect between the commercial reality of painters like Xie Shichen and the literati ideal embraced by Shen Zhou and his followers had little relevance to Tessai, Tetsujō, and their circle. Here, style mattered more than anything else. To Tessai, Tetsujō, and their compatriots, the convoluted, heavily layered mountain vistas of Shen Zhou's style and other artists like Xie Shichen offered novel visual interpretations that challenged established Japanese assumptions of the age-old subject of imagined alpine reclusion.



Figure 11. (Left) Sun Kehong, *Red-robed Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi on a Reed*, late sixteenth–early seventeenth century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC: Transfer from the United States Customs Service, Department of the Treasury, F1980.130.

Figure 12. (Above) Bada Shanren, *Tranquil Evening Album (Anwentie)* (detail), 1694. Album leaf; ink on paper. Sen-Oku Hakukokan, Tokyo. Reproduced from *Kuwana's Record of Painting Seals (Kyūka inshitsu kanzō garoku, 1920)*, image courtesy Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Properties.

Similarly, figure paintings such as *Red-Robed Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi on a Reed* by Sun Kehong (ca. 1533–1611) visualize the Ming dynasty approach to the impactful facial expressions and defiant postures that appealed to Meiji-era artists and found their way into Tessai's practice. The painting shown in records of Tetsujō's collection is now in the Freer Gallery of Art (Figure 11). Further, the abbreviated and often whimsical images by Bada Shanren (1626–1705)—represented through a single album in his signature style—triggered an infatuation with the efficacies of economically precise and highly impactful brushwork and compositions while also offering another subject for personal identification (Figure 12). Bada Shanren's background—a Ming prince who went into self-imposed exile at the fall of his dynasty under the

Manchu Qing—supplied Tessai and his circle with a historic touchstone for their own discontent with Meiji politics.¹⁰

Other publications, such as a 1920 article by Tetsujō in *Bijutsu shashin garoku*, disclose the diversity of collectors who accumulated such works. Alongside a work from Tetsujō's collection, the article reproduces paintings owned by industrialists like the Tokyo-based Iwasaki family of the Mitsubishi conglomerate and Yamamoto Teijirō (1870–1937), who had profited from colonial sugar production. Also shown is a piece from the collection of the aristocratic Sanjō family. The popularity and colorful collectors of new importations are evident.

Based on such works, people like Tessai formulated a visual language and intellectual framework that recalibrated art and culture during Japan's nascent modernity with the aim of embracing a new pan-East Asian referential focus. The shaping of that focus relied in equal measure on new means of overseas transport through steamships and the international movement of people as well as access to a gigantic new corpus of artworks released onto the market by modern political forces.

The lives and activities of Rengetsu and Tessai effectively spanned from the late eighteenth century into the early twentieth. Both of them gained a high level of veneration during the twentieth century—an impact that is vividly illustrated in Tessai's case in Michiyo Morioka's essay. At the example of the Japanese Western-style (*yōga*) painter Masamune Tokusaburō (1883–1962), the layered impact of Tessai on artists and intellectuals far beyond his own literati tradition comes into focus. As Morioka discusses, the stunning visual modernity of Tessai's paintings from the last years of his career drew wide admiration and profoundly influenced not only modern Japanese-style (*nihonga*) painters working in traditional styles but also *yōga* artists trained in Western-style oil painting. Masamune's adulation of Tessai during the latter's last five or so years of his life manifests the layered and diversified effect of Tessai onto more than a generation of Japanese artists and intellectuals.

JUST AS TESSAI'S BOOK *Waves* transposes the past into the present and imbues it with aesthetic and intellectual relevance, the lives and works of Rengetsu and Tessai embody one of the most crucial periods in Japan's history. As one of the most important intellectuals and artists of her time, the creative force and politics of Rengetsu and her circle were crucial in laying some of the political and philosophical foundations of modern Japan. In fact, Rengetsu actively played her part in guiding Japan on its path to becoming a modern nation-state. Her foundation formed the prerequisite for the man and scholar Tessai would become. The relationship between Rengetsu and Tessai, however, is not as simple as one setting the stage for the other. Rather, their paths were distinct—although without Rengetsu there may likely have not been a Tessai. The trajectory drawn in this book, through the lives and works of Rengetsu and Tessai, represents a paradigm for the evolution of modern Japan.

The road from Rengetsu to Tessai embodies Japan's national path during the long nineteenth century: from the apotheosis of the Edo period to the distant Heian period as a point of cultural reference and political departure, and to the reconciliation of a traditionally shared cultural sphere in East Asia against the backdrop

of a modern nation-state. Furthermore, Tessai outlived Rengetsu by fifty years and achieved artistic maturity and a national reputation as a painter in the Taishō era, when new waves of cultural and intellectual influences from the West gripped Japanese society. The essays of the seven authors brought together in this volume trace the activities of Rengetsu and Tessai to form a picture of two remarkable individuals during an astonishing time. In their entirety, the essays give shape to the trajectory of modern Japan in the Meiji and Taishō eras, from its seed during the waning days of the shogunate to the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century struggle to forge a sustainable cultural foundation upon which to build a modern Japan.

Notes

1. On Sesson, see Barbara B. Ford, “A Study of the Painting of Sesson Shūkei” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1982); and Frank Feltens and Yukio Lippit, *Sesson Shūkei: A Zen Monk-Painter in Medieval Japan* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution; Munich: Hirmer Publishers, 2021).
2. On Kōrin, see Frank Feltens, *Ogata Kōrin: Art in Medieval Japan* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2021).
3. Douglas Howland, “‘On the Benefits of Foreign Relations with China’: A New Development in Fukuzawa Yukichi’s Theory of Civilization,” in *Late Qing China and Meiji Japan: Political and Cultural Aspects*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Norwalk, Conn.: Eastbridge, 2004), 21–38.
4. Okakura Kakuzō, *The Ideals of the East: With Special Reference to the Art of Japan* (London: J. Murray, 1903).
5. See, for example, Katō Ruiko, Shimada Yasuhiro, and Kōmoto Shinji, eds., *Tessai to sono shiyūtachi* (Kyoto: Kyōto Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 1997), 9.
6. Nagai Kazuhiro, ed., “Tomioka Tessai ni manabō,” *Geijutsu shinchō* 53, no. 9 (September 2002): 25.
7. Translated after Odakane Tarō, ed., *Tomioka Tessai shiryōhen* (Kyoto: Kyōto Shinbunsha, 1991), 179.
8. Tamaki Maeda explains in detail the Kansai-based dissemination of new importations. See Tamaki Maeda, “(Re-)Canonizing Literati Painting in the Early Twentieth Century: The Kyoto Circle,” in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 215–227.
9. See Kuwana Tetsujō, “Minshinga to sono gahō,” *Bijutsu shashin garoku* 1, no. 8 (September 1920): 12–25.
10. Bada Shanren’s work receives one of its most extensive annotations in Kuwana Tetsujō’s catalog. It rehashes Bada Shanren’s life and idiosyncratic approach to the arts of the brush while opening the text with a focus on his aristocratic pedigree and mountain-dwelling reclusion following the end of the Ming dynasty. See Kuwana Tetsujō, ed., *Kyūka inshitsu kanzō garoku*, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Bunseidō Shashin Seihanjo, 1920), unpaginated.

Between Asia and the West

THE STRUGGLE FOR “JAPAN” IN THE ERA
OF MODERNIZATION, 1860S–1910S

IN A NEWSPAPER editorial published in his newspaper, *Jiji shinpō*, in March 1885, Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), one of the foremost thinkers of modern Japan, advised his countrymen to say “Goodbye to Asia.” Fukuzawa declared a new spirit of “civilization” was abroad in the world, associated most powerfully with the modern West, although by no means its exclusive possession. China and Korea appeared resistant to the charms and benefits of that spirit—in thrall, still, to outmoded principles of politics and ways of life. Japan ought not to make the same mistake. The country should, counseled Fukuzawa, turn its back—for now, at least—on the great cultural zone of which it had been a part for many centuries and cast instead its lot with the West. There was no escaping geography, of course: Japan was, he wrote, like a “righteous man living in a bad neighborhood.”¹

Famously unsentimental about the past, Fukuzawa had previously lambasted the Japanese Neo-Confucianist scholars whose work had underpinned centuries of governance in his country as mere “rice-consuming dictionaries.”² Prone to looking backward for intellectual inspiration and moral renewal, and woefully lacking in the sort of practical knowledge—in the sciences and technology, especially—upon which Japan’s future depended, these scholars had, Fukuzawa stated, left Japan with little to be proud of but its scenery.

Fukuzawa’s 1885 editorial was published less than twenty years into a grand modernizing experiment launched by a small cadre of lower-ranking samurai who succeeded in 1868 and 1869 in toppling the old Tokugawa shogunate. The worry, for people who felt as Fukuzawa did, was that the weight of Japan’s past continued nevertheless to hang heavy. Central for so long to Japanese political economy, society, and public morals, Neo-Confucianism was never going to disappear overnight. The same was true of the country’s Buddhist establishment. Accused by its modernizing critics of peddling false cosmologies and draining the country of precious resources—thereby helping to impede its development both intellectually and economically—Buddhism was nevertheless deeply woven into Japanese life.

These two great cultural forces, Confucianism and Buddhism, became part of a lively and consequential debate from the 1860s to the 1910s and beyond about what a self-consciously modern Japan ought to do about its Asian roots and neighbors. Not everyone shared Fukuzawa's enthusiasm for the modern West. Some cautioned that an insufficiently discriminating uptake of European and American institutions, culture, and social mores—from banking, educational, and political systems to ballroom dancing and mutton-chop sideburns—threatened to turn Japan into a mere facsimile of a Western country. This could only be avoided, they argued, by regarding traditional Japanese culture, with its rich and extensive Asian roots, not as a relic but as raw material in the building of a distinctive and self-confident modern nation.

In this way, it was hoped, Japan might avoid being overwhelmed in cultural terms, serving instead as the place where modern life met Asian antiquity. In time, a double rescue would result: first, of the West from the disenchantment and soullessness that were the price of rapid scientific and industrial advance (and to which Asian religion, philosophy, and art, it was claimed, offered a powerful antidote), and, second, of mainland Asia from the mire of hidebound traditionalism. The effect of this debate and these dreams for Japan's global role came to have a profound impact upon twentieth-century history, contributing philosophical underpinnings and powerful rhetorical material for war with China from 1937 and with the United States and Great Britain from 1941.

JAPAN'S CONNECTIONS TO ASIA were once of a very literal sort: land bridges linking across from Siberia in the north and the Korean peninsula in the south. Across them traveled life of all kinds, from tigers and woolly mammoths to communities of human beings thought to have taken up residence on the Japanese archipelago more than thirty thousand years ago. Links with mainland life survived the final submergence of those land bridges, and it was to seaborne migrants from China and the Korean peninsula that the people of the archipelago came to owe rice cultivation and metal-working from around 500 BCE. The earliest known diplomatic relationships with China were established in the era of a woman named Himiko (ca. 170–248), ruler of one of the largest communities on the archipelago at that time and described by Chinese chroniclers as a “queen.”³

Over the centuries that followed, Chinese and Korean culture contributed enormously to Japan's emergence as a unitary nation-state. The imperial court, as it evolved and extended its sway over much of the archipelago's main central portion from the fifth to the tenth centuries, was recognizably continental in its laws, fashion, architecture, poetry, music, dance, philosophy, and religion. The stream of mainland Asian influence flowing into Japan was occasionally broken, and across these and later centuries domestic Japanese achievements began to pile up in areas like literature, the performing arts, and Buddhist philosophy and practice. However, China in particular continued to be a byword for high culture. As the political influence of Japan's imperial family and aristocratic class waned from the 1100s onward, some in the great samurai families who replaced them as the true holders of power regarded

connoisseurship in Chinese art forms, including painting, as essential to the shift they were making from provincial men of violence to natural-born rulers.

Two-and-a-half centuries of relative peace and stability under the Tokugawa shogunate, from the early 1600s to the 1850s, provided Japanese intellectuals with a chance to evaluate their country's long history with China. Chinese thought, and Neo-Confucianism especially, was central to the Tokugawa social settlement: a network of relationships characterized by senior and junior partners who were bound together by bonds of mutuality. The junior party in a relationship—vassal, wife, child, peasant—would be expected to offer obedience in return for fair and benevolent treatment. Most of the unrest that occasionally convulsed parts of Tokugawa Japan was a matter of people seeking the proper functioning of these relationships—the demand was almost always for restoration, not revolution.

These were years if not of isolation from the rest of the world, then certainly of carefully managed borders. The Western presence in Japan was confined to a handful of closely guarded Dutch traders, required to live on an artificial island called Dejima, just off the coast of Nagasaki. A similarly close watch was kept on Chinese, Korean, and Southeast Asian traders, while Japanese were forbidden to leave the country without permission on pain of execution when they returned. A flourishing merchant class helped to bankroll a range of significant cultural achievements—including a printing boom and thriving pleasure quarters in towns and cities—while contributors to a nativist (*kokugaku*) school of thought began sketching out the contours of a distinctively Japanese national character and destiny. Dry Chinese rationalism and Western barbarousness offered convenient foils for a vaunted Japanese genius for insight and fine emotions.⁴

Skepticism in some quarters about Japan's need of China, then, was already well advanced by the time that news began filtering through (largely via Nagasaki) of the latter's ever-worsening fate at the hands of Great Britain and other European colonial powers across the first half of the 1800s. When Western governments began pressuring Japan for diplomatic and trading relations, beginning in 1853 with a visit from the American commodore Matthew C. Perry, China was held up as a model of how *not* to respond. China's leaders, it was argued, had exhibited a disastrous combination of hubris and insularity. Japan must at the very least work to acquire the sort of steamship and weapons technology seen in the "black ships" of the Perry flotilla. How exactly that ought to be achieved became the focus of more than a decade of debate, political wrangling, and violence until a civil war broke out in 1868—a combination of frustration at an apparently unreformable Tokugawa shogunate and sheer opportunism on the part of regional powers in Japan who had never really been reconciled to Tokugawa rule.

The Boshin War (1868–1869), as it became known, brought to power a small cadre of reform-minded, lower-ranking samurai, mostly from southwestern Japan, who managed to secure the teenaged emperor as their figurehead for what was billed to the Japanese public as the restoration of imperial rule. The problem of relations with the modern West and with mainland Asia was not solved by this change of regime, however; it merely passed into new hands. Treaties had been signed across the 1850s

and early 1860s with the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia, and others; all treaties were on terms that disadvantaged, even humiliated, Japan—from trade tariffs to rules on extraterritoriality in designated “treaty ports” that meant crimes committed by foreigners would not be subject to Japanese law. Against this backdrop, and the threat of treaty ports becoming the thin end of a colonial wedge, the new leadership’s priority was *fukoku kyōhei*: “rich country, strong military.” Basing themselves in the former Tokugawa stronghold of Edo—soon renamed Tokyo, or “Eastern Capital”—they set about furnishing Japan with the sort of modern infrastructure, institutions, and industrial technology required to sustain a credible military and thus ensure Japan’s continued independence.⁵

Two other slogans to emerge during the years that followed hinted at complications in this grand strategy for national renewal. Fukuzawa Yukichi himself contributed one of them: *bunmei kaika*, “civilization and enlightenment.” Beyond the basic necessities of greater wealth and military strength, he and many like him believed, lay the social, cultural, and even moral opportunities of contact with the modern West: national school systems, hospitals, civic responsibility, and myriad scientific endeavors. Few of these things might be immediately relevant to national defense, but their advocates argued that Western advancement of late was no accident of history; it was connected with the flourishing of a spirit of freedom, decency, and practical inquiry—“civilization and enlightenment,” in other words.

Ideas about how to fast-track the transfer of this spirit to Japan proliferated during the 1870s and early 1880s, from having people convert to Christianity and speak English as the national language to intermarrying with Westerners. The brakes were soon applied as a wave of powerful enthusiasm for all things Western—particularly in urban Japan—gave way to a more nuanced awareness of life in Europe and America. Alongside the factories, schools, and impressive buildings, Japanese travelers encountered pollution, illiteracy, slums, and a competitive spirit so brutal that it threatened to make nonsense of the idea of national “community.” A degree of discernment was clearly required in Japan’s dealings with the West, but according to what principles? Could the country simply pick and choose—“Yes” to trains, trams, and shipyards; “No” to Christianity and an individualism that bordered, for its critics, on callous self-indulgence? A slogan intended to shape solutions to this problem—*wakon yōsai*, “Japanese spirit, Western technology”—was soon revealed as inadequate. In the real world, spirits and techniques coexist, shaping one another all the time. Meanwhile, as the great novelist of the era Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916) pointed out at the turn of the twentieth century, the “Japanese spirit” was a rather slippery concept: “Admiral Tōgō [a naval hero] possesses the Japanese spirit, and the local fishmonger has it as well. Swindlers and murderers also have the Japanese spirit. Since it is a spirit it is always blurry and fuzzy; there is no one in Japan who hasn’t had it on the tip of his tongue, but there’s no one who has actually seen it.”⁶

In truth, “Japanese spirit” was not a natural ethic, nor a reservoir of wisdom on which political leaders might draw for inspiration when faced with difficult decisions. Rather, it was a concept deployed by those leaders to naturalize decisions once they had been made and which tended toward the building of a strong, centralized state whose control remained firmly in their hands—with the emperor continuing to serve

as their legitimizing figurehead. Tight control over the police, education, and law-making was justified on the grounds of national security and a supposedly “Japanese” communitarianism: a good citizen (or, rather, imperial subject) was an informed, civic-minded individual who pursued their calling, whether at work or in the home, for the sake of the nation, while for the most part entrusting the governance of that nation to the emperor and his appointees in the cabinet. Tussles over power or public policy were regarded by the likes of Yamagata Aritomo (1838–1922), one of the most influential of the leaders of 1868–1869, as irresponsible and even immoral, given Japan’s continuing international vulnerability.

Beyond politics, the adjective “Japanese” similarly came to be used to sanctify constellations of traditions and traits drawn from the country’s past and combined with contemporary ideas in ways that served what leading politicians, government bureaucrats, intellectuals, and businessmen regarded as its present needs. A model emerged of the perfect Japanese housewife, combining the frugality of proud but hard-pressed late Tokugawa samurai women, the industriousness of their manual labor-loving rural counterparts, and the practical education and fine manners of middle-class American wives and mothers. Newspaper columns, magazines, schools, advertisers, and latterly Japan’s new department stores all helped to shape and promote this new standard.⁷ A similar process brought *bushidō*, the “way of the warrior,” to readers around the world. Nitobe Inazō’s (1862–1933) English-language book *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan* (1900) took an ethic that had developed during the Tokugawa period and combined it with elements of Europe’s chivalric tradition in hopes of fostering greater international sympathy for the new Japan by placing at its core a respectable and readily recognizable set of attitudes.⁸

There was creativity, too, in the religious arena, where some of Japan’s younger Buddhists set out to save their tradition—amid the post-Tokugawa postmortem, seeking to explain Japan’s woeful backwardness at the point when Perry arrived—by presenting Buddhism as part of the answer to Japan’s (and indeed the world’s) present predicament. Details varied between differing sects and modernizing initiatives, but the basic common claim was the same: Buddhism, properly understood, was perfectly in tune with modern science, free of questionable doctrinal claims (unlike Christianity, so went the argument), capable of serving as a salve for the pressures and anxieties of modern life, and able, too, to help shape a psychologically robust citizenry.⁹

IN THIS WAY “Japanese spirit” and, more especially, the adjective “Japanese” took on recognizable—although not uncontested—meaning across these decades, associated with elements of the Japanese past that were believed to be helpful in addressing contemporary challenges. This pragmatic, increasingly proud take on Japan’s history and hopes for the future had profound implications for the country’s relationship with mainland Asia. For centuries Japanese leaders and thinkers had lived with the Chinese concept of *tianxia*, or “all under heaven”: a physical and moral universe in which China was in every respect central. The modern equivalent, owing much to Social Darwinism, was an often rather crudely expressed hierarchy of nations with Japan steadily clawing its way up through the ranks until military victories in the First

Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and particularly the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) made it clear around the world that top-tier status had at last been achieved.

And yet all was far from cozy at the top table. Kaiser Wilhelm II responded to Japanese success in 1905 with talk of a “yellow peril,” while in Japan various Pan-Asian ideologies emerged at whose core was a desire to see Asian countries cooperate in rolling back the Western colonial presence there—militarily, politically, and culturally. Some of these ideologies were connected from the outset, or became linked later on, with strategic imperatives. These centered around the development of what Yamagata Aritomo called a “line of advantage” for Japan in Asia, ensuring that no potentially hostile foreign power would be able to establish itself on Japan’s doorstep. The Korean peninsula, its southern tip mere miles from the Japanese island of Kyūshū, found itself on the wrong side of that line. Japan’s wars with China and Russia were fought in large part over the question of influence on the peninsula, which Japan finally annexed in 1910.

In Taiwan (ceded to Japan by China in 1895), in Korea after 1910, and also along corridors of land associated with a railway network in southern Manchuria that was handed over to the Japanese by Russia in 1905, Japan’s modern experience of being caught—or, to some, felicitously located—between Asia and the West played out in overlapping military, economic, and cultural spheres. The conviction that “civilization and enlightenment” could be refitted for export in Asia was tested on residents of Taiwan’s capital, Taipei (Taihoku, in Japanese). The city was remade with wide, airy streets, fresh infrastructure, hospitals, schools, and public hygiene campaigns. For all that the architects of projects like these believed in their value to people, a sense of national chauvinism was never far from the surface. It was revealed most clearly in Korea, where anticolonial activists accused the Japanese of using “modernization” as a pretext for forcing the Japanese language and values on people and of resorting to a level of violence that was anything but enlightened or progressive. “Pan-Asianism” of this kind reached its grim apotheosis in 1940 with the announcement of Japan’s intention to create a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” (Dai-Tōa kyōeiken): cover, it soon turned out, for the exploitation of the region’s resources—including its human resources—in the service of war with China from 1937 and the United States and Great Britain from late 1941.¹⁰

Even at the more genuinely cooperative end of the spectrum, Pan-Asianists tended to regard Japanese leadership of an Asian renaissance as inevitable. Influential tropes emerged among Japanese travelers to mainland Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century that pictured China as the “sick old man” in contrast to Japan’s “lively youth.”¹¹ It fell now to Japan to gather Asia’s energies, curate its talents, in the service of achieving political and cultural balance in the region and, indeed, the world. Students from China, Korea, and elsewhere in Asia were encouraged to study in Japan for much the same reasons that Japanese students traveled to Western Europe and the United States: to pick up what expertise they could in some particular sphere of activity—industry, science, the law—and then to return home with it for the benefit of their compatriots.

Japanese journeys to the West were mirrored in these years by the travels of Japanese scholars of history, Buddhism, and the arts around Asia. Taking place on a more

modest scale, these were aimed at reconstructing the region's past and turning it into a credible foundation for answering Western cultural influence in kind. This undertaking increasingly came to be framed, as the end of the 1800s approached, in terms of Indian, Chinese, and Korean contributions to Asian culture down the centuries being perfected and now stored for safekeeping in Japan. There were powerful echoes here of European "golden age" theories regarding India, especially: ancient greatness had long since faded, but with the help of European scholarship and political leadership, it was steadily being recovered while Indians themselves were raised up once again. The Buddhist reformer Inoue Enryō (1858–1919) offered a particularly strident form of the argument where Japan was concerned. Contemporary religion in India, he declared, amounted to little more than "crystallized superstition," nowhere more evident than in the "exceedingly filthy" practice of cow veneration. By contrast, Japanese Buddhism was just now reaching its evolutionary peak, incorporating the latest findings of the natural sciences along with new psychological research that helped reformers get the best out of centuries-old Buddhist practices.¹²

An important element in claims such as those made by Inoue Enryō was that Asian culture had benefited down the centuries from a Japanese genius for honing or purifying ideas and practices. This genius or "spirit" was said to be on display both in religion and in the arts. All the more reason, claimed advocates for the Japanese arts, to worry about their catastrophic loss amid an overcooked enthusiasm for all things Western. One of the most influential Japanese contributions was made by Okakura Kakuzō (1863–1913). Deeply versed in Chinese classical literature, a creator himself of Chinese poems (*kanshi*) and literati paintings (*bunjinga*), and well-traveled across Japan, China, and India, Okakura rose to become perhaps the foremost art critic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Japan. He saw in his country's art both the expression of its unique spirit and a means of carrying that spirit forward into the next generation. It must, for that reason, be saved: from the disappearance abroad of "hallowed masterpieces and treasures, indices of exquisite subtlety" and from the steady loss of old, region-specific techniques as old forms of patronage died out.¹³

Okakura served across the 1880s and 1890s in a number of important art and heritage roles: within the Ministry of Education and as director both of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tōkyō bijutsu gakkō, founded in 1887 by Okakura and others) and of the fine art section of the Imperial Museum (Teikoku hakubutsukan, established in 1889). While supporters regarded him as helping to save Japanese art during its period of greatest threat, critics charged that it was through people like Okakura that Japan became caught in Western webs of meaning and approbation. He took his cues, they suggested, from Western appreciation of Japanese art as exotic, turning his country into an "aesthetic object" in the process and substituting intelligent art criticism for a flag-waving conviction that anything old and Japanese was intrinsically "good."¹⁴

It was certainly true that Okakura ended up caught between the West and Asia in a way that a great many Japanese cultural diplomats of his age did: keen to establish Japan as treasure-keeper and arbiter for Asian culture but doing so with a degree of sensitivity toward Western opinion that led him to internalize those standards.

He published more in English than he did in Japanese, flattering his Western readers not by praising the recent achievements of their cultures but by supporting the sense among many of them—adventurous aesthetes and spiritual seekers in particular—that those achievements had left them hollow and hungry, in need of fresh means of connection to a universal spirit or sense of self that modern life tended to deny or at least obscure. Because he was appealing to a very real sense of lack, Okakura was able to mount an argument in his book *The Ideals of the East with Special Reference to the Art of Japan* (1903), published in English for a Western audience, that in other circumstances might have sounded like crude cultural nationalism. He began by staking Asia's claim to access where that universal spirit was concerned:

Asia is one. The Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilisations, the Chinese with its communism of Confucius, and the Indian with its individualism of the Vedas. But not even the snowy barriers can interrupt for one moment that broad expanse of love for the Ultimate and Universal, which is the common thought-inheritance of every Asiatic race, enabling them to produce all the great religions of the world, and distinguishing them from those maritime peoples of the Mediterranean and the Baltic, who love to dwell on the Particular, and to search out the means, not the end, of life.¹⁵

Okakura went on to give his readers a tour of some highlights of Asian history before alighting on Japan's present privileged position:

It is in Japan alone that the historic wealth of Asiatic culture can be consecutively studied through its treasured specimens. The Imperial collection, the Shinto temples, and the opened dolmens [megalithic tombs] reveal the subtle curves of Hang workmanship. The temples of Nara are rich in representations of Tang culture, and of that Indian art, then in its splendour, which so much influenced the creations of this classic period—natural heirlooms of a nation which has preserved the music, pronunciation, ceremony and costumes, not to speak of the religious rites and philosophy, of so remarkable an age, intact...

Thus Japan is a museum of Asiatic civilisation; and yet more than a museum, because the singular genius of the race leads it to dwell on all phases of the ideals of the past...welcom[ing] the new without losing the old...It is this tenacity that keeps Japan true to the Asiatic soul even while it raises her to the rank of a modern power.¹⁶

Okakura never repeated his claim that "Asia is one." It was only in the early 1940s, long after Okakura's death, that Japanese nationalists deployed "Asia is one" to provide a spiritual gloss for their strategic ambitions.¹⁷ Nor was Okakura overtly political elsewhere in his writings. Still, there was no dividing culture from politics in this period, or not when it came to Japan's relationships with the West and with Asia. And Okakura was clear in his writings about how profoundly he believed that art spoke to the true character of a nation. While others looked to the battlefield for the

true test of a people's mettle—hence the enormous importance of Japan's victory over Russia in 1905—Okakura insisted that “art is the flowering of a nation”: “Its form amalgamates and crystallizes those ideas that the people revere, admire, and cherish, and to which they aspire. Accordingly, by looking at the spirit and dignity of an artwork, one can judge the level of a culture.”¹⁸

In Okakura's case as elsewhere, the positioning of Japan at the head or frontier of an Asian inheritance worthy of international respect was mediated to a considerable degree by Westerners. The introduction to *The Ideals of the East* was written by “Sister Nivedita”: an Irish teacher and anticolonial activist, born Margaret Elizabeth Noble (1867–1911), who became a disciple of one of India's most famous religious modernizers, Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902).¹⁹ It was Nivedita, in fact, who helped to edit *The Ideals of the East* and to arrange for its publication, keen as she was to help counter what she called in her introduction the “pseudo-Europeanising tendency now so fashionable throughout the East” and the “disintegration of taste and ideals which is coming about [in Japan] in consequence of competition with the West.” Like many Westerners who found inspiration in Asian religion, philosophy, or art in this era, Nivedita wondered whether it might be “the destiny of imperial peoples to be conquered in turn by the religious ideas of their subjects.”²⁰

Okakura also had a Western mentor in Japan in the form of Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), an American art historian who taught Okakura at Tokyo Imperial University and with whom Okakura collaborated in cataloging, critiquing, and conserving Japan's artistic heritage.²¹ The philosophical underpinnings for Fenollosa's work were similar to those of Sister Nivedita. This was a time in which universalist aspirations flourished across philosophy, religion, and art. Nivedita's interest in interfaith dialogue, of which Swami Vivekananda was an enthusiastic proponent, was paralleled in Fenollosa's Hegelian conviction that Western and Asian aesthetics might soon achieve “synthesis,” raising human civilization to new heights as a result.²² Equally important to Fenollosa as to Nivedita was that countries like Japan not forsake their own traditions and insights in a rush to emulate supposedly superior Western equivalents. For Fenollosa, this danger was greatest where painting was concerned, as he made clear in a lecture delivered at the Ueno Education Museum:

When traditional Japanese painting and Japanese painting in the European style are compared on the basis of aesthetic principles, there is no question about the superiority of the former over the latter. Why do you Japanese people strive to imitate European-style paintings when you have such excellent paintings of your own? European paintings are becoming more and more realistic and scientific and are declining artistically. . . . You Japanese people, therefore, must re-recognise the virtues of your own painting and do what you can to put new life into it. If only this is done, the value of your traditional Japanese paintings will be universally recognised within the next few years.²³

Similar intersections between Western Romanticism and Japanese cultural nationalism have been discerned in the repackaging of Zen Buddhism for foreign

consumption: as the answer to a Western hunger for direct religious experience in this era and as the quintessence of a supposedly unique Japanese talent for immediate insight into the world—in self-conscious contrast to rationalistic Chinese and verbose Westerners.²⁴ For their defenders, the likes of Okakura and the influential Buddhist popularizer Suzuki Daisetsu (1870–1966) were motivated to address foreign audiences not simply to pander to them but to push back against misleading and sometimes demeaning accounts of Asian culture (in the case of Buddhism, against early Western depictions of it as dark and nihilistic). Swami Vivekananda wrote and lectured in English—including a celebrated speech to the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893—for similar reasons: to counter what he regarded as incorrect and disparaging views of Indian religion—some of which were put forward by members or allies of Christian missions—and to demonstrate its potential value to the modern world.

THE DEATH IN 1912 of the Meiji emperor—hailed from courtly seclusion in Kyoto back in 1868 and made to serve as the figurehead for a modernizing samurai clique—marked the end of one of history’s most dramatic and successful examples of a national overhaul. But those decades had seen Japan’s position between Asia and the West argued over rather than fully resolved. It fell to subsequent generations to attempt to complete the process. Among those whose lives and work were shaped by the confusions and conflicts inherent in that task was one of Japan’s most celebrated modern poets, Yosano Akiko (1878–1942). Her personal and political outlook underwent a remarkable shift over time, from that of a cosmopolitan liberal during the late Meiji and Taishō (1912–1926) eras to someone rather more wary of Japan’s modern, international entanglements.

A number of Japan’s great literary figures had been inspired to reflect on their nation’s modern course during journeys in mainland Asia: Natsume Sōseki, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892–1927), Tanizaki Jun’ichirō (1886–1965). Yosano Akiko was among those travelers who, by the late 1920s, were developing mixed feelings about Japan’s modernization process and about the country’s role in mediating modernity on the Asian mainland. For all the romance of aesthetic and spiritual strands within Pan-Asianism, by the time of Yosano’s 1928 visit to parts of Manchuria controlled by Japan’s South Manchuria Railway Company, it was clear that a strategic imperative was winning: leaders of a resource-poor Japan were determined to develop the region as an economic lifeline.²⁵ The results were sometimes disturbing. Yosano was struck by the romance of a place whose natural beauty was deeply embedded in the Japanese imagination, thanks to generations of painters, poets, and writers: awesome mountains towering above endless plains, lush forests, and mighty waterfalls. She marveled at the efforts made to open schools for expat Japanese and local people alike. Yet she found that when set alongside the fabled elm trees, willows, and White Pagoda of the Japanese-controlled city of Liaoyang, the new Japanese and Western buildings that had been thrown up struck a “sharply discordant note.”²⁶ Yosano, and others like her, worried that their country’s leaders were talking about uniting and revivifying Asia

while in reality serving as a conduit for the worst aspects of Western modernity: its disenchantment and its totalizing focus on national advantage.

Similar political protestations about the stability of East Asia featured in official Japanese rhetoric explaining the necessity for war with China in 1937 and then against the United States and Great Britain in 1941. Japan's once-promising position between Asia and the West ended in an armed conflict with both. The old questions about Japan's place in the modern world were brought to a head—but not to an end. How ought geography to be reconciled with culture, Japan's Asian with its Western relationships? From art to spirituality, politics to pop culture, and with the country's recent tourist boom, Japan's sense of its place in the world, and its attempts to communicate that sense to its neighbors, remains very much a work in progress.

Notes

1. Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Datsu-A Ron," in *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshū*, vol. 10 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958), 64. On Fukuzawa, see also Urs Matthias Zachmann, "Blowing Up a Double Portrait in Black and White: The Concept of Asia in the Writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi and Okakura Tenshin," *Positions* 15, no. 2 (2007): 345–368.

2. Hirakawa Sukehiro, "Japan's Turn to the West," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 5: *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 465.

3. On Queen Himiko and early Japan, see Walter Edwards, "In Pursuit of Himiko: Post-War Archaeology and the Location of Yamatai," *Monumenta Nipponica* 51, no. 1 (1996): 53–79; Simon Kaner, "Jōmon and Yayoi: Premodern to Hypermodern," in *Routledge Handbook of Premodern Japanese History*, ed. Karl F. Friday (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 56–67; and J. Edward Kidder, "The Earliest Societies in Japan," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 1: *Ancient Japan*, ed. Delmer M. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 97–98.

4. On early modern Japan, see John Whitney Hall, ed., *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 4: *Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); James McClain, *Japan: A Modern History* (London: Norton, 2002); and Marius Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002). On *kokugaku*, see Harry Harootunian, *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

5. On the early, formative decades of "modern Japan," see McClain, *Japan*; Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*; Christopher Harding, *Japan Story: In Search of a Nation, 1850 to the Present* (London: Allen Lane, 2018); and Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

6. From Natsume Sōseki, *I am a Cat* [*Wagahai wa neko de aru*] (published in installments in *Hototogisu*, 1905–1906).

7. See Jordan Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880–1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 95–100.

8. On the concept of *bushidō*, see Oleg Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai: Nationalism, Internationalism and Bushidō in Modern Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

9. See Robert Sharf, "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism," *History of Religions* 33, no. 1 (1993): 1–43; Gerard Clinton Godart, "Tracing the Circle of Truth: Inoue Enryō on the History of Philosophy and Buddhism," *Eastern Buddhist* 36, nos. 1–2 (2004); and Kathleen M. Staggs, "Defend the Nation and Love the Truth: Inoue Enryō and the Revival of Meiji Buddhism," *Monumenta Nipponica* 38, no. 3 (1983): 251–281.

10. On Pan-Asianism in culture and politics, see Harding, *Japan Story*.
11. Andō Fujio, quoted in Joshua Fogel, *The Literature of Travel in the Japanese Rediscovery of China, 1862–1945* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 85.
12. “Crystallized superstition” is quoted in Jason Ananda Josephson, “When Buddhism Became a ‘Religion’: Religion and Superstition in the Writings of Inoue Enryō,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 33, no. 1 (2006): 155. See also Staggs, “Defend the Nation.”
13. Quoted in Okakura Kakuzō (trans. Kevin Singleton), “Concerning the Institutions of Art Education (1897),” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 24 (December 2012): 185.
14. “Aesthetic object” is *Karatani Kōjin*, quoted in Chelsea Foxwell, “Japan as Museum? Encapsulating Change and Loss in Late-Nineteenth-Century Japan,” *Getty Research Journal* 1 (2009): 40, 52; see also Charles S. Terry, “Tessai’s Tradition,” *Japan Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (1957).
15. Okakura Kakuzō, *The Ideals of the East with Special Reference to the Art of Japan* (London: J. Murray, 1903), 5.
16. Kakuzō, *Ideals of the East*, 5.
17. See Kinoshita Nagahiro, “Okakura Kakuzō as a Historian of Art,” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 24 (December 2012): 37; and Noriko Murai and Yukio Lippit, “Okakura Kakuzō: A Reintroduction,” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 24 (December 2012): 2–3.
18. Okakura Kakuzō, “Kokka,” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 24 (December 2012): 176.
19. Inaga Shigemi (trans. Kevin Singleton), “Okakura Kakuzō and India: The Trajectory of Modern National Consciousness and Pan-Asian Ideology Across Borders,” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 24 (December 2012). On Swami Vivekananda, see William Radice, ed., *Swami Vivekananda and the Modernisation of Hinduism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999).
20. Nivedita, introduction to Okakura Kakuzō, *Ideals of the East*, xx.
21. See Kevin Nute, “Ernest Fenollosa and the Universal Implications of Japanese Art,” *Japan Forum* 7, no. 1 (1995).
22. Nute, “Ernest Follosa and the Universal Implications.”
23. Quoted in Hisatomi Mitsugu, “Ernest F. Fenollosa and Japanese Art,” *Japan Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (1958): 309–310.
24. See Sharf, “The Zen of Japanese Nationalism.”
25. See Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 4.
26. See Yosano Akiko, *Travels in Manchuria and Mongolia: A Feminist Poet from Japan Encounters Prewar China*, trans. Joshua A. Fogel (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 42.

Reinventing Oneself

THE ARTISTIC CAREERS OF ŌTAGAKI RENGETSU

ŌTAGAKI RENGETSU'S (1791–1875) accomplishments as a potter, poet, calligrapher, and painter made her a celebrity with a national reputation. These accomplishments came about through Rengetsu's reinvention of herself as an artist in her early forties, following the deaths of her children, her stepmother, two husbands, and her stepfather. She expanded the idea of *sencha* (steeped tea) ceramics from a focus on Chinese models to include a personal Japanese style displaying her own *waka* verses.¹ With the popularity of her poetry and calligraphy, she became prominent in social circles ranging from commoners to members of the imperial court. Her career as an independent female artist inspired other women to develop their own talents, creating a kind of female salon. She also fostered the career of Tomioka Tessai (1836–1924) from the time he was a child, launching him into the world of literati painters and poets. Her work as a poet, potter, and painter fused aspects of Japanese and Chinese traditions that harmonized with some trends in “national learning” (*kokugaku*) thought as advocated by Ueda Akinari (1734–1809) and others, which in turn helped to inspire Tessai's own eclectic fusion of Japanese and Chinese history, thought, and artistic traditions.

Soon after Rengetsu's death, entertaining stories about her life and relations with others proliferated in the increasingly nationalistic environment to such a degree that by the 1930s and 1940s, her support for restoration of imperial rule became the focus of attention. Postwar publications often shifted their emphasis to highlight her charming eccentricities while overlooking the depth of her achievements and influence. Through an examination of contemporaneous evidence of her career, this essay focuses on aspects of Rengetsu's life and artwork that have been neglected or obscured by later storytelling and mythologizing. This essay introduces new historical materials on aspects of her life, including her multiple careers as an artist, her interactions with contemporaries, her relation to some aspects of *kokugaku* thought, and the development of a female salon that helped to promote the careers of the members as poets and potters. Information about the circumstances of her adoptive family have been reassessed to reveal the role that her father's ambition to restore the family's social status played in shaping much of Rengetsu's life. The essay includes a new level of connoisseurial analysis of Rengetsu's ceramic work supported by first-time use of

archaeological reports and a deeper consideration of the origins of her distinctive style of calligraphy. Finally, the essay concludes with some observations about the alternative visions of Rengetsu's life that developed during the political convolutions of twentieth-century Japan.

Adoption into the Ōtagaki Family

The remarkable fluidity of Rengetsu's associations with people of disparate social standings was prefigured by the situation of her birth on the eighth day of the first month of 1791 to a woman employed in the Sanbongi entertainment district of Kyoto, just west of the Kamo River.² A variety of evidence has established that Rengetsu's father was probably the sixth-generation head of Iga-Ueno Castle, Tōdō Yoshikiyo (1767–1798).³ A key mystery is by what route this illegitimate baby, then called Nobu, was adopted within weeks of her birth by a man working at Chion'in, the Kyoto head temple of the Jōdo sect of Buddhism. To address this question, it is necessary to understand why the Ōtagaki family wanted to adopt a child.

The Ōtagaki, descended from the prominent Kusakabe family, were in charge of Takeda Castle in Tajima since the time of Ōtagaki Mitsukage (r. 1443–1465). As a part of their service to the ruling Yamana clan, the Ōtagaki family maintained the castle through seven generations until finally losing possession in 1577 during the conflicts at the beginning of the Momoyama period. The remaining Ōtagaki descendants moved to Tottori and engaged in agriculture. Rengetsu's adoptive father, Ōtagaki Teruhisa, had been born in Tottori in 1755, left the area in 1783 for Kyoto, and was eventually employed by Chion'in under the adoptive name Yamazaki Tsunemon Yoshitora, subsequently restoring his Ōtagaki name in 1798.⁴ Teruhisa's wife, Nawa, had given birth to five sons, four of whom quickly succumbed to illness. Their remaining son, Sennosuke (b. 1783), later assumed the name Katahisa but died in 1803, leaving their twelve-year-old daughter Nobu as their only child. Teruhisa was preoccupied through most of his life with preserving the Ōtagaki family line and its ancient connection to higher social standing. By adopting the daughter of a prominent family, he likely hoped to continue the family name with a restored status.

It is believed that Tōdō Yoshikiyo spent much time in Kyoto during the several years it took to reconstruct the huge Tōdō clan residence that had been destroyed along with the imperial palace and most of central Kyoto in the Great Tenmei fire of 1788. As the Tōdō family had had some connection with Chion'in, it is further considered possible that Yoshikiyo lodged at Chion'in while in Kyoto. In light of Teruhisa's elevated family history and interest in continuing the family line, Yoshikiyo may have considered Teruhisa to be a good candidate to receive his illegitimate newborn. The mother's low social position would have made it impossible to place the baby in a currently prominent family. Although the precise details remain unknown, there must have been some equivalent considerations behind such a swift adoption of a newly born girl.⁵ Eight months after Rengetsu's adoption in 1791, Teruhisa was appointed *fudai bōkan*, one of the highest administrative positions in the temple, at Chion'in. Teruhisa was charged with supervising the affairs of the monks.

From 1798 or 1799 Rengetsu was sent to be in service at Kameyama Castle in

Tanba (today's Hyōgo Prefecture), where she remained until returning to Kyoto in 1807.⁶ It is probable that Teruhisa implored the Tōdō family to arrange for Nobu to go to Kameyama Castle so she would receive the education and training that befit one of their descendants. While in Kameyama, Nobu received some military training in the use of the *naginata* pike and other techniques, indicating she may have been in a position close to the family of the castle lord.⁷ It is likely that Nobu advanced her knowledge in the game of *go* that, under her adoptive father's tutelage, became one of her first notable skills. In 1803 her brother Katahisa died, and several months later her adoptive mother, Nawa, also died. With these deaths, the future of the Ōtagaki family depended on Rengetsu's prospects for marriage and children.

First Marriage

A common practice of families without a male heir was to adopt a suitable adult man into the family and then have him marry a daughter. Teruhisa followed this custom when he adopted Tenzō (b. ca. 1781), the fourth son of Tayuinoshō Gin'uemon, in 1804. This particular adoption was arranged due to the historical connections between the Ōtagaki and Tayuinoshō families that extended back to the Muromachi period when the Ōtagaki family ruled Takeda Castle. The Tayuinoshō family also traced its lineage to the Kusakabe family and had been one of the main supporters of the Yamana family and Ōtagaki rule of the castle in the Muromachi period. The importance of these ancestral roots was pointed out by Tenzō's older brother Tenmin (1779–1867) in a letter to Rengetsu.⁸ Upon adoption, Tenzō's name became Ōtagaki Mochihisa. He married Rengetsu in 1807.

Over the next few years, Rengetsu gave birth to at least three children: a son in 1808 who died after a few months, a daughter in 1810 who died two years later, and a second daughter in 1815 who died a few days after birth.⁹ Rengetsu's insistence on a divorce was accepted in 1815, and Mochihisa died of illness after returning to the Tayuinoshō residence later that year. Despite these traumatic circumstances, Rengetsu remained close to members of the Tayuinoshō family for the rest of her life, and many letters survive that were written to her husband's older brother Tenmin. In particular, Tenmin's second son, Saiji (later known as Senri) (1815–1896), received much attention from Rengetsu over the following decades as she carefully followed the boy's development and later career in her letters to the Tayuinoshō family. This has caused speculation that Saiji may have actually been Rengetsu's son, whom she could have placed into Tenmin's care at a time when he was childless and Rengetsu was in the midst of her divorce from Mochihisa.¹⁰ A new baby may have been awkward at a time when Rengetsu would soon be looking to remarry in order to fulfill Teruhisa's desire for a son to continue the Chion'in position and maintain the family line.

Second Marriage and Life as a Nun at Chion'in

In 1819 Rengetsu married Ishikawa Jūjirō, a retainer from Hikone domain in today's Shiga Prefecture.¹¹ He, too, was first adopted into the Ōtagaki family and given the name Hisatoshi. Unlike Rengetsu's first husband, Hisatoshi had a good relationship

with Teruhisa as they worked together at Chion'in. In the first year of this marriage, a daughter was born, and in 1820 Hisatoshi took on the hereditary temple position when Teruhisa retired. However, a chronic illness caused Hisatoshi's death in the sixth month of 1823. The shock of her husband's impending demise caused both Rengetsu and her father to take Buddhist vows from the head of Chion'in the day before Hisatoshi's death. Nobu was ordained as Rengetsu. Soon after, reflective of his high position at the temple, Teruhisa was then appointed the head of Makuzuan, a hermitage associated with Chion'in, and lived there with Rengetsu and her daughter.¹² The decade (1823–1832) that Rengetsu spent at Makuzuan is one of the least-known periods of her life. In 1825 her daughter—her last acknowledged child—died, leaving Rengetsu alone with her aged, adoptive father.

Even though there are few records of Rengetsu's activities during her thirties, the typical accounts of her life focus on her study of the game *go* for which her father was famous. While *go* was undoubtedly significant, her growing interest in *waka* poetry and painting has been less discussed due to lack of documentation. However, her swift rise to public attention in her forties presupposes her steady progress in these areas during her time at Makuzuan. In addition, given that Chion'in is next door to the Awata area of ceramic production that she was to eventually use for her pottery, it could also be that Rengetsu's familiarity with potters and kilns developed at this time.

Life in Okazaki and Growing Prominence as an Artist

After Teruhisa's death in 1832, Rengetsu was obliged to leave the Chion'in grounds, and she moved to the village of Okazaki, which was then part of the land administered by Chion'in. Although the area has long been absorbed into the city of Kyoto, at that time Okazaki was still a village east of the capital. Rengetsu referred to herself as living south of Kaguragaoka, the old name for the area of Kyoto now called Yoshidayama. Over the next several decades, Rengetsu changed her residence so frequently—apparently trying to escape unwanted visitors—that she acquired the nickname of “Relocating Rengetsu” (Hikkoshi Rengetsu).

Although undated, Rengetsu's first poem strips (*tanzaku*) from the 1830s have survived, with her early *waka* and the oldest form of her calligraphy and signature style. Throughout this decade, she was steadily advancing her skills in various art forms as a source of income.

Rengetsu's Poem of Protest

One of the most famous and political of Rengetsu's verses is a distinctive long poem (*chōka*) written in criticism of Ōshio Heihachirō (1793–1837) after his abortive revolt in Osaka in 1837. This uprising precipitated a tragic fire that destroyed a large area of the city. Employing several metaphors and puns, the poem describes the city as being engulfed by a tide of fire with sparks resembling fireflies. In a tone of amazement, the poem laments that a man who claimed to be following the path of the sages had led the people into such suffering.¹³ Although others had written *chōka* verses in praise of

Ōshio's revolt, Rengetsu was unrelenting in her poetic critique.¹⁴ An examination of Rengetsu's motives for writing this verse provides insights into her social concerns and their connection to the turbulent regional conflicts and personal dilemmas of her life.

For several reasons, Rengetsu would have been following Ōshio's career for years prior to the disastrous fire. Ōshio had held the hereditary post of a constable for the magistrate located in the Eastern District of Osaka (Osaka Higashimachi bugyō yoriki) since 1820 and had led prosecutions against a variety of powerful people in the late 1820s.¹⁵ Ōshio was the most noted proponent of the Wang Yangming (1472–1529) school of Neo-Confucianism in Japan at that time. He especially venerated a key tenet that advocated for the unity of knowledge and action, *zhixing heyi* (Japanese: *chikō gōitsu*), that stipulated knowledge was genuine only when manifested in behavior. The achievement of this unity was thought to form the basis for moral conduct in society. Ōshio also believed in the innate goodness (*ryōchi*) of people and desired to foster this potential through his work and teachings. Ōshio was known, in particular, for three “great cases,” one of which involved the arrests of many corrupt Buddhist priests in Osaka temples in 1829.¹⁶ The notoriety of these arrests and subsequent punishments inspired similar prosecutions of priests in Kyoto, including at important temples such as Myōshinji, Nanzenji, Tōfukuji, Honganji, and Chion'in.¹⁷ Ōshio's advocacy of Wang Yangming thought coupled with his reputation for challenging the status quo made him popular among many literati figures, including Rai San'yō (1781–1832), Shinozaki Shōchiku (1781–1851), Saitō Setsudō (1797–1865), and Tanomura Chikuden (1777–1835).¹⁸

The ensuing years saw Osaka and Kyoto in turmoil due to the Great Tenpō Famine (Tenpō no daikikin, ca. 1833–1837). Osaka was a focus during famines, as it was the main location to which domains around the country sent their rice to great storehouses (*kura yashiki*) on Nakanojima in central Osaka, where it was converted to money. As a result, even during famines, these storehouses were full of grain. Some of the rice dealers were notorious for manipulating the market by holding back sales as the price of rice soared. With destitute, starving farmers flooding cities, including Osaka and Kyoto, Ōshio developed a plan asking the wealthiest estates in Osaka to contribute to a fund that would relieve the general suffering, yet this plea was refused by all sides. In desperation, Ōshio sold his noted library of rare books and donated substantial funds as relief aid to several nearby rural communities. Driven to extremes, Ōshio finally planned a revolt against the major authorities and families in Osaka who had done nothing to relieve the widespread suffering. Two days before the planned revolt, several insiders informed the authorities. Upon learning he was about to be arrested, Ōshio set off the rebellion in a chaotic manner by burning down his own estate and leading several groups of supporters to attack the houses of the wealthy and powerful on either side of the Yodo River in central Osaka. The resulting fires swept out of control and razed a substantial section of Osaka, ending in the loss of life and turning thousands of people into refugees. Ōshio and his son escaped immediate arrest but committed suicide days later when their hiding place was discovered.

Thus, the background for Rengetsu's poem of ironic lament about the Osaka rebellion included Ōshio's earlier anticorruption drive that had extended to Chion'in

when she was still living there. That she may have approved of Ōshio's earlier efforts at social reform would have amplified her severe disappointment in the disastrous consequences of the abortive rebellion. In addition, that Tayuinoshō Saiji was one of Ōshio's key disciples would have intensified Rengetsu's level of involvement and resultant distress.¹⁹ Among the seven hundred people tried in the rebellion was Saiji, who, despite being uninvolved in the rebellion, almost died during more than six months of imprisonment.²⁰ Even though Rengetsu responded to later episodes of suffering and social unrest with charitable gifts, this long poem expresses most clearly her concerns for the anguish of the populace due to economic and political strife.

Development as a Poet

Researchers have extensively discussed the question of with whom Rengetsu might have studied *waka* poetry. It is clear from her own statements that Rengetsu greatly admired the work of Ozawa Roan (1723–1801), whose poems she seems to have studied on her own.²¹ Roan was known in his day as one of the Four Guardian Kings of Waka (Heian waka shitenno) in Kyoto. He shared that popular designation with the poets Chōgetsu (1714–1798), Jien (1748–1805), and Ban Kōkei (1733–1806). These four were all students of Reizei Tamemura (1712–1774), the most prominent *waka* poet in mid-eighteenth-century Kyoto.²² However, Roan developed principles of poetry that were seen as so disruptive to the tradition that he was expelled from the lineage in 1774. Tamemura supported the transmission of a complex set of rules for composing *waka* that Roan rejected as too restrictive for the expression of personal feelings. Roan was noted for advocating simpler, more direct expressions in *waka*, even saying “in poetry there was originally no rule nor teacher.”²³ Most famously, he espoused the notion of “plainspoken verse” (*tadagoto uta*), a phrase found in Ki no Tsurayuki's (872–945) famous preface to the tenth-century *Anthology of Old and New Japanese Poems* (*Kokin wakashū*). In Roan's interpretation, this meant not only the use of simple, direct language but also an intention to express the personal sentiments of the poet. Thus, he maintained that *tadagoto uta* could be the basis for new modes of poetic expression. Similar to Roan, in her *waka*, Rengetsu strove for an intuitive simplicity rather than for the traditional referential complexity. Nonetheless, the simplicity of Rengetsu's *waka* (like Roan's and other similarly minded poets) was underpinned by references to older poems. The tendency to translate Rengetsu's verse into plain English accentuates the impression of simplicity, whereas Japanese discussions of her *waka* often include lengthy explanations of her use of poetic precedents. Melissa McCormick's in-depth account in this volume is a rare exception in both English and Japanese scholarship.

The one major poet who Rengetsu studied with was Kagawa Kageki (1768–1843), also known as Tōutei, an ardent admirer of Roan's emphasis on personal feelings expressed in language closer to everyday speech. Although critiqued by the noted Edo-based poet Katō Chikage (1735–1808) for being lightweight, Kageki's Keien school of verse was to become the most popular of its day. The key evidence for Rengetsu's early involvement with Kageki is the publication of eleven of her poems in *Tōutei's Monthly Waka on Designated Themes* (*Tōutei tsukinami kendai waka*), a collection of

Kagawa Kageki's students' verses from 1839 and edited by Kageki in 1840.²⁴ Rengetsu had likely been introduced to Kageki by his student Tomita Yasukuni (1792–1840), a Hikone domain retainer who arrived in Kyoto in 1833.²⁵ Aside from her *chōka* about Ōshio and the few poems published by Kageki, Rengetsu's early works are largely unknown today. It is thus striking that her first appearance in the *Who's Who in Old Kyoto* (*Heian jinbutsu shi*) of 1838 lists her among sixteen female artists. This, the first of three successive appearances in this publication series, recorded Rengetsu as notable for *waka* and painting.²⁶ As there are currently no known datable paintings by Rengetsu from the 1830s, this ranking of her with top painters and poets of Kyoto reveals our current lack of evidence for her artistic production at an early stage of her career. As only a fraction of artists achieved mention in the *Who's Who in Old Kyoto*, Rengetsu must have been steadily creating works that were highly evaluated by the public.

During the many years Rengetsu had studied and composed *waka* poetry, she developed connections with a variety of poets, including the noted *kokugaku* scholar Mutobe Yoshika (1798–1864), who recorded in his diary that Rengetsu entered his school in 1849.²⁷ Yoshika, the son of a Shinto priest and a follower of the famous national learning scholar Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843), had opened his own school that focused on the significance of Shinto tutelary deities in everyday life.²⁸ His own poetry was rather traditional and seems to have had little impact on Rengetsu's verse.²⁹ The extant letters between them, although not discussing poetry, show that they had a deep friendship, and Rengetsu wrote a moving *waka* upon news of his death.

Rengetsu kept up a voluminous correspondence with a great many people, including those in other parts of Japan.³⁰ Among them was Tachibana Akemi (1812–1868), a national learning scholar and poet in the region of today's Fukui Prefecture.³¹ On a pilgrimage tour to Ise, Akemi went to see Rengetsu during his stopover in Kyoto in 1861. After their first meeting, they maintained a steady correspondence on various topics. Akemi's poetry resonated with Rengetsu's own approach, as he wrote about mundane aspects of everyday life—activities that had rarely appeared in traditional *waka*. Akemi gradually became acquainted with many people in Rengetsu's circle, including the young Tessai.

As Rengetsu's reputation for poetry and ceramics grew, her contacts and correspondence with people outside her native Kansai region expanded. It was common for prominent poets to correspond with each other—offering comments and criticism on each other's verse—yet most poets had been the disciples of established writers early in their careers. In Rengetsu's case, it is clear from her various statements of admiration for Roan that his work and ideas had the strongest formative influence on her poetry. Her appreciation for his advocacy of everyday language and personal experiences was reinforced by Kageki's own appreciation of these qualities that were to typify many of her *waka*.

The First Decades after Leaving Makuzuan (1832–1854)

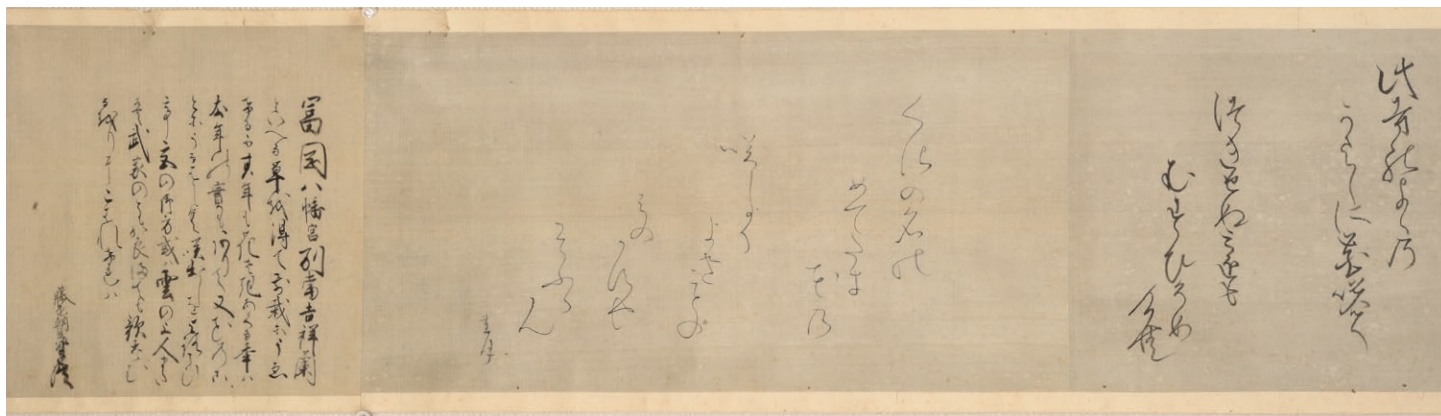
The death of Rengetsu's adoptive father in 1832 created circumstances that helped lead to the birth of her artistic career. For most male artists of her time, the activities of their forties and fifties constitute the middle to late periods of their careers, yet

for Rengetsu, these were the decades in which she began her artistic activities and gradually rose to renown. The entries for her in the 1838 and 1852 editions of the *Who's Who in Old Kyoto* demonstrate her continuing success as a poet and potter. Nonetheless, few dated works of poetry, calligraphy, paintings, and ceramics survive from this critical formative period except for items such as the long poem about Ōshio discussed earlier. Several recently discovered artworks—an album from 1842 and a pair of handscrolls from 1854—help to shed light on Rengetsu's relations with other artists and her growing popularity throughout Japan.³²

The 1842 *Album of Paintings and Poems* contains works by twenty-six poets and painters.³³ Although the circumstances for assembling the album are not recorded, Rengetsu's close friends and associates are represented, including the female poets and painters Takabatake Shikibu (1785–1881), Saisho Atsuko (1825–1900), and Ichinoi Shizuko (1785–1851). Male painters with whom Rengetsu occasionally made joint works are represented by the *yamato-e* revivalist Ukita Ikkei (1795–1859), Mochizuki Gyokusen (1794–1852), the literati painter Harada Iseki (dates unknown), Okamoto Sukehiko (1823–1883), and Yoshida Junshō (1789–1873). The presence of these figures establishes that this album represents a group connected to Rengetsu.

The remaining people represented in the album are all poets: some were members of the nobility while others belonged to different factions of national learning. The aristocrats are Uematsu Masataka (1815–1855), Chigusa Arifumi (1815–1869), and Chigusa Ariaki (1829–1846). Until recently, the significance of the Kyoto-based nobility in the movement to restore imperial power has often been overlooked. They had powerful motives to be sympathetic to those mixed forces seeking the overthrow of the Tokugawa rule, giving them some shared interests with rebellious samurai and scholars of Chinese and Western studies.³⁴ The same is true for the national learning scholars in the album, including Hoida Tadatomo (1792–1847), Ōhashi Nagahiro (1788–1851), Matsuda Naoe (1783–1854), Sasaki Haruo (1818–1888), and Nakamura Yoshinobu (d. 1850). The diversity of people in the album—artists, poets, scholars, and members of the aristocracy, with ages ranging from the thirteen-year-old Ariaki and the seventeen-year-old Atsuko to the fifty-seven-year-old Shikibu and the fifty-nine-year-old Naoe—highlights the complex mixture of people around Rengetsu in the early 1840s. At the age of fifty-one, Rengetsu was in this heady mix of artists and intellectuals who were sharing their skills and ideas in ways that were receptive to her multimedia approach to art.

In the 1850s Rengetsu's reputation had spread well beyond the Kyoto area, as can be seen in a newly discovered pair of handscrolls from 1854. These handscrolls provide some context for who she associated with and how she was regarded at a time when she was gaining national recognition. Eishū Shōnin (dates unknown), the head priest of Eitaiji, a Shingon temple in Edo, commissioned poems in Chinese verse and *waka* from forty-four poets, writers, calligraphers, and a sole painter. Albeit hailing exclusively from the Kantō and Kansai regions, the artists were selected as being the most noted talents of their kind from around Japan. The participants were all sent a length of high-quality, gray-colored silk with the request that they compose an original poem in praise of *kichijō ran*—a kind of orchid—either in Chinese or Japanese verse.³⁵ The returned works were assembled into two handscrolls titled *Lingering Enjoyment*



of *Collected Felicities* (*Chōshō yokyō*). The *waka* handscroll begins with a colored painting by Tsubaki Chinzan (1801–1854) of a group of orchids, followed by eighteen other sections, including a *waka* by Rengetsu.

Alongside Rengetsu, the pair of scrolls presents the verses of many of the most famous poets and calligraphers of Japan at that time, including the title for the Chinese-style poem handscroll written by the head of the main Confucian school for the Tokugawa family, Hayashi Fukusai (1800–1859); the prominent scholar of Zhu Xi (1130–1200); Asaka Gonsai (1791–1861), who wrote the preface; two of the most prominent calligraphers and Chinese-style poets of Kyoto, Nukina Kaioku (1778–1863) and Yanagawa Seigan (1789–1858); the noted Kyoto Confucian scholar and calligrapher Nakajima Sōin (1779–1855); and the illustrious Chinese-style calligrapher of Edo, Ichikawa Beian (1779–1858), among others.

The scroll of *waka* includes poems by two noted aristocrats, Asukai Masahisa (1800–1857) and Chigusa Arikoto (1797–1854); head priest of Daitokuji, Daikō Sōgen (1772–1860); the national learning scholar Mutoke Yoshika; along with Rengetsu and others. Although a number of the Kansai figures have well-known connections to Rengetsu—including Kaioku, Seigan, Sōin, Arikoto, and Yoshika—the prominent placement of Rengetsu's *waka* in third position following the two members of nobility amplifies the significance of her being one of only two women selected for this project.³⁶ Her distinctive Heian period–influenced calligraphy stands out clearly from that of the other *waka* (Figure 1). Rengetsu's inclusion among these Edo luminaries known for their Chinese and Japanese verse and calligraphy styles shows that her poetry and calligraphy were held in high esteem among various social strata and in different geographical locations as early as 1854.³⁷

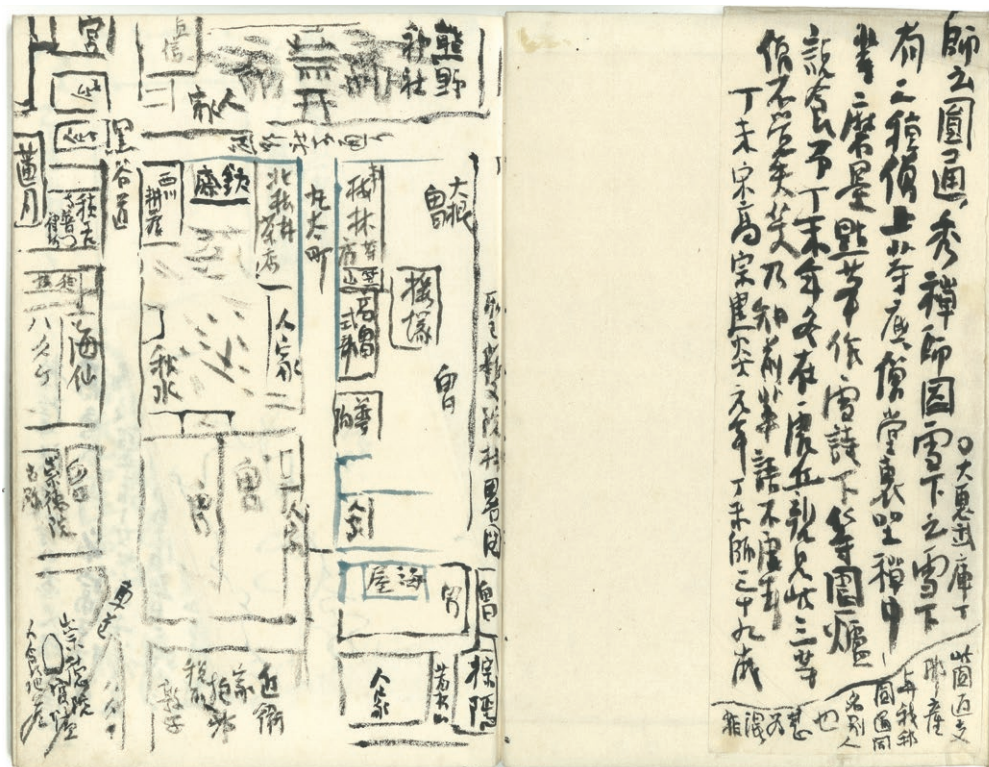
The artists and poets found in the album and handscrolls discussed here are linked by the fact that most of them were known for their endorsement of various movements aimed at restoring imperial rule. Although the extent of Rengetsu's direct involvement in politics remains unclear, her circle of friends and supporters shared a strong desire to see the end of Tokugawa rule. Rengetsu was now sixty-three; the following two decades saw the fullest development of her career as a self-supporting, independent artist.

Figure 1. Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Waka following Verse by Chigusa Arikoto*, 1854. Handscroll; ink on silk. *Lingering Enjoyment of Collected Felicities* (*Chōshō yokyō*), handscroll two, section four. Hakutakuan Collection.

Relations with Tomioka Tessai

Although there are a variety of conflicting accounts, it seems that Rengetsu developed a fondness for Tessai when he was a boy in her neighborhood of Shōgoin village, east of the Kamo River.³⁸ The Tomioka family business supplied priestly robes for Sōtō Zen temples, but Tessai's father, Korenobu (1804–1856), had gradually lost interest in the declining business and spent most of his time reading books at home.³⁹ Although their store was at Koromodana on Sanjō Street west of Karasuma, the Tomioka family lived opposite the western gate of Kumano Shrine in Shōgoin village. Only a few dozen meters north, Rengetsu was creating her ceramics and writing verses in a small house behind a garden supplies shop. At that time, the small Shōgoin village was an enclave for artists, including Nukina Kaioku, Yanagawa Seigan, Chō Kōran (1804–1879), Oda Kaisen (1785–1862), Nakajima Kayō (1813–1877), Nakajima Sōin, Takabatake Shikibu, and Saisho Atsuko (Figure 2).⁴⁰ The rural character of the village was emphasized by radish fields that separated the artists' homes by only a few blocks.⁴¹ This was the environment where Rengetsu lived with the young Tessai. Late in life Tessai frequently asserted that he was not a painter, as the aspiring artists he had known were often in training by their early teens and were capable of technically polished works by their early twenties. In contrast, Tessai was still learning basic techniques in his late twenties, mostly without the guidance of a real teacher. Despite becoming famous for his painting late in life, he emphasized his scholarship and would urge people to read his inscriptions first and then look at the painting.

Figure 2. *Map of Shōgoin village by Tomioka Tessai, ca. 1916.* Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji, Tessai Museum.



In China, “paintings by literati” (Chinese: *wenrenhua*; Japanese: *bunjinga*) idealized amateurism as opposed to professional painters who approached their work as a craft. In actual practice, however, many Chinese literati painters achieved high technical skill. Japanese painters, however, took the amateur concept very literally, and some of them reveled in their neglect of technical skills. Most of the Chinese painters who had come to Japan at various points in history were, in fact, merchants—not of the Chinese literati social class. They were true amateurs in painting, and their simply brushed works reinforced the Japanese preference for untutored simplicity in literati painting.⁴²

Growing up so close to the sympathetic proximity of Rengetsu, Tessai had her as an example of a person who had turned to the creation of art in middle age with little formal training in poetry, calligraphy, painting, or ceramics and nonetheless gradually became a celebrated figure. In the Sinocentric world of Japanese literati painting, the ideal scholar-artist was someone who was knowledgeable of Chinese cultural history and literature and who could write verse in Chinese. Rengetsu, however, set a model of literary sophistication based on Japanese classical literature and fused it to the new Chinese ceramic forms used in *sencha* tea culture. In doing so, Rengetsu was not purposefully iconoclastic. More likely, she followed a natural process of doing her best with what skills she had, creating opportunities when she could. Nonetheless, the success of her unique approach to artwork demonstrated to the young Tessai that an unconventional path to life and art was possible.

In the spring of 1856 Rengetsu was invited by the head priest Hara Tanzan (1819–1892) to live and work at Shinshōji, a Sōtō Zen temple in the northeastern hills of Kyoto.⁴³ Rengetsu accepted this offer to live in what was then a remote location as a way of avoiding the stream of visitors that often interrupted her life in the city. The temple was an uphill climb from the town of Shirakawa and must have been inconvenient for moving clay and finished ceramics back and forth. When Rengetsu moved to Shinshōji, it was arranged for the youthful Tessai to live with her and to assist in bringing clay to the temple and in taking the finished works for firing in the Awata kilns on Sanjō Street in Kyoto, next to the temple Shōren’in. It seems that this arrangement lasted for a year or more and greatly deepened the connection between the two.

In the succeeding few years, Rengetsu helped pay for Tessai’s education and allowed him to use her house as he unsuccessfully attempted to become a tutor for painting. She also encouraged him to take a long trip to Nagasaki in 1861. Part of the reasoning for this trip was to be away from Kyoto while people suspected of anti-shogunate activities were still being investigated. In fact, many of Tessai’s older literati friends were under supervision or had even been arrested. In Nagasaki, Tessai associated with local literati artists, including Hidaka Tetsuō (1791–1871); met with Chinese visitors; and studied imported Chinese paintings. Later Tessai referred repeatedly to his time in Nagasaki in his paintings, and this trip confirmed an interest in travel—an enthusiasm that took him over much of Japan, including to Hokkaidō—in the following decades.

Rengetsu often inscribed *waka* on the works of the young Tessai, which increased their popularity and value. Before her death, Rengetsu passed on to him a large

number of painting papers and fans with her poetry already written on them so that Tessai could later add paintings. She gave him so much material that a considerable quantity of unused works was still in the possession of the Tomioka family in the postwar period. Tessai, in turn, often made box inscriptions for Rengetsu paintings, calligraphy, and ceramics. In the last several decades of his life Tessai began to make ceramics inspired in part by his early experiences helping Rengetsu. Some works were handmade by Tessai, and others were created by his wife, Sasaki Haruko (1846–1940), or by noted Kyoto potters. All were covered with his inscriptions and small paintings, most often as underglaze blue-and-white porcelains. By the late Meiji era, the idea of painters decorating ceramics had come into the mainstream, thanks in part to the continuing popularity of Rengetsu's ceramics even decades after her death. Rengetsu's overall impact on Tessai will be discussed further at the conclusion of this essay.

Life at Jinkōin

The friendship Rengetsu developed with the Shingon priest Wada Gozan (or Gesshin, 1800–1870) helped shape the circumstances of her last decade. In 1865 he provided her with a small house at Jinkōin, a temple west of Kamigamo Jinja in northern Kyoto. Because Rengetsu spent her last decade at Jinkōin, subsequent priests of the temple had a special relation not only to her but also to her reputation and the stories they would pass on about her. Most of the later head priests of the temple became noted authorities on her life and were the primary people who made box inscriptions authenticating her works in various media. Rengetsu produced more joint works than any painter other than Tessai.

Rengetsu's first book of poetry, the 1868 *Rengetsu and Shikibu: A Waka Collection of Two Women* (*Rengetsu Shikibu ni jo wakashū*), was a joint production with her well-known former neighbor in the Shōgoin village, Takabatake Shikibu.⁴⁴ Over the years, Rengetsu had helped form a loose salon of female poets consisting of her friends and disciples. Most of the participants were self-supporting women who attained a degree of recognition for poetry, calligraphy, and, in some cases, painting or pottery. That these women had formed a salon was recognized publicly in *In Vogue Waka Poets of Today's Kyoto: The Thirty-Six Immortal Poets of Plum Flowers and Cherry Blossoms* (*Miyako genzon waka sha ryū Umesakura sanjūrokkasen*, 1852). This single-sheet woodblock print reimagination (*mitate*) of the Thirty-Six Immortals of Poetry in the guise of thirty-six prominent people in Kyoto included separate images of Rengetsu, Shikibu, Ueda Chikajo (1824–1894), and Sakuragi (mid-nineteenth–early twentieth centuries).⁴⁵ That they were four of the five women included in the series suggests that the public awareness of their group was already well advanced at this time.

One of the shared passions and inspirations of these four women were the female writers of the late Heian period. Rengetsu, in particular, gradually shifted her calligraphic style to resemble Heian cursive calligraphy. Prominent among the four women were the aforementioned Sakuragi—a courtesan from the Wachigaiya establishment in Kyoto's Shimabara neighborhood—and Ueda Chikajo, an entertainer from Kyoto's Gion district. Chikajo had married Nagasawa Tomo'o (1800–1859), a retainer from Kishu domain; after his death while under arrest for anti-shogunate

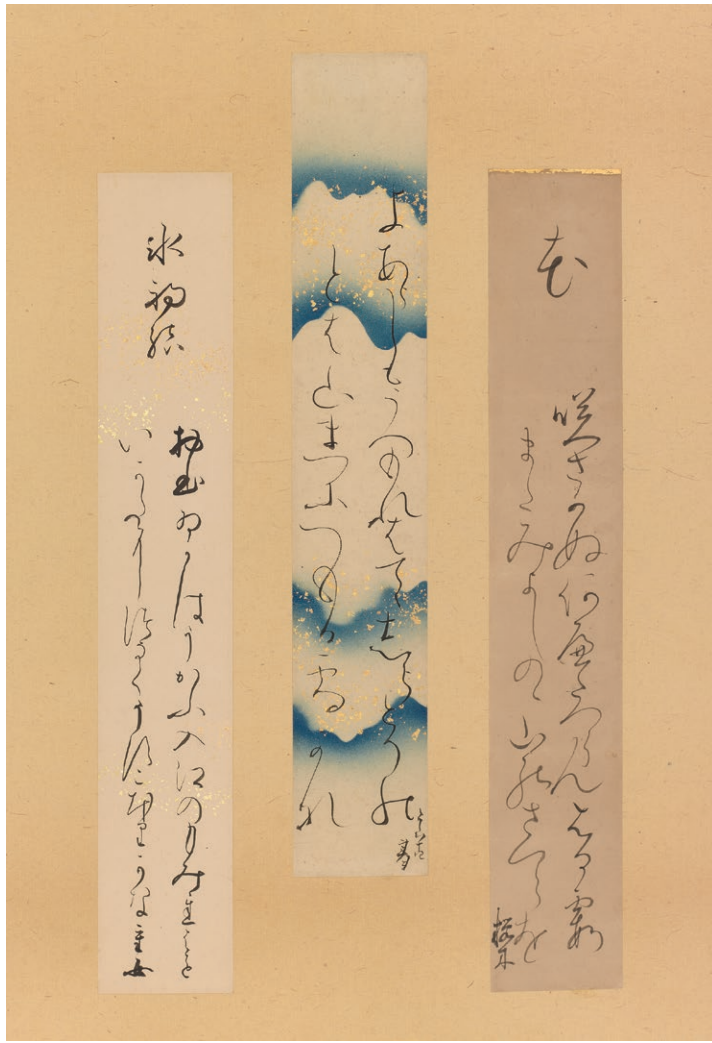


Figure 3. Ōtagaki Rengetsu (c.), Sakuragi (r.), Chikajo (l.), “*The Midnight Storm*” *Waka Poems*, Rengetsu’s verse 1874, others 1870s. Hanging scroll; ink on decorated paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2021.2.4a-d.

activities, she became a nun. Rengetsu’s background as the daughter of a high-ranking samurai and a woman from the pleasure quarters fostered her associations with interesting people regardless of their class standing. That these two devoted disciples both became nuns later in life seems part of a broader pattern of women choosing this route to gain a measure of independence.⁴⁶ Sakuragi modeled her calligraphy style on Rengetsu’s and even engaged in making Rengetsu-style ceramics (Figure 3). Later, Chikajo wrote an honorific postscript to Rengetsu’s second volume of poetry, *A Diver’s Harvested Seaweed* (*Ama no karumo*, 1870).

Rengetsu had borrowed the phrase “a diver’s harvested seaweed” from the identical title of a comparatively obscure late-twelfth-century narrative about the lives of sisters in late Heian court society.⁴⁷ The title phrase is introduced in a manner that could have been inspired by three *waka* that employ the same phrase in *Anthology of Old and New Japanese Poems*.⁴⁸ The cryptic title gains meaning when considered in the context of the story, which depicts a princess imagining being reborn as a diver who ponders sorrows that are prompted by the sight of bugs living in the gathered seaweed.⁴⁹ The possible interpretations are too varied to pursue here, but the idea of

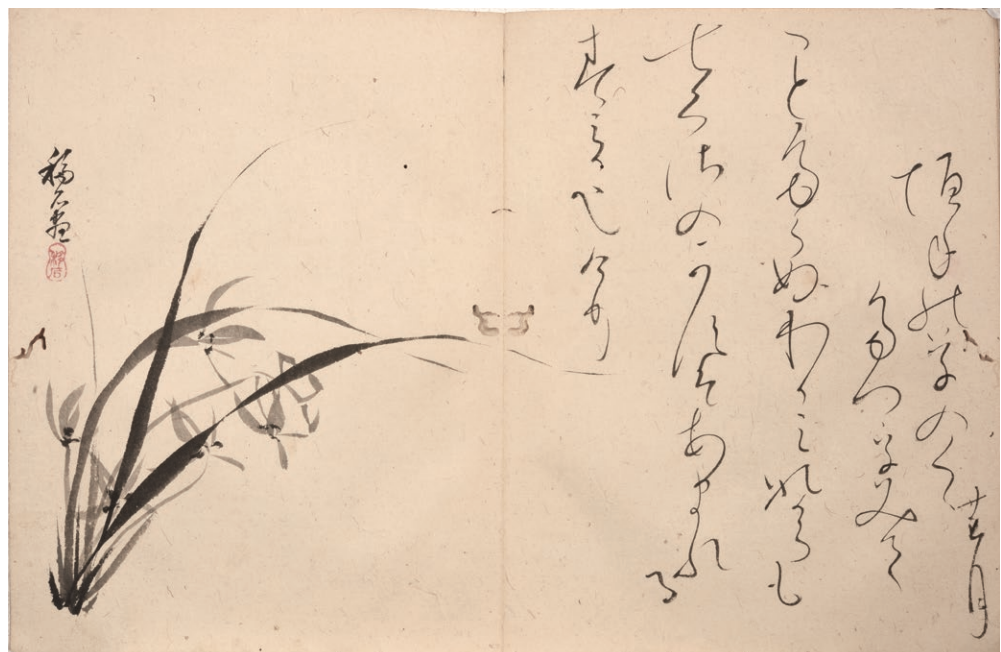
an aristocrat being reborn as a lowly diver may have resonated with Rengetsu's own life, with its shifts between high and low status. It is this kind of classical reference that, with its ambiguity, enriches some of Rengetsu's *waka*.

In her eighties, Rengetsu produced many works in every media as the quality of her art continued to improve. The physical labor of ceramic production seems to have shifted more and more to the potter Kuroda Kōryō (1822–1894), often called the second-generation Rengetsu, with Rengetsu adding her signature poetry to the vessels. Yet the most remarkable change was the ever-increasing sense of balance and the ephemeral yet firm modulation of the calligraphic line that attained new heights. Just as Tessai was to reach a new level in his last decade, Rengetsu created some of her finest work in her last year. Rengetsu was buried in a graveyard next to Jinkōin, and her small gravestone with its inscription by Tessai still marks the site.

Rengetsu as a Calligrapher

Rengetsu's skill as a calligrapher continues to drive her popularity. The earliest examples of her work show a more ordinary cursive style derived from the Oie style that was the norm for her day (Figure 4). By her early fifties, she had started to develop a graceful curvilinear manner with a very narrow line that subtly modulates from a slender to a somewhat fuller width. She continued to develop this distinctive approach, and it steadily increased in quality into her last year. Many of the finest examples of Rengetsu's calligraphy date from her eighties. The most easily accessible examples are found on the innumerable poem strips that she inscribed with her own *waka*. The earliest examples from her forties were signed on the reverse side, sometimes with an added seal or a note saying Shōgoin village was her residence.⁵⁰ These poem strips show the influence of Oie style in line quality and character composition.

Figure 4. Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Waka*, 1842. Ink on paper. Fragrance of Brushes and Ink (Kanbokukō). Album leaf; ink on paper. Hakutakuan Collection.



Tanzaku from Rengetsu's fifties have her signature on the front side and show a gradual evolution of style into her sixties when she began to include her age next to the signature. During these later decades, the form of her signature went through progressive changes that have been charted by several scholars.⁵¹ Although the character for *ren* (lotus) evolved, the more obvious changes are seen in the *getsu* 月 (moon) character. In her forties, she wrote *getsu* rather vertically with both descending lines of similar lengths; sometimes the left stroke was even the longer one.⁵² Over time she began to write this character in a more cursive and increasingly horizontal manner, with the left side stroke becoming shorter and shorter.

Although it is generally recognized that Rengetsu's ultimate personal style of calligraphy resembles aspects of late Heian calligraphy, it is still undetermined how she developed it. Not only did she not train with any known teachers of calligraphy but her finished style does not resemble the works of her contemporaries. It seems most probable that she studied examples of calligraphy attributed to the late Heian period. She may have examined works attributed to the poet Koōgimi (late tenth–early eleventh centuries), one of the five female poets of the famed group of Thirty-Six Immortal Poets (*Sanjūrokasen*). Works ascribed to Koōgimi often have a slender line forming rounded characters that could have inspired Rengetsu's style.⁵³ More recently, the anonymous late Heian fragment of the *New Collection of Old and New Poems, Manshūin Version* (*Manshūin-bon Shinkokin wakashū*) has been suggested as a possible influence. Due to Rengetsu's friendship with the Tendai priest Rakkei Jihon (1795–1868), who had close connections with Manshūin, she might have been able to view that work or a copy of it, along with other pieces of Heian calligraphy kept at the temple.⁵⁴ This work has features of line, character composition, and layout that resemble aspects of Rengetsu's later style. Although the exact process that led to Rengetsu's distinctive, elegant calligraphy—combining a gossamer-like floating quality with an “iron wire” control of the line—remains obscure, it successfully regenerated a late Heian style (Figures 5 and 6).⁵⁵

As discussed by the art historian Komatsu Shigemi (1925–2010), the development of Japanese-style calligraphy in the Edo period was marked by a variety of calligraphers having renewed appreciation of classical (*kobitsu*) calligraphy of the late Heian and Kamakura periods.⁵⁶ As seen in the exquisite recreations by Konoe Iehiro (1667–1736) and the works of Karasuma Mitsuhiro (1579–1638), Kojima Sōshin (1580–ca. 1656), and others, down to the nineteenth-century productions of Katō Chikage and Reizei Tamechika (1823–1864), calligraphers were inspired by the diverse styles found in examples of ancient calligraphy. Rengetsu's calligraphy is a part of this larger pattern. Comparing her calligraphies with her contemporaries, her works more fully embody aspects of an ancient aesthetic, giving them a striking distinctiveness.

Rengetsu's prolific writing of thousands of *tanzaku* and poetry leaves (*shikishi*) led to the creation of *tanzaku* albums of either fifty or one hundred examples that functioned like folios of her poetry. She also wrote her *waka* on larger sheets of plain paper—more rarely choosing highly decorated or woodblock-printed papers—for display in the hanging scroll format. Despite countless forgeries, her calligraphic style is difficult to successfully emulate, and among her followers, it was only Sakuragi who strove to maintain aspects of Rengetsu's approach. Although very different in

Figure 5. (Left)
 Ōtagaki Rengetsu, “*I Snapped and I Brought*” *Waka Poem*, 1872. Hanging scroll; ink on decorated paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2019.3.25a-c.

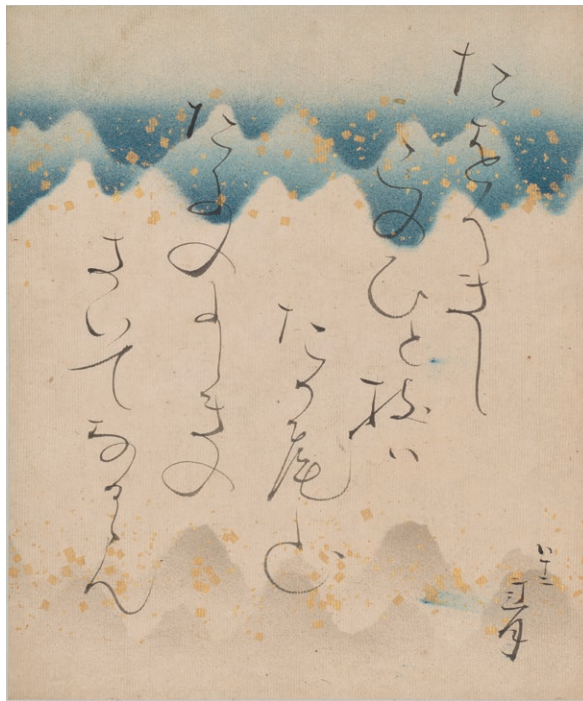
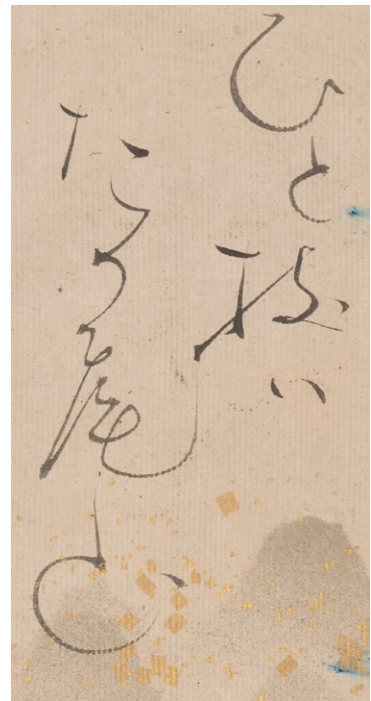


Figure 6. (Right)
 Detail of Figure 5.



character, the calligraphy found in Rengetsu’s numerous letters has also been admired for its more forceful and irregular qualities that reveal other aspects of her aesthetics.

Rengetsu as a Collaborator in Joint Works and as a Painter

Although *waka* poetry has been inscribed on diverse types of paintings for centuries—from formal portraits to *yamato-e*-style landscapes—in the eighteenth century, a new manner of combining *waka* with painting developed and spread through most traditions of painting. This phenomenon parallels to some degree the development of *haiga*—paintings with *haikai* verses—from the late seventeenth century. Like *haiga*, this new style of painting, which can, retrospectively, be called poetry pictures (*waka-e*), is sparsely brushed figures and landscapes that leave most of the painting surface blank. Unlike the free, expressionistic brushwork of *haiga*, *waka-e* tend to be carefully painted in a reserved, delicate manner with slight use of color. During the Edo period, this type of painting was embraced by literati painters, the Shijō and Maruyama schools, revivalist *yamato-e* artists, and others. Rengetsu’s painting activities, whether her own paintings or works by other artists to which she added a *waka*, are mostly this type of *waka-e*.

The list of artists with whom Rengetsu collaborated by adding a *waka* to their painting, whether a hanging scroll or a painted *tanzaku*, is quite extensive. The greatest number of her joint works are with Tessai (Figures 7–9), followed by the many paintings by Wada Gozan (Figure 10) in addition to numerous other artists like Mori Kansai (1814–1894), Takabatake Shikibu, Shiokawa Bunrin (1808–1877; Figure 11), Kishi Chikudō (1826–1897), Tanomura Chokunyū (1814–1907), and Reizei Tamechika. The eclectic panorama of painters who collaborated with Rengetsu covers most of the



Figure 7. (*Left*) Calligraphy: Ōtagaki Rengetsu; Painting: Tomioka Tessai, *Fox Priest Hakuzōsu*, 1867. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2018.4.21A-e.

Figure 8. (*Above*) Calligraphy: Ōtagaki Rengetsu; Painting Tomioka Tessai, *Manzai Performers*, 1869. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, 2021.398.5.



Figure 9. (Left) Calligraphy: Ōtagaki Rengetsu; Painting: Tomioka Tessai, “No place at the inn” *Waka and Painting of Cherry Blossoms*, 1873. Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.



Figure 10. (Right) Calligraphy: Ōtagaki Rengetsu; Painting: Wada Gozan, *Pine*, 1866. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.

different trends in painting of her time, demonstrating her wide range of contacts and appreciation for painters of all schools. Nonetheless, Rengetsu added her poems only to works painted in the abbreviated *waka-e* manner. The themes of the paintings were mostly the same as those she employed in her own work.

It is unclear what training Rengetsu received in painting, although there are repeated accounts that she may have had initial training from Shijō school-trained Matsumura Keibun (1779–1843). Even though her direct connection to Keibun is obscure, some of her paintings, especially those of houses in snowy landscapes, are close to Keibun's work. Many of Rengetsu's paintings show indebtedness to Shijō-school brushwork and compositions, fitting with that tradition's ambidextrous ability to mix Maruyama school and literati approaches. Rengetsu had favorite themes for her paintings, including *sencha* pitchers with cups, eggplants, flying cranes, butterflies, banner runners (*yakko*), Ebisu, paper figurines for the doll festival (*tachibana*), rural landscapes, a solitary old house under a pine (sometimes modeled after her own residence), and so on (Figures 12 and 13). These topics resemble those of her poetry, focusing on everyday scenes and objects of daily life. Much of her painting exudes a cheerful playfulness that is perennially appealing. Most of her paintings were done on paper, although she also painted on ceramics, wooden box lids, and flat wooden plates for sweets (*kashizara*) (Figure 14).

Rengetsu as a Potter

As a middle-aged, single woman living alone as a Buddhist nun, Rengetsu's artistic activity was born from the need to be financially self-supporting. Acclaim as a poet brought little income, although her poems written on *tanzaku* and her paintings did produce some revenue. That they were inexpensive to produce helps account for the tremendous number that Rengetsu created throughout her life. The mainstay of her income, however, was her ceramic production, which eventually reached large-scale proportions through the help of various assistants.

How Rengetsu learned basic ceramic techniques and began to sell her works is still unknown, although there are anecdotes that a neighboring woman introduced Rengetsu to the fundamentals while she was living in Makuzuan with her adoptive father. The temple Chion'in is next door to the Awata ceramic area, which had various ceramic studios with their own kilns, and Rengetsu may have become acquainted with aspects of production there. In the 1820s and 1830s, the popularity of drinking the brewed tea of *sencha* and the production of related ceramics was rapidly expanding, fueling the popularity of the most noted *sencha* potter in Kyoto, Aoki Mokubei (1767–1833). Mokubei was a designated potter for the temple Shōren'in to the north of Chion'in, and his wares were inspired by brightly decorated Chinese forms and unglazed pitchers from Southeast Asia (so-called Southern Barbarian, or *nanban* style). Rengetsu would have been aware of the growing enthusiasm for *sencha* ceramics as well as the amateur ceramic efforts of Ueda Akinari, who had created a small number of hand-pinched ceramics for *sencha* in the same parts of Kyoto that she was to reside in. Although Akinari's fame today is largely connected to his ghost stories, he was a major national learning scholar and a key figure in the transmission of *sencha*



Figure 11. Calligraphy: Ōtagaki Rengetsu; Painting: Shiokawa Bunrin, *Yakko*, ca. 1860s. Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2021.2.3a-d.

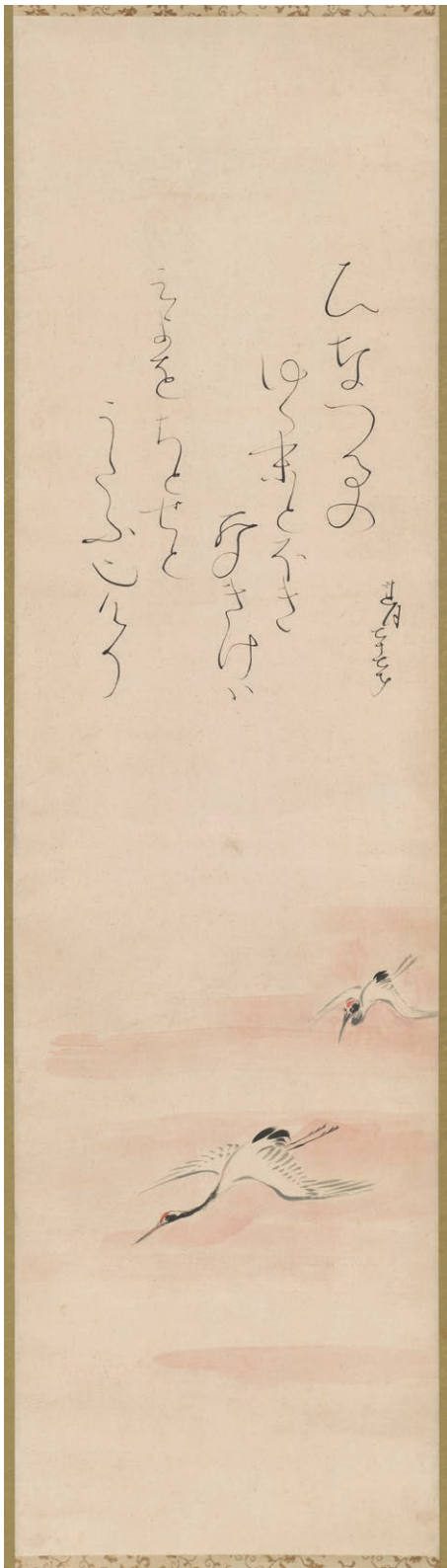


Figure 12. (Left) Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Flying Cranes with Waka*, 1867. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.

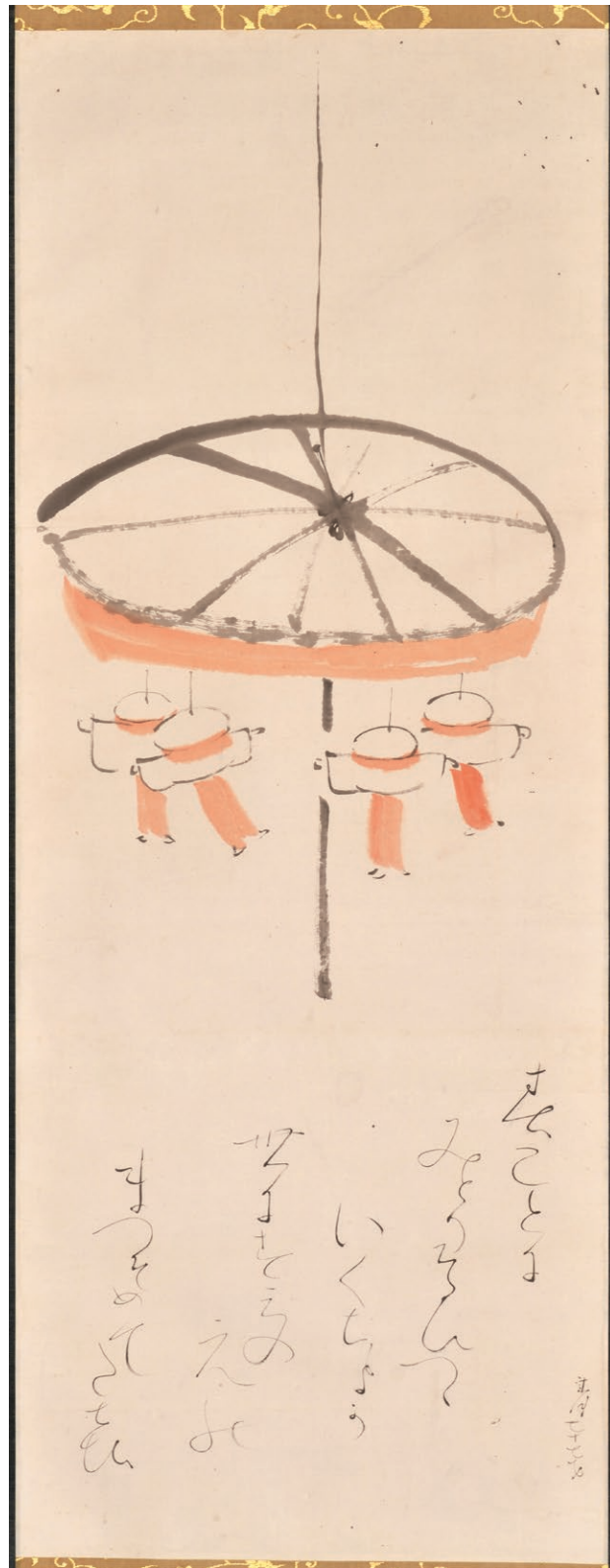


Figure 13. (Right) Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Umbrella with Waka*, 1867. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.



Figure 14. Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Hotei with Waka on Kashi-zara Plate for Sweets*, 1860s. One of a set of twelve. Japanese cedar wood. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.

techniques established by their progenitor in Japan, Baisaō (1675–1763).⁵⁷ The combination of these circumstances seems to have inspired Rengetsu to become an amateur potter despite her lack of a ceramic studio, kiln, and proper training. Within a decade or so, Rengetsu was able to launch a successful career as a potter, concentrating on hand-pinched utensils for *sencha*, sake drinking, and traditional tea culture (*chanoyu*) equipment.

The bulk of Rengetsu's ceramics were made of clay from nearby Kyoto areas, including Kaguragaoka.⁵⁸ These works, either with a translucent glaze or unglazed, were mostly high-fired earthenware that were susceptible to cracking, chipping, and staining during regular use. Rengetsu's extant work is usually damaged, and it is probable that much of her production did not survive years of steady use. For those works that did endure regular handling, the fragility of the surface easily developed a special patina that gives a sense of softness to the touch similar to that found on the soft surfaces of well-used earthenware tea bowls.

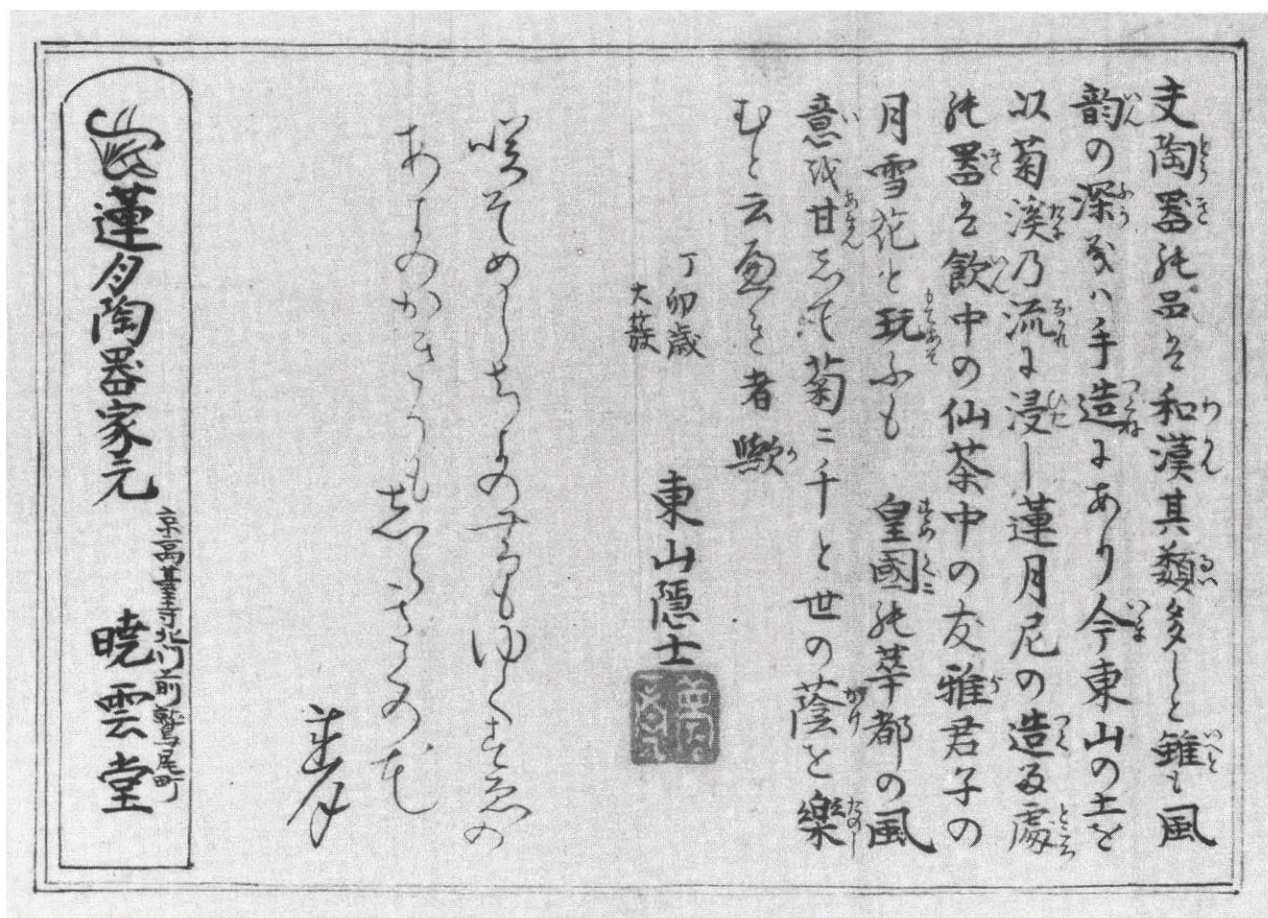
Although Rengetsu had to make do with her limited skills and the materials she had at hand, in some respects her wares were revolutionary. Up to this point *sencha* utensils had largely followed Chinese prototypes known through imported works and designs found in woodblock books of ceramic forms. The ceramics produced by Mokubei and subsequent Kyoto potters focused on very detailed forms that were often molded and then decorated with brightly colored glazes and enamels. The cultural world of *sencha* was highly Sinocentric, and inscriptions on *sencha* utensils were invariably in Chinese—usually quotations of classic Chinese texts or

poems. That Rengetsu was able to popularize irregularly shaped, hand-pinned *sencha* ceramics with little or no color, decorated with her own Japanese *waka* poetry, was unprecedented.

The unexpectedly explosive popularity of Rengetsu's ceramics may have been due to the expanding customer base for *sencha*. Although early *sencha* gatherings were more relaxed and conversational, without the solemnity and rigorous rules found in the various schools of traditional tea practice, appreciation of the complexities of Chinese language and culture had made *sencha* especially popular among the highly educated and comparatively wealthy class. The irregularities and informality of Rengetsu's ceramics and the Japanese verse that was easier to read than classical Chinese would have appealed to a wider public, including women. As a large number of original signed wooden boxes for Rengetsu ceramics survive, it is clear that many of them were sold as items to be treasured and stored in their boxes. The lids of the boxes often have an additional *waka* by Rengetsu in her beautiful calligraphy, enhancing the poetic appeal of the work. It is an interesting feature that the great majority of her boxes were made by gluing together irregular pieces of Paulownia (*kiri*) wood rather than employing complete pieces, as was normally done. This reveals that she was using the cheapest kind of Paulownia available to reduce the cost of her wares. That her works were pleasant to handle, unpretentious, and comparatively inexpensive would have made them attractive to people who rarely bought boxed ceramics.

Although Rengetsu sold some of her works directly from home, the bulk of her production was handled through stores selling tea ceramics. Her attitude toward selling her pottery is evident in a note attached to her name in Yoshida Enzan's (act. 1840s) directory of Kyoto artists, *Record of Painters and Calligraphers from the Old Capital* (*Kōto shoga jinmei roku*, 1847). Among the hundreds of artists listed, Rengetsu was the only one to attach a message: "Calligraphy, painting, *waka*-ceramics, tea utensils, pitchers (*kibisho*) each inscribed with my verse, inexpensive and operated for aficionados" 書画和歌 陶物茶具急火焼毎作彫自詠以安價与好人為業.⁵⁹ This desire to explain and publicize her works is further shown in an 1867 woodblock-printed flyer issued by the shop Gyōundō, which was promoting Rengetsu's ceramics at their business by the north gate of Kōdaiji temple (Figure 15). The flyer described the shop as the "hub" (*iemoto*) for her ceramics, indicating that the reputation of her ceramics was not limited to word of mouth.⁶⁰ While these advertisements may have been generated by the shops selling her work, Rengetsu must have known of them, and they are in line with her desire for all kinds of people to enjoy her unpretentious wares.

Accounts that Rengetsu's works were a popular form of souvenir for distant visitors to Kyoto have been confirmed by archaeological discovery of fragments of her wares elsewhere in Japan.⁶¹ This scale of production gave rise to the term "Rengetsu ware" (*Rengetsu yaki*), which, strictly speaking, refers to her own ceramics, but the broader meaning includes works employing her poetry and reflecting aspects of her style regardless of who created them. Although forgeries began to appear during her lifetime, works in various ceramic types—including blue-and-white porcelain—bearing her poems and signature continued to be made into the postwar world as an homage to Rengetsu without any intent to deceive.



Rengetsu ceramics are commonly described as unskillful due to their irregularities; yet close examination reveals her considerable ability in crafting unusual wares. For instance, her numerous sake flasks (*tokkuri*) usually have extraordinarily thin walls from top to bottom, a form that is difficult to produce without the walls collapsing or distorting during production or firing (Figure 16). Moreover, she often incised her poems into these thin walls when the clay was leather-hard, with the carving almost penetrating to the interior. The incisions are smoothly carved, demonstrating that the clay had yet to fully harden. A cloth bag filled with sand inserted into the interior may have supplied enough support to keep the walls from collapsing.⁶² Although the majority of Rengetsu's works have incised *waka*, she also wrote them with a brush using a thin, iron-rich slip that could be used much like ink and could then be covered by a transparent glaze. In this case, the difficulty was to write the characters as smoothly as if they had been inscribed on flat paper, rather than revealing they were added while rotating an irregular clay surface in the hand.

Rengetsu's sake flasks come in many shapes, from squat shorter forms, sometimes painted with figures, to thin and tall ones. The clay is usually a light cream color that is preserved with a transparent glaze, while the exposed clay bases usually turned a darker brown during the firing process and through later use. The weight of sake in a full flask would much exceed the weight of the thin ceramic walls, making these

Figure 15. Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Hikifuda Flyer for Her Ceramics*, 1867. Woodblock-print on paper. Reproduced from Matsumoto Hideki, *Ōtagaki Rengetsu: Bakumatsu joryū kajin no shoga to tōgei* (Kyoto: Kyōto Furitsu Sōgō Shiryōkan, 1984), ill. 148.



Figure 16. Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Pair of Sake Flasks*, ca. 1860. High-fired earthenware. Box signed by Rengetsu. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2021.2.1.1-4a-e.

high-fired earthenware pieces susceptible to breakage, cracks, and chips. The works often have an indentation that circles around the smooth irregular surface to make them easier to hold.

Her many *sencha* pitchers are much more regular in form than her sake flasks. The need for good-fitting lids, spouts that would pour without dripping, and well-placed interior holes that would strain the leaves while pouring tea all required precise calculations and potting. Her pitchers are glazed, unglazed, or glazed only on the interior. They are also decorated in various ways, especially with lotus leaves and tendrils. Although not taken to the extremes of her flasks, the pitchers also tend to be thin walled and lightweight. The clays are often the same types used for her *sake* flasks, but there is a greater variety, including some clays that turned a darker brown in firing (Figures 17–19). Additionally, she sometimes used clay from Shigaraki.⁶³ The larger stones typical of Shigaraki clay were removed, although the relative roughness of the surface and the brownish-orange color remain distinctive. With the Shigaraki clay, higher kiln temperatures were used to fully mature it into well-fused stoneware. These works are considerably heavier and more durable, without the cracks and chips found in her earthenware pots. As the burnt-orangish color becomes the decorative element, the exterior is often unglazed, although spots and areas of naturally occurring ash glaze do occur.



Figure 17. (Above) Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Inscribed Sencha Pitcher (kyusu) in the Shape of a Lotus Pod with Frog*, ca. 1860s. Box signed by Rengetsu. Unglazed earthenware. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.



Figure 18. (Left) Detail of frog on lid of Sencha Pitcher in Figure 17.

Figure 19. (Below) Detail of base of Sencha Pitcher in Figure 17.





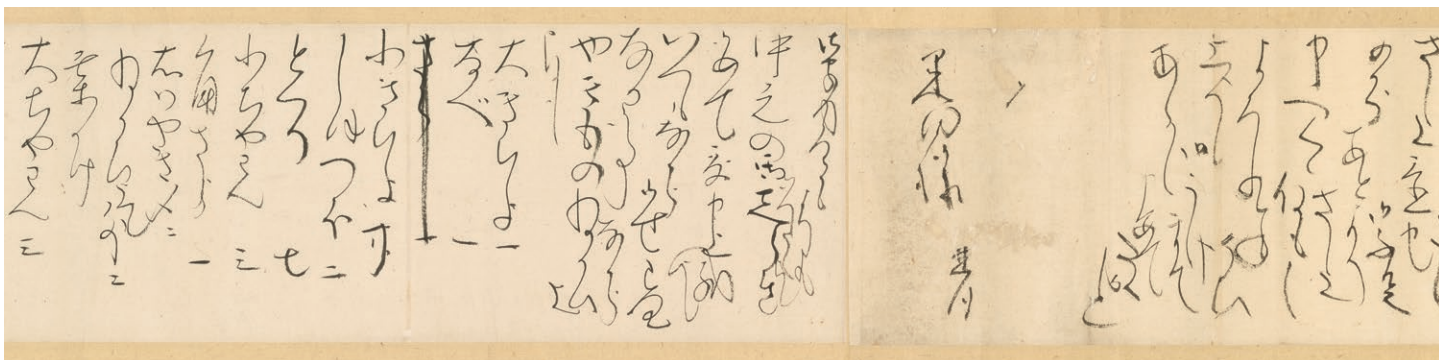
Figure 20. (Above) Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Ten Sencha Cups*, ca. 1863. High-fired earthenware. Box signed by Tomioka Tessai. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.



Figure 21. (Left) Detail of Figure 20, view of grooves on base of a cup.

Rengetsu's most numerous products were cups for drinking sake and *sencha*. In special cases they were made as single items with their own small boxes, but more commonly such drinking cups were produced in sets of five or ten to accompany her flasks and pitchers (Figures 20 and 21). Although both types are diminutive, the *sake* cups are usually shorter and broader with everted lips, while the *sencha* cups have steeper sides with the undersides often molded into lotus motifs.⁶⁴

In addition, Rengetsu created an array of ceramic utensils for *sencha* and traditional tea practice, including incense containers (*kōgō*), tea bowls, freshwater containers (*mizusashi*), and wastewater containers (*kensui*). The items she frequently made tended to have set methods of construction, while those she made infrequently were sometimes finished more roughly. Undoubtedly, forms and techniques changed over time, although most works are undated until her late sixties, when Rengetsu started adding her age by the signature, as in her paintings and calligraphy. Boxes for ceramics made earlier in her career are often signed "Rengetsu East of the Capital" (Rakutō Rengetsu 洛東蓮月), indicating they were created while she was living in Okazaki or Shōgoin village, east of the Kamo River.



To create what eventually became mass quantities of ceramics, Rengetsu relied on assistants. The most noted of them was the potter Kuroda Kōryō. Although his early career remains unknown, it is clear he was a professionally trained potter with a range of technical skills that Rengetsu never acquired. From 1858 he had lived near her residence, and Rengetsu enlisted his help in keeping up with the steadily growing demand for her works. In various letters addressed to him, Rengetsu continually requested a great many ceramics of various types (Figure 22). He was likely helping with the transport of the ceramics from her residence to the kilns and may also have been applying glazes. Their relationship was complex and changed as Kōryō gradually increased his involvement.

A great many of the *sencha* cups and various other works were made by pushing clay into one-sided, open-faced molds to form the complex patterns that included lotus leaves, stems, and seed pods. The interiors were smoothed by hand before the finished form was inscribed by Rengetsu. Using these molds made by Kōryō greatly increased output and allowed for the creation of more complex designs. The aging Rengetsu was freed from the strain of preparing and manipulating the clay and could focus on swiftly inscribing her *waka* into the leather-hard clay surfaces. Kōryō also used stamps to decorate the surface of the ceramics, especially geometric fret patterns and overall pebbled patterns to the outsides of objects. At some point, Kōryō started impressing his own seal into the works, most commonly reading “Kōryōzan” 光良山 or, somewhat later in time, “Dai-Nihon Kōryōzan” 大日本光良山.⁶⁵ Kōryō continued his production of Rengetsu ware after her death, and it is difficult to determine which of the extant ceramics were joint productions and which were completely his work. Presumably, the examples that remain in their original boxes with Rengetsu’s signature and poetry were at least inscribed by her. Compared to the sensitivity seen in Rengetsu’s calligraphy on paper and wooden boxes, the calligraphy that is incised or painted with slip on ceramics is more difficult to assess.

Aside from Kōryō, there were many people who assisted Rengetsu in producing ceramics. One of the earliest is thought to have been the wife of a farmer in the Shōe goin area named Otokome (dates unknown). Another woman, Yoshida Yasu (dates unknown), not only assisted but actually crafted vessels similar to Rengetsu’s, signing them “Yasu” 安.⁶⁶ Yasu is believed to have accompanied Rengetsu when she moved west of the Kamo River before entering Jinkōin.

Figure 22. Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Letter to Kuroda Kōryō*, detail of one section, late 1860s. Ink on paper. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.

Rengetsu's student Sakuragi was so successful in making Rengetsu-inspired ceramics that she was one of the few potters mentioned in *Who's Who in Old Kyoto*. This entry lists her as a potter with the studio name of Tōkōzan and as selling her work in the Kiyomizu ceramic district of Gojōsaka at a shop called Asahitei.⁶⁷ An extant sake flask by Sakuragi closely resembles Rengetsu's work.⁶⁸

Although often overlooked, Raiha (1810–1902), a daughter of the famous *sencha* potter Aoki Mokubei, also studied ceramics with Rengetsu.⁶⁹ Raiha became a professional singer (*kagi*) in Gion, later married, and after the death of her husband became a nun called Teishin. Tessai's most detailed map of the Shōgoin village reveals that Teishin was living just east of Rengetsu in the early 1860s.⁷⁰ She studied poetry with Kagawa Kageki and became so proficient with ceramics that she, too, was listed as a potter in *Who's Who in Old Kyoto* under the name Miwa Teishin with her residence recorded as Shōgoin village.⁷¹ Late in life Teishin joined Ueda Chikako to tutor the young Isoda Taka (1879–1945) in poetry. Taka would later run a kind of literati salon at the teahouse Daitomo along the Shirakawa River in Gion, about a hundred meters east of where Teishin's father had operated his ceramic studio. Daitomo became one of the famous places in Gion patronized by modern writers such as Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916) and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886–1965) and by painters ranging from Asai Chū (1856–1907) to Fujita Tsuguharu (1886–1968).⁷²

Another early assistant in Rengetsu's ceramic production was Renna (1797–1870), a Jōdo Shinshū monk from Akita in northern Japan.⁷³ Renna studied *waka* and pottery with Rengetsu and is said to have produced many ceramics. *Tanzaku* with Renna's *waka* are still numerous in the Akita area. After several decades in Kyoto, he returned to head the Saizenji temple in today's Akita City. Renna's work with Rengetsu was another way that appreciation for her art spread to distant areas of Japan.

As mentioned earlier, forgeries have been an ongoing problem in evaluating Rengetsu's work. The participation of a diverse range of assistants complicates assessment of her involvement with specific examples. Works with her original signed boxes help to establish a basis for connoisseurship, but most authentic works lost their first boxes long ago. The authenticators centered around Jinkōin made huge numbers of box inscriptions, yet it is clear that these are not uniformly reliable. The number of forged tea bowls for *chanoyu* is especially large. Although Rengetsu did make *chanoyu* utensils, they form a smaller portion of her output. As *chanoyu* gatherings became more and more popular with the growth of the main tea schools, demand for her tea bowls was met with an outpouring of imitations that can be identified by their problematic construction techniques.⁷⁴

Recent excavations uncovered the area around Rengetsu's house when she was living near the Tomioka family in Shōgoin village. Hundreds of fragmentary Rengetsu works that had been discarded as damaged or misfired were excavated behind where her house stood.⁷⁵ Several dozen meters distant, a well shaft was found to have been filled with a different mix of Rengetsu-related ceramics of interest. A series of archaeological reports have helped to sort out some of the technical aspects of the many works attributed to Rengetsu. Among them is the discovery of several potters who lived close to Rengetsu: the female potter Tarumi Ayako (nineteenth century) and the doctor Tamaki Ryōsai (d. 1856).⁷⁶ Although their works were closely modeled

after Rengetsu's, they signed their own names and often inscribed their own *waka* on the surface. Rather than forgers, they were emulators who may have been able to market their work due to the demand for Rengetsu ware. As their techniques closely resemble those used by Rengetsu, they may have been her assistants at some point.

Rengetsu occasionally inscribed her *waka* on sophisticated pots made on special commission by professional potters from Kiyomizu and other areas. In one account she mentions the seventh and eighth generations of Awata ware potters, Taizan Yohei (7th gen., d. 1861); and Taizan Yohei (8th gen., d. 1878) as well as Kiyomizu Rokubei (1822–1883) and Kinkōzan Sōbei (1823–1884).⁷⁷ It is remarkable that Rengetsu, an untrained potter using the simplest of techniques, could produce wares of such appeal that imitators and forgers continued production for decades after her death. It raises questions about the larger implications of her work.

The Significance of Rengetsu's Career

Today Rengetsu is often seen as an idiosyncratic nun who created simple but pleasing poetry and ceramics that were prized for their humanity, not their sophistication. In the heated political atmosphere of prewar Japan, however, she was perceived as the model hardworking wife who persevered through the loss of her children to become an unshakable devotee of the restoration of imperial power. Many articles and some books were published extolling her patriotism. In 1936 Ono Harumichi's (act. 1924–57) play *The Nun Rengetsu* (*Rengetsu-ni*) was performed at the Hibiya Takarakuza Theater with a plot about the attempted assassination of Rengetsu for her loyalty to the imperial cause.⁷⁸ Similar adulation reached its peak with a plan for the noted director Mizoguchi Kenji (1898–1956) to make a film of Rengetsu's life based on a script by the popular poet Yoshii Isamu (1886–1960). Eventually the script was published as a book after the film was abandoned due to the excessive length of the text. Nonetheless, an abbreviated reworking of the script was performed on stage at the Imperial Theatre (Teikoku gekijō) in Tokyo.⁷⁹

Stepping back from the historical vicissitudes that polarized her reputation, it is possible to see Rengetsu's career in a larger context. The complex circumstances of her birth and her adoption by the Ōtagaki family directed the course of her childhood training at Kameyama Castle, preparing her for two marriages that were aimed at producing heirs for the Ōtagaki family line in the hope of reclaiming a measure of their ancient social standing. The deaths of her children and husbands led her at the age of thirty-two to become a Jōdo nun in 1823. The death of her adoptive father in 1832 left her with a pressing need to reevaluate the course of her life and find a means for subsistence. She made the improbable decision to become an artist in her early forties, working in multiple medias. Even at this stage, she had a range of friendships with many kinds of people and possessed a drive to incessantly produce artwork that continued, despite occasional health issues, for the rest of her life. The great majority of painters, calligraphers, poets, and potters achieved success after decades of training with the support of their teachers and the client base of the studio. Rengetsu took a different path to artistic acclaim and along the way challenged the aesthetic status quo, especially in calligraphy and ceramics. Her calligraphy revived some aspects

of late Heian period—court calligraphy, a level not achieved by her contemporaries despite their veneration of those ancient styles. Rengetsu's ceramics were revolutionary in several respects. *Sencha* ceramics emphasized high technical skills and elaborate decoration in blue-and-white porcelain or colorfully glazed and enameled utensils. Her untutored production of irregularly shaped works in earthen tones was the antithesis of this standard, yet her works appealed to a broader public through their unpretentious warmth and low cost. Additionally, the mainstream *sencha* culture focused on the appreciation of Chinese language and cultural referents. Rengetsu adopted the general Chinese categories of utensils for *sencha* but took the unprecedented step of inscribing her own *waka* on them instead of the usual quotation of famous texts in Chinese.

Female labor has often been the unspoken underside of ceramic production, with much of the arduous preparation of clays, glazes, and other work being done by the women in potter communities.⁸⁰ Rengetsu encouraged the women who studied with her to make works under their own names, with Sakuragi and Teishin becoming so successful they were listed as potters in the *Who's Who in Old Kyoto*. The number of Rengetsu's female friends and students was large enough to form a kind of salon as they met to discuss their ideas and insights about poetry and art.⁸¹ It is striking that so many of the women she knew eventually became nuns living alone. Although their Buddhist beliefs seem genuine, it is plausible that they wanted to live as nuns to have a respectable social position free from family and male supervision. Although there were nuns living in Buddhist nunneries, Rengetsu and her friends chose the acceptable option of ordaining as a nun with a spiritual adviser yet living alone in a "hermitage" that could, in reality, be a house in the city.

Rengetsu's role in fostering the young Tessai's connection with artists, scholars, and priests helped form the basis of his later syncretic orientation to art. Tessai would come to eclectically embrace aspects of Chinese and Japanese history and traditions and to study Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shinto in depth, even developing a love for the Ainu culture of Hokkaidō. That Rengetsu achieved such success in art, despite such a late and inauspicious beginning, gave Tessai a model for his own belated development of calligraphy and painting that eventually made him one of the most acclaimed artists of his time.

RENGETSU'S SUCCESS in her manifold artworks and her ability to overcome daunting obstacles through the force of her determination to live as she would made her an exceptional figure whose accomplishments were recognized by many levels of society in Kyoto and elsewhere. A separate study of the multiple forms of her posthumous popular image would also reveal how social forces in the Meiji era and later attempted to turn her remarkable life into a model for conventional female roles. Rengetsu research, rather than nearing completion, is instead approaching the possibility of a new beginning, as further study of her artworks and letters and of archaeological discoveries stand to continually deepen the understanding of her work and that of her female associates. Placing these further investigations in the context of the philosophies and social movements of their day will help lead to a fuller understanding of the achievements and importance of female artists that even today remain neglected.

Notes

1. For an introduction to *sencha* history and practice, see Patricia J. Graham, *Tea of the Sages: The Art of Sencha* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999).
2. It is not certain whether her mother was employed as a courtesan (*yūjo*) attached to an establishment or was employed as an entertainer (*geisha*).
3. His name is sometimes given as Kinshichirō, although one of its earliest proponents, Murakami Sodō, admitted that his name could also have been Shinshichirō. See Murakami Sodō, ed., *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*, vol. 3 (Kyoto: Rengetsu-ni Zenshū Hanpukai, 1927), 18. Shinshichirō was the hereditary name for all the Tōdō lords of the Iga-Ueno Castle.
4. Although born as the son of Ōtagaki Yukieru, he was adopted into the Yamane family in his teens and subsequently into the Yamazaki family. In 1798 Rengetsu's adoptive father finally reverted to his original Ōtagaki family name as Ōtagaki Banzaemon Teruhisa.
5. Accounts are given in various sources, including Sugimoto Hidetarō, *Ōtagaki Rengetsu* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1975), 30–37; and Murakami, *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*, 3:20–23.
6. Kameyama castle and the surrounding area is now known as Kameoka.
7. These anecdotes are discussed at length in Murakami, *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*, 3:24–29. The *naginata* pike is one of the key weapons traditionally used by women of the palace. Based on comments in her letters, it is clear that Rengetsu saw the value of military training, but it is also possible that her military skills were exaggerated in the posthumous push to promote her as a defender of the imperial cause.
8. This letter is quoted in Murakami, *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*, 3:34.
9. There are conflicting accounts of the number of Rengetsu's children, ranging from four to six children over the course of her two marriages. Ōtagaki Yoshio, *Rengetsu-ni no shōgai hyakkaiki ni atarite* (Kyoto: Privately printed, 1978), 10–11; and Murakami, *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*, 3:37–41.
10. There is no sign in any of the correspondence that the Tayuinoshō family resented Rengetsu's divorce. Tenmin's oldest son had already died by this time. Satō is among those scholars who support the possibility that Senri may have been Rengetsu's child. See Satō Setsuo, "Rengetsu to Senri," *Tōsetsu*, no. 702 (September 2011): 37. Relying on a group of newly discovered Rengetsu letters to Tenmin, Maeda Toshiko strongly asserts this case in her *Rengetsu* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1979), beginning at page 60. Sugimoto also supports this possibility in his *Ōtagaki Rengetsu*, 233–237. Senri's complex career as an artist, his relations with Tessai, and his military expertise are covered in greater detail in Tenbō Yukihiro, "Tayuinoshō Senri-ō den," *Historia*, no. 14 (March 1956): 60–86.
11. How the Ōtagaki family became acquainted with the Ishikawa family is unknown, but the Hikone domain maintained a large residence in the village of Okazaki on the east side of Kumano Shrine, and this proximity may have facilitated their connection.
12. For a brief chronology of these events, see Sugimoto, *Ōtagaki Rengetsu*, 243.
13. See the discussion in Fujise Reiko, *Rengetsu* (Tokyo: Meitoku Shūppansha, 2013), 53–58. Fujise suggests there were some possible models for the structure in the ancient anthology of poetry, *Man'yōshū*.
14. See the discussion of Tachibana's long poem of praise in Suzuki Eiichi, *Tachibana Moribe* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1972), 173–176.
15. In the layered administration of Edo-period judicial and police administration, there were up to thirty *yoriki* serving under the Osaka Higashimachi Bugyō. Possessing a high social status that entailed a large residence and substantial annual salary, each *yoriki* supervised a small group of investigators called *dōshin*. See the discussion in Miyazaki Fumiko, *Christian Sorcerers on Trial: Records of the 1827 Osaka Incident* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), xxviii–xxxii.

16. A list of the Osaka temples is found in Kōda Shigetomo, *Ōshio Heihachirō* (Tokyo: Chūkō Bunko, 1977), 28–30.
17. See Harada Tomohiko, “Sessō no meian,” in *Kyōto-shi no rekishi*, vol. 6, ed. Kyōto-shi (Tokyo: Gakugei Shorin, 1973), 466. Harada uses the voluminous chronology of events by an Osaka doctor of that time, *State of the Floating World* (*Ukiyo no arisama*), as a key source. Find the complete text of this unique document in Harada Tomohiko and Asakura Haruhiko, eds., *Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei*, vol. 11, *Sesō 1 Ukiyo no arisama* (Tokyo: San’ichi Shobō, 1970).
18. Ōshio commissioned Chikuden to create a portrait of Wang Yangming (now lost), and one of Chikuden’s finest blue-and-green landscape paintings with a poem by Wang Yangming is dedicated to Ōshio: “Spring Embankment, Evening Moon” (*Shuntei yagetsu zu*, ca. 1834, Idemitsu Bijutsukan).
19. Saiji is listed as one of Ōshio’s thirteen most important disciples in Ishizaki Tōkoku, *Chūsai Ōshio sensei nenpu* (Tokyo: Daitōkaku, 1920), 202.
20. See Whi-chil Song, “‘Yomeigaku’ as a Philosophy of Action in Tokugawa Japan: Ōshio Heihachiro (1793–1837) and His Rebellion in 1837” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1982), 147–148, for details of punishment and numbers of people arrested. Saiji almost died of illness during his imprisonment, but he also felt he had achieved a kind of enlightenment. He was released in the twelfth month of 1837. He continued to espouse Ōshio’s thought throughout his life. Tenbō, “Tayuinoshō Senri-ō den,” 75.
21. See the extended discussion of Roan’s ideas about *waka* in Kuroiwa Ichirō, *Kagarwa Kageki no kenkyū* (Kobe: Bunkyo Shoin, 1957), 347–365. See also Roger K. Thomas, *The Way of Shikishima: Waka Theory and Practice in Early Modern Japan* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2008). Thanks to Melissa McCormick for this reference; see her essay in this volume.
22. Tamemura had a great many students, including the literati painters Yanagisawa Kien (1703–1758), Ike Taiga (1723–1776), and Tokuyama Gyokuran (1727–1784).
23. See this quotation from Roan’s *Chirihiji* in Kuroiwa, *Kagarwa Kageki no kenkyū*, 350.
24. The poems are given in Kuroiwa, *Kagarwa Kageki no kenkyū*, 591. More information on this collection, published in the second month of 1840, is given in the same volume on page 197. See Kuroiwa Ichirō, “Roan o meguru Kageki to Rengetsu,” *Kokugo to kokubungaku*, no. 401 (September 1957): 59; and Sugimoto, *Ōtagaki Rengetsu*, 123–128, for more discussion on the eleven verses by Rengetsu in Kageki’s volume.
25. Tomita hailed from the same Hikone domain as her late husband. Kuroiwa speculates that Tomita may have been the one who introduced Rengetsu to Kageki. See the discussion in Kuroiwa, *Kagarwa Kageki no kenkyū*, 590–591. Rengetsu was likely residing at Tomita’s house, as noted in the 1838 *Who’s Who in Old Kyoto* (*Heian jinbutsu shi*), 54. Sugimoto also supports the importance of Tomita’s role in introducing Rengetsu to Kageki in his *Ōtagaki Rengetsu*, 121–123.
26. On page 54 of the 1838 edition of *Who’s Who in Old Kyoto*, Rengetsu is listed among the sixteen entries in the *joryū*, or “women’s division.” Most of these women were noted for *waka*, but other skills included calligraphy, medicine, haiku, and elegant writing (*bunga*).
27. Tokuda Kōen, *Rengetsu-ni no shin kenkyū* (Kyoto: Sanmitsudō Shoten, 1958), 115–116; and Yumoto Kisaku, *Ōtagaki Rengetsu-ni kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1965), 170–173. Twelve letters by Rengetsu to Yoshika, eleven of which were preserved in the Mutobe family, are found in Murakami Sodō, ed., *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*, vol. 2 (Kyoto: Rengetsu-ni Zenshū Hanpukai, 1927), 62–70.
28. His thought is analyzed in H. D. Harootunian, *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 235–243.
29. Sugimoto, *Ōtagaki Rengetsu*, 115–116.
30. Some hundreds of Rengetsu’s letters have been published in the second volume of

Murakami, *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*; and in Tokuda, *Rengetsu-ni no shin kenkyū*, as well as in other places. Well into the postwar world, many of her letters were still preserved by the descendants of those who had received them. A great many unpublished letters, mounted as hanging scrolls or handscrolls, are in miscellaneous private collections where they are prized for Rengetsu's distinctive calligraphy as well as for their contents. It is plausible that thousands of her letters, which are often long and detailed, are still extant.

31. Most works on Rengetsu mention her connection with Akemi. Especially informative are the exhibition catalog *Akemi to Rengetsu*, ed. Fukui-shi Tachibana Akemi Kinen Bungakukan (Fukui: Fukui-shi Tachibana Akemi Kinen Bungakukan, 2003); and Satō Set-suo, "Rengetsu to Akemi," *Tōsetsu* 683 (February 2010): 41–44.

32. This prosopographical approach to understanding artists through their associations is exemplified by Anna Beerens, *Friends, Acquaintances, Pupils and Patrons: Japanese Intellectual Life in the Late Eighteenth Century: A Prosopographical Approach* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2006).

33. All but a few of the participants have been identified. Two of the works are dated 1842, but the others are not dated. However, all are written on the same paper of an accordion-format album and appear to be from the same period. I am much indebted to Scott Johnson for calling my attention to this album.

34. Recent studies on the political activities of the *kuge* in the late Edo period include Kobayashi Takehiro, *Meiji ishin to Kyōto: kuge shakai no kaitai* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1998); and Osakabe Yoshinori, *Kugetachi no bakumatsu ishin* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2018). The first preface to these scrolls by the Confucian scholar Asaka Gonsai (1791–1861) describes the participants as "all the famous talents within the country who sing praise for beauty created these scrolls" 海内諸名流詠之裒然成卷.

35. The circumstances of the formation of the pair of scrolls and the selection of the participants are described in a lengthy preface and several postscripts. The scrolls are in a private collection in Kyoto.

36. The other *waka* signed Umeko is by an unidentified woman. It appears as the final poem in the *waka* scroll. A twentieth-century note in the box suggests that she may have been a daughter of the Osaka poet Shinozaki Shōchiku (1781–1851).

37. An 1848 painting by Matsumoto Kōzan (1784–1866) with a *waka* by Rengetsu is even earlier evidence of her popularity in the city of Edo.

38. Tokuda compares some of these early accounts of this time in his *Rengetsu-ni no shin kenkyū*, 77–82.

39. Sugimoto describes this situation in his *Ōtagaki Rengetsu*, 194 and 198, as part of a larger discussion of Rengetsu and Tessai.

40. The spouse of Seigan, Chō Kōran, an accomplished poet and painter, was to remain a close friend of Tessai, often creating joint works and participating in gatherings of literati. Nakajima Kayō was a Shijō school painter who had studied with Yokoyama Kazan (1781–1837). Tessai married Kayō's eighteen-year-old daughter, Tatsu (1849–1869) in 1867.

41. The precise locations of these residences are known due to the two maps Tessai made of the Shōgoin village. These maps are largely identical, but one of them marks the location of the Tomioka residence. See a reproduction among the unnumbered frontispieces of Kyōto-shi, ed., *Shiryō Kyōto no rekishi 8 Sakyō-ku* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1985). The more frequently reproduced map that does not mark the Tomioka house is in Maeda, *Rengetsu*, 67; and Tokuda Kōen, "Tokushu: Rengetsu-ni," *Bokubi*, no. 103 (January 1961): 9; a redrawn version of this map with easy-to-read printed characters is found in Koresawa Kyōzō et al., *Rengetsu* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1971), 164.

42. There were a few important exceptions to this pattern, including the professional painter Shen Nanpin (1682–1760), Zhang Qiugu (act. 1780–1790s), Jiang Jiapu (act. early nineteenth century), and others. More extensive discussions of the relation between Chinese

and Japanese literati painting can be found in my essays, Paul Berry, “The Relation of Japanese Literati Painting to Nihonga,” in *Modern Masters of Kyoto: The Transformation of Japanese Painting Traditions*, eds. Michiyo Morioka and Paul Berry (Seattle: SAM/University of Washington Press, 1999), 32–39; and Paul Berry, “Japanese Literati Painting and Its Relationship to Chinese Culture,” in *Poetic Imagination in Japanese Art: Selections from the Collection of Mary and Cheney Cowles*, ed. Maribeth Graybill (Portland, Ore.: Portland Art Museum, 2020), 149–153.

43. Tanzan studied Zen under the monk-artist Fūgai Honkō (1779–1847) and later in life became a lecturer on Indian philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University.

44. Shikibu appeared more times and in more categories than any other woman listed in the editions of *Who's Who in Old Kyoto*. She is one of the least studied among the important women of the time. Anne Walthall has an informative account of Shikibu's politics and personal grooming in Anne Walthall, *The Weak Body of a Useless Woman: Matsuo Taseko and the Meiji Restoration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 177–80.

45. See the discussion in Suga Shūji, “Miyako genzon waka sha ryū Umesakura san-jūrokkasen,” *Bungaku kenkyū*, no. 63 (June 1986): 45–51.

46. Multiple sources indicate that the highest courtesan rank Sakuragi achieved in Shimabara was *tenshin*, the level just below *tayū*. There are other accounts, however, that mention a *tayū* Sakuragi. It seems plausible that other courtesans at the Wachigaya establishment assumed the Sakuragi name after she had retired. The name has continued to this day, as shown in the *Kyōto Shinbun*, April 4, 2015, which has a photo of a teenaged woman on parade at Jōshōji who has just been named Sakuragi *tayū*. That Rengetsu's disciple became a Buddhist nun is confirmed by various poems on *tanzaku* that she signed Sakuragi-ni 桜木尼 (Sakuragi, the nun) and a letter she wrote with the same signature. The most deeply researched essay on her life is Yashima Miyako, “Shimabara ‘Wachigaya’ no yūjo Sakuragi ni tsuite,” *Edo ki onna kō*, no. 3 (September 1992): 44–65.

47. An annotated version of the text is found in Seno'o Yoshinobu, trans., *Ama no karumo, Chūsei ōcho monogatari zenshū*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 1995).

48. More extensive considerations can be found in the following sources: Seno'o Yoshinobu, *Ama no karumo*, 226–27; Seno'o Yoshinobu, “‘Ama no karumo’ shiken,” *Kokubungaku kō*, no. 126 (June 1990): 21–34; and Motohashi Hiromi, “‘Ama no karumo’ ni okeru shimai no ronri to kōjotachi,” *Gakugei koten bungaku*, no. 5 (March 2012): 161–169.

49. The idea of bugs living in seaweed is a trope found in classical literature, not a reference to actual bugs.

50. Although it is often thought that Rengetsu did not use seals, there are seals on the backs of some of her earliest *tanzaku* and on an occasional later painting. The seals all read “Rengetsu” and have related designs, but there are a number of versions. Given the high quality of the works on which they appear, she may have briefly used several similar seals. Photos of three different seals reading “Rengetsu,” including ones found on the backs of early *tanzaku*, are found in Koresawa, *Rengetsu*, 218–219.

51. Tokuda Kōen presents a two-page chronological chart of the changes in her signature in his *Ōtagaki Rengetsu* (Kyoto: Kyōto Shoen, n.d.), 237–238. He includes a photo of one of her seals. The same signature photos are used in a chart that was published in Tokuda Kōen, “Rengetsu-ryū no shotai kansei e no ayumi” *Sumi*, no. 44 (September 1983): 64. There is a different selection of signatures found in the chart in Koresawa, *Rengetsu*, 218–219.

52. Tokuda Kōen presents ten *tanzaku* from Rengetsu's forties with their distinctive early signatures on the backs in “Rengetsu-ni ni tsuite ni,” *Bokubi* no. 109 (July 1961): 3–4.

53. Tokuda dismisses the Koōgimi possibility alongside other Heian calligraphy fragments, arguing that someone of Rengetsu's social class would not have had access to such precious works. Tokuda, “Rengetsu-ryū no shotai kansei e no ayumi,” 42. However, there is evidence of Rengetsu's relations with *kuge* families and priests who would likely have had

examples. There were also numbers of high-quality copies of Heian *kobitsu* in circulation that would have been more easily accessible.

54. Fujise presents interesting speculation on the type of brush Rengetsu may have employed for her calligraphy. See Fujise, *Rengetsu*, 134–136. This manuscript was once attributed to Fujiwara Yukinari (972–1027), but that has been thoroughly disproven. It is a high-quality anonymous work of the period, now stored at the Kyoto National Museum. See *Manshuin bon Kokinshu [den Fujiwara yukinari]*, *Nihon meihitsu sen*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Nigensha, 1993).

55. The idea of a calligraphic line appearing to be of such high tensile strength that it could have been made of iron was a conceit used in Chinese calligraphy discussions.

56. Komatsu Shigemi, *Nihon no sho*, vol. 11 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1982). Although Komatsu does not introduce Rengetsu in this text, her work well exemplifies the Edo-period trend toward revivifying ancient *wayō* styles.

57. For a study of Baisaō's career and the early state of *sencha* practice, see Baisaō, *The Old Tea Seller: Life and Zen Poetry in 18th Century Kyoto*, trans. Norman Waddell (Berkeley, Calif.: Counterpoint, 2008).

58. Rengetsu mentions using these clays in her two major statements about her ceramics. The first of these was requested of Rengetsu in 1874 by Tessai, and the original manuscript still survives. The second text is described as being dictated to Kuroda Kōryō, yet the complete text may still be unpublished. Murakami mentions portions of it in *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*, 3:61–62. Later writers have repeatedly quoted from it without referencing the whole text. As this Kōryō version is more detailed regarding her ceramics, it may provide additional significant information if the complete text were published.

59. Rengetsu's entry can be found in Yoshida Enzan, ed., *Kōto shōga jinmeiroku* (Kyoto: Junshōdō, 1847), 89. The other artists' specializations are merely identified by a single character for calligraphy, painting, and so on.

60. Maeda illustrates the flyer and reproduces the text in standard script along with a discussion of the Ōmori family that ran the shop in her *Rengetsu*, 96. The flyer appears in Matsumoto Hideki, *Ōtagaki Rengetsu: Bakumatsu joryū kajin no shōga to tōgei* (Kyoto: Kyōto Furitsu Sōgō Shiryōkan, 1984), plate 148.

61. Chiba Yutaka, in his report on the excavations of Rengetsu materials in the Shōgoin area, notes the excavation of Rengetsu shards in Tokyo and his expectations that other discoveries will be made around Japan. Chiba Yutaka, “Kōko shiryō toshite Rengetsu yaki,” *Kurenai: Kyōto Daigaku Kōnai iseki chōsa kenkyū nenpō* (2006/2007): 322.

62. The only sake flask not by Rengetsu that managed this degree of thinness is the one made by her student Sakuragi, illustrated in Yashima, “Shimabara ‘Wachigaya’ no yūjo Sakuragi ni tsuite,” 44–65. Sakuragi became well known for her ceramics, although remaining examples are few. Thanks to Patricia Fister for additional photos of this flask.

63. See Louise Allison Cort, *Shigaraki: Potters' Valley* (New York: Kodansha, 1980), 244–245, for mention of Tanii Rijūrō (1806–1891), a potter from Shigaraki who was inspired by Rengetsu. Aside from Ninsei's (act. 1640s to 1690s) prominent use of Shigaraki clay, Kyoto potters had long used that clay after further refining it. I am grateful to Louise Cort for this information.

64. The cups with molding of lotus motifs were at least partly made by Kōryō or another professional potter, while those with hand-potted bases are more likely to be fully the work of Rengetsu. These hand-formed bases can have applied foot rings or can sometimes show several long finger indentations similar to those found on the bases of her turtle-shaped incense holders.

65. A photo of the rarer “Dainihon Kōryōzan” seal is provided in Maeda, *Rengetsu*, 98.

66. See the vase (*dobin*) in Rengetsu's style with the signature “Yasu zō” (made by Yasu) placed next to a copy of Rengetsu's *waka* in Koresawa, *Rengetsu*, plate 72.

67. There is an early nineteenth-century account of a shop specializing in *sencha* wares called Asahitei. Today there is a ceramic shop of that name on Gojō Street that was founded in the Edo period and may be descended from that shop. There has also been an excavation of a kiln associated with Asahitei in this area.

68. Sakuragi's correspondence with a patron from the Nagoya area, Murakami Tadamasa (1812–1884), still survives in the house of his descendants along with a hand-pinched sake flask in the style of Rengetsu with a poem written in slip on its side and signed "Sakuragi." A photograph of this correspondence appears in Yashima, "Shimabara 'Wachigaya' no yūjo Sakuragi ni tsuite," 44–65.

69. Sugita notes Raiha's birth under the name Rai in his chronology, listed under 1810 in the unpaginated appendix and stating she was entrusted to the keeping of Oshima Raikin (dates unknown), a painter who had been married to Kō Fuyō (1722–1784). See Sugita Hiroaki, *Kyōyaki no meikō, Aoki Mokubei no shōgai* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2001).

70. Hamazaki Kazushi and Miyamoto Kazuo, "Daisanshō Kyōto Daigaku Byōin kōnai AF19 ku no hakkutsu chōsa," *Kurenai: Kyōto Daigaku kōnai iseki chōsa kenkyū nenpō* (1987/1984): 54.

71. Teishin's *waka* poetry was published as a two-volume woodblock-printed book. Miwa Teishin, *Yomogi ka tsuyu* (Kyoto: Hōseien, 1893).

72. Tanizaki recounts his memories of Isoda Takajo and her career in Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *Isoda Takajo no koto* (Kyoto: Zenkoku Shobō, 1947). Sugita discusses at length Chikajo's relationship with Isoda Takajo and emphasizes the endurance of the Rengetsu tradition in Sugita Hiroaki, *Gion no onna: Bungei geigi Isoda Taka* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2001), 67–71.

73. Information on Renna is found in various publications, including the *Akita jinmei daijiten* (Akita-shi: Akita Sakigake Shinbunsha, 2000). Thanks to Yamazoe Taku for bringing Renna's career to my attention.

74. Even a potter working in the area around Kiyomizu temple in the 1960s and 1970s who signed his pots "Heian Issō" 平安一宋 has been mistaken for a contemporary collaborator of Rengetsu. Issō was such a great fan of Rengetsu that he inscribed her poems and signature on his works, even roughly mimicking her calligraphed poems on his boxes. He was usually not trying to forge her work, instead creating bowls that were more of an homage. His tea bowls are easily distinguished from Rengetsu's due to his distinctively crude way of making the foot with dramatic tool markings, the base made as a flat surface with a fabric pattern, and an applied foot ring whose ends overlap rather than complete a circle. He even put imitations of Rengetsu's calligraphy and signature on the boxes of his modern ceramic designs unrelated to her style. A photo of his seal is found in Melanie Eastburn, Lucie Folan, and Robyn Maxwell, *Black Robe, White Mist: Art of the Japanese Buddhist Nun Rengetsu* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2008), 124.

75. Discarding broken ceramics near the potter's house may sound eccentric, but even today potters working in rural areas usually discard broken wares near the house or kiln. Historical kilns had nearby mounds of ceramic shards that are still researched today.

76. The Tarumi Ayako pronunciation is based on the reading given in Yumoto, *Ōtagaki Rengetsu-ni kenkyū*, 106. For an extensive discussion of Tamaki Ryōsai, see Chiba Yutaka, "Rengetsu yaki o mohōshita tōki ni tsuite," *Kurenai: Kyōto Daigaku kōnai iseki chōsa kenkyū nenpō* (2018/2016): 123–154.

77. Kinkōzan offers a detailed account of Sōbei's career in Kinkōzan Kazuo, *Kyōto Awatayaki kamamoto: Kinkōzan Sōbei den* (Tokyo: Kaitakusha, 2018). All three potters are mentioned in Mitsuoka Tadanari's essay "Rengetsu-ni no tōgei" found in Koresawa, *Rengetsu*, 202–203.

78. See the text by Ono Harumichi and Moriyasu Masaru, "Kageki 'Rengetsu-ni,'" *Takarazuka shōjo kageki hoshi gumi shutsuen kyakuhon shū*, no. 33 (September 1936): 10–23. The

noted *otokoyaku* (actor specializing in male roles) Shiomi Yōko (act. 1926–1943) played Rengetsu with a serious mien and long straight hair rather than imitating Rengetsu's bald head.

79. See Yoshii's account of the plans for the film and the later stage production in Yoshii Isamu, *Gikyoku Rengetsu* (Kyoto: Taigadō, 1943).

80. Cort, in her *Shigaraki: Potters' Valley*, writes of the work of female potters in that kiln area. In the late 1970s women working for some famous potters in Bizen were limited to picking out the stones from blocks of raw clay taken from the fields.

81. Tessai mentions his coming upon Rengetsu, Sakuragi, and Chikako discussing late Heian literature with an impressive level of knowledge.

Ōtagaki Rengetsu's *Waka* Poetics

SENTIMENT, SELFHOOD, AND THE SAIGYŌ PERSONA

ŌTAGAKI RENGETSU (1791–1875) left behind nearly one thousand *waka* poems—a number multiplied by their repeated inscription on all manner of surfaces, from pottery to poem sheets to hanging scrolls with accompanying paintings. This vast body of poetic work speaks to Rengetsu's use of the ancient thirty-one syllable form as her primary mode of creative expression and intellectual ordering of experience. The vitality and social immediacy of the nun's poetry open up onto a vibrant world of *waka* and its theorization in the Edo period, countering notions of *waka*'s stagnation since the medieval period, when it gave way to forms such as linked verses (*renga*) and subsequently *haikai* in the early modern era. Although Rengetsu left no poetic treatises or theoretical texts of her own, her oeuvre of verses and inscribed artworks in their copious totality amount to a *waka* poetics of practice that rewards analysis for its richness and complexity of allusion, subject position, and medium specificity. In light of Paul Berry's historically detailed and insightful account of life and work in this volume, this essay assumes a level of familiarity with the nun's biography and output.¹ It offers a sustained meditation on Rengetsu's poetics, focusing on one of her most famous poems—instantiated in word and image—to demonstrate the multiplicity of poetic subject positions she employs. I argue that Rengetsu's work is imbricated with past poetic personae in a way that ultimately allows her to posit a self that is rhetorically negated.

Rengetsu practiced her poetry at the end of an age that had witnessed the transformation of *waka* as a form that drew from a limited set of elevated (*ga*) themes and a courtly poetic lexicon to one suffused with the language of the everyday, the plebian (*zoku*), and the personal. By the nineteenth century, the most notable *waka* theorists and their thousands of students had long debated the degree and manner in which high and low should be worked into this classical form. The stakes of these debates ranged in gravity, from individuals who associated the preservation of classical *waka* diction with existential and even cosmological concerns to those who focused on the aesthetic rewards of opening up the rarefied world of *waka* to a more egalitarian approach.² Within this history, Rengetsu's work is most closely aligned with efforts

to infuse *waka* with the external reality experienced by the poet, or what Roger K. Thomas has called “personalism.”³ This approach was favored in part by followers of the *waka* theorist Ozawa Roan (1723–1801), whose poetic treatises and personal writings Rengetsu encountered in 1851 at the age of sixty-one.⁴ In a subsequent letter to the “national learning” (*kokugaku*) scholar Murakami Tadamasa (1812–1884), Rengetsu signaled her aesthetic preferences and affinity for Roan’s approach, lauding him for having composed *waka* “from the heart, just as they occurred to him.”⁵

Rengetsu’s poetic oeuvre, produced over the course of her fifty-some years of artistic activity, is extensive and varied and, importantly, situational.⁶ Although some of her poems are less concerned with the kinds of poetic principles and ideas advanced by Roan, many warrant further analysis for how they engage the poetic theories to which she was exposed. Most discussion of Rengetsu’s poetry, for example, stops at praising its simplicity and directness, qualities that make her work seem easily accessible to readers across time. These are certainly important characteristics of her verse, but her approach to directness might be better understood as deriving from a desire to cultivate “plainspoken verse,” what Roan called *tadagoto uta*. This was not a mere incorporation of vernacular language into *waka* but was the result of learning to “refine the ordinary” through careful usage.⁷ Part of this process involved a continued dialogue with classical *waka* that would result in a communal understanding of the poetic past and what were perceived to be universal emotions, infusing one’s verse with “shared sentiment” (*dōjō*). Roan made it clear that one should not rely on the classical lexicon and imagery in a way that stifles the perspective of the poet or that results in purely imitative verse. He stressed the importance of “new sentiment” (*shinjō*) and the idea that individuals possess a singular perspective and grasp of language shaped by the constant state of flux in the world around them, which should be reflected in *waka*. I would suggest that many of Rengetsu’s poems not only reflect but actively engage these principles and even transform them through, for example, the particular Buddhist aesthetics that characterize her poetry.

In some cases, Rengetsu achieved an innovative “new sentiment” by registering a personal response to a recent event while tapping into traditional, affective poetic imagery. Take, for example, her verse among the *Three Waka Poems* in the Cowles Collection reacting to the Boshin War (1868–1869, specifically the 1868 Battle of Toba-Fushimi in which supporters of the Tokugawa shogunate fought pro-imperial forces) (Figure 1).

“As soldiers engage at Fushimi and the terrifying echoes of firearms traverse the distance”⁸

伏見にいくさありとて火具の音のいみしう響き渡りかかれば

Sounding incessantly from afar
these violent
winds of the moment—
how I wish they would not scatter
the blossoms of the Flowered Capital!

よそにきく
音もはげしき
時津風
花のみやこを
ちらさずもがな⁹

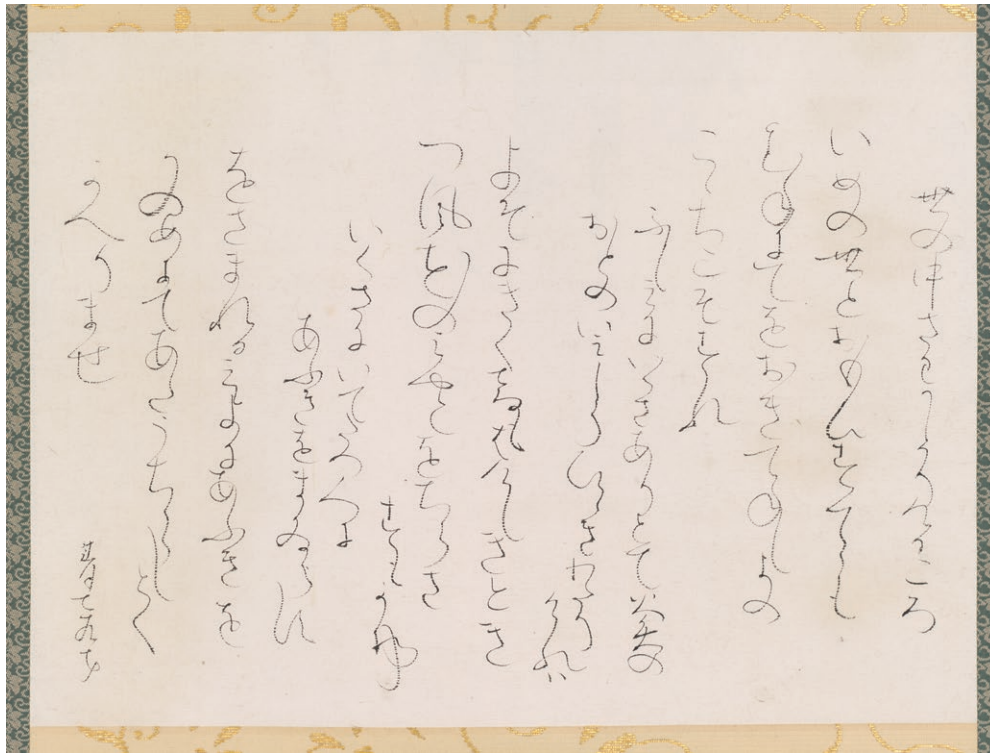
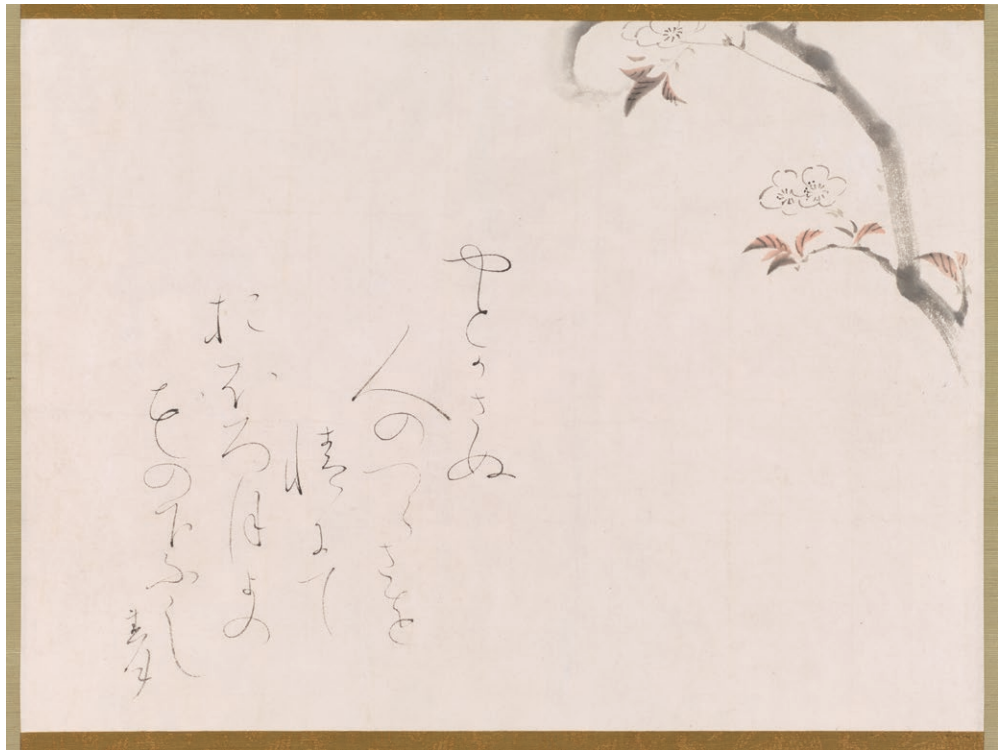


Figure 1. Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Three Waka Poems*, 1869. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2021.2.2a-d.

Rengetsu heightens the poem's immediacy by placing the reader on site with her in the heart of the capital, hearing the violent sounds of cannons and gunfire. Although the battlefield in Fushimi lies approximately ten kilometers to the south, the sonic image compresses space and topographical distance. Instead of age-old auditory poetic tropes such as the sound of the wind in the pines, it is the reverberating cacophony of gunfire that reaches her ears. It was in fact the new influx of massive numbers of firearms in this battle that enabled the pro-imperial forces to ultimately defeat the shogunate. Here the firearms are made explicit only in the poem's headnote. In the *waka* proper, weaponry is only implied by the quality of its ferocious sound, allowing the verse to remain subtly evocative.

Yet the topic of gunfire represents a bold departure from orthodox *waka* and signals Rengetsu's confidence in interpreting and deploying "new sentiment" in her work. She seems to announce this innovation by pivoting her poem on the word for "tidal wind" (*tokitsukaze*), which also refers to the rising tides of the political and social kind that were new to her age. She turns the poem into a lament over the present-day state of affairs in which supporters of the shogunate would take up arms against an imperial army. The poem is not all newness, however, and the final two lines use the classical image of the "Flowered Capital"—the epitome of courtly elegance (*miyabi*) and the epicenter of *waka* tradition—to create a stark juxtaposition to the sounds of fighting in the upper stanza. Taking the capital as a metaphor for the imperial body, the suggestion in the poem of its dissolution is startling. Yet this image is tempered by envisioning destruction in the classical terms of scattered

Figure 2. Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Cherry Blossoms* / “No Place at the Inn,” nineteenth century. Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2019.3.26a-d.



evanescent blossoms, a key motif in Rengetsu’s Buddhist aesthetics of spirituality and impermanence.

Focusing exclusively on the immediacy or autobiographical aspects of Rengetsu’s poetry can have the effect of obscuring the intertextuality of her work. Her deep reservoir of poetic knowledge and the way she transforms the classical past provide ways of more fully understanding her artistic accomplishment. In the remainder of this essay, a close look at Rengetsu’s most famous verse will suggest the interpretive possibilities that arise from paying attention to her *waka* sources, even when the author’s subjective voice and presence in the poem seem to dominate. The poem in question is one that Rengetsu inscribed countless times on all manner of surfaces, from ceramics to poem strips (*tanzaku*) and poem sheets (*shikishi*) to vertically and horizontally oriented hanging scrolls, often accompanied by her own painting (Figure 2) or that of a collaborator, such as Wada Gozan (1800–1870).¹⁰ A particularly intriguing example is a collaboration between Rengetsu and Tomioka Tessai (1836–1924), dated to 1873 (Figure 3). The verse had already been published in Rengetsu’s poetry anthology *A Diver’s Harvested Seaweed* (*Ama no karumo*) a few years before she brushed this work at the age of eighty-three.

Turned away at the inn
I take this unkindness as grace...
resting instead
beneath the hazy moon
and evening blossoms.

やどかさぬ
人のつらさを
情にて
おぼろ月よの
花の下ぶし¹¹



Figure 3. Calligraphy:
 Ōtagaki Rengetsu; Painting:
 Tomioka Tessai, "No place
 at the inn" Waka and Paint-
 ing of Cherry Blossoms, 1873.
 Hanging scroll; ink and light
 color on paper. The Mary and
 Cheney Cowles Collection.

Composed from the perspective of a traveler who has been denied shelter, the upper stanza, consisting of its first two lines (*kami no ku*), introduces the poem's topic—the “callousness” (*tsurasa*) of a “person who does not lend their lodging” (*yado kasanu hito*). In the lower stanza (*shimo no ku*), the uncharitable act of the innkeeper is transformed through the sentiment of the poet who, upon seeing the luminous vision of cherry blossoms bathed in hazy moonlight, decides to interpret it as a gift (*nasake nite*). The verse presents a poet who is spiritually and aesthetically cultivated enough to realize in the moonlit scene “the moving power of things” (*mono no aware*). It evokes the “ah-moment” of surprise that precedes a heart being moved, which is then captured in the unique diction of *waka* and which the nativist scholar and philologist Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801) defined as the highest ideal of literary creation.¹² The poem's universality led to its extreme popularity but also to a predictable backlash. In his 1929 *Historical Overview of Meiji and Taishō Tanka* (*Meiji Taishō tanka shi gaikan*), the poet Saitō Mokichi (1882–1953) wrote that the popular poem left him unimpressed and called it illustrative of predictable human emotions.¹³

The poem had also become inextricably linked to Rengetsu the person and legends about her idiosyncratic personality. Some iterations of the verse included a headnote stating that it was composed “in the season of flowers” (*hana no koro ni*) or “while traveling during the season of flowers” (*hana no koro tabi ni arite*), encouraging biographical readings. In a widely read volume of selected famous verses with narrative headnotes and commentary from 1906 titled *Chats on Poems, Past and Present* (*Kinko kawa*), Rengetsu's verse even receives a substantial backstory:

One day around spring, a certain individual paid a visit to Rengetsu's hermitage in Okazaki. She was nowhere to be seen, but porridge cooking in a clay pot was about to be charred, so he removed it from the fire and waited for the nun to return. Concerned when so much time had passed that he could see nothing but dark shadows, he departed. In the coming days he called upon the nun again, and this time found her at home in her hermitage. He engaged her in conversation and in passing asked her about what had happened the other day. The nun smiled and said, “I wanted to make vegetable porridge and went out to buy some bean curd. While out, I suddenly recalled the cherry blossoms at Yoshino and began heading in that direction. I hadn't any travel money on me and when dusk fell, I asked to be given a night of free lodging at a residence in the mountains but was refused. With nothing else to be done, I made a pillow of grass beneath the flowers, and while contemplating the blossoms, on a piece of pocket paper I wrote the poem . . . ,” which she showed to him.¹⁴

The nun is presented as a spontaneous, free, and easy wanderer in the Daoist vein who goes wherever her instincts lead. In the anecdote, she aims for distant Yoshino, even fancifully suggesting that her night beneath the flowers took place in the famous mountains. The tenor of these “chats on poems” no doubt assumes a reader who takes such narrative vignettes with a grain of salt; the portrayal of eccentric poets and artists was a long-standing convention in works such as *Biographies of Modern Eccentrics*

(*Kinsei kijin den*, 1790). Nevertheless, an understanding took hold of this poem as describing an actual occurrence, making it easy to envision Rengetsu as the traveler turned away, or as a surrogate for readers who might imagine themselves in her position.

In the poem-painting version by Tessai and Rengetsu, Tessai limited the visual motifs to moon, mist, and blossoming branches, creating a lack of specificity that enables a range of associations for and interpretations of the poem. Taking the verse as descriptive of the poet's experience, for example, the branches and moon in the upper part of the painting appear as though being gazed at from below, through the eyes of the rejected traveler lying on the cold ground, their head on a pillow of grass. From this vantage point, the long flower branch rendered in ink reaches down into the composition and extends across the scroll to form a horizontal canopy over the recumbent poet. Occupying the physical place of the poet is the inscription of the poem; given the immediately recognizable quality of Rengetsu's calligraphic hand, the writing seems to embody the nun herself beneath the blossoms. With the branch as a makeshift rooftop, the columns of calligraphy suggest the walls of an alternative lodging to the one denied—a house of word and image fabricated by the nun and her protégé. In this way, the scroll offers a visual resolution to the quandary of the verse, showing the true nature of a lodging (*yado*)—be it an inn, a household, or the corporeal shell of the human body—as merely temporary (*kari no yado*), a metaphor for the illusory phenomenal world. An understanding of the ephemeral nature of the seemingly solid lodging is akin to a larger Buddhist awakening, and this is suggested by the pictorial image of the moon. The particular haziness of the “misty moon” (*oborozuki*) in the poem materializes through faint layers of ink-wash and the mottled ink bleeding ever so slightly into the paper around the circumference of the lunar disk. And yet the moon is not obscured by mist but is depicted as softly luminous, made to appear even more so by the stark contrast of blank white paper and surrounding ink. The image suggests the moment of revelation as the mists clear, bringing forth the full luminosity of insight.

These specific pictorial motifs and poetic Buddhist metaphors have a long history, and here the work draws from that pictorial and textual tradition, enacting the use of “shared sentiment” as in the poetics of Roan described earlier. In this most famous poem, Rengetsu does not merely capture the poet's experience but engages with the classical past. The allusive source (*honka*) for the poem may likely be, as Sugimoto Hidetarō has shown, a verse by the Heian period-courtier Fujiwara Chikamori (dates unknown, ca. 1200):

Turned away at the inn—	やどかさぬ
the person's unkindness	人のつらさぞ
is forgotten	忘れぬる
in a field beneath the clear moon,	月すむのべに
on a night spent sleeping as a traveler.	旅ねせし夜は ¹⁵

It would seem that Rengetsu took her first stanza from this poem, or that the phrase had become common enough to readily employ. Despite this iterative opening, however, by the end of the poem Rengetsu has transformed the verse in a way that conveys

yet other sources of allusion. I would suggest that Rengetsu's poem contains shades of the poetic legacy of the monk-poet Saigyō (1118–1190). The “innkeeper” in the poem, for example, need not merely be anonymous but can be an oblique reference to the person who once rejected Saigyō, a woman identified in certain texts as a courtesan (*yūjo*) of Eguchi named Tae:

*“On my way to Tennōji temple it rained, so I asked for lodging at a place called
Eguchi; on being refused, I composed”:*

天王寺へまゐりけるに、雨の降りければ、江口と申す所に宿を借りけるに、
かさざりければ

It may be difficult
for you to despise
this fleeting world,
but you begrudge me
even momentary lodging!

世の中を
厭ふまでこそ
かたからめ
仮の宿りを
惜しむ君かな

Reply

Because I heard
that you despised the world
my only thought was:
do not set your heart
on this momentary lodging!

かへし

世を厭ふ
人とし聞けば
仮の宿に
心とむなと
思ふばかりぞ¹⁶

In the famous exchange, Saigyō scolds the woman for what he believes to be a lack of generosity. The woman's rejoinder, however, clarifies that she had acted only with his virtue in mind, taking his Buddhist vows more seriously than the monk himself and refusing to shelter him in a place where he might be led astray.

Rengetsu's poem could be seen as her own reworking of the Saigyō–Eguchi courtesan exchange, especially given the continued currency of this well-known literary topos in the early modern period. Indeed, the poetic exchange between Saigyō and Tae took on a life of its own from the medieval period, embedded within the biographical *Tale of Saigyō* (*Saigyō monogatari*, thirteenth–fifteenth centuries) and elaborated on in anecdotal literature collections (*setsuwa*). The episode was central to the Noh play *Eguchi* (attr. Zeami Motokiyo, 1363–1443), which more than anything elevated the Eguchi courtesan's spiritual standing in the popular imagination.¹⁷ The play ends with a climactic scene in which the courtesan is revealed to be a manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen (Samantabhadra), who miraculously appears before the monk.¹⁸ The Buddhist message of the play, which emphasizes the Eguchi courtesan's sacred identity, is in keeping with other works by Zeami and the overall medieval Noh repertoire.

Yet other valences of the Eguchi courtesan can be found in the countless images of her depicted as Fugen in the form of hanging scrolls by some of the leading painters of the late Edo period (Figure 4).¹⁹ A painting by Katsukawa Shunshō (1726–1792), for

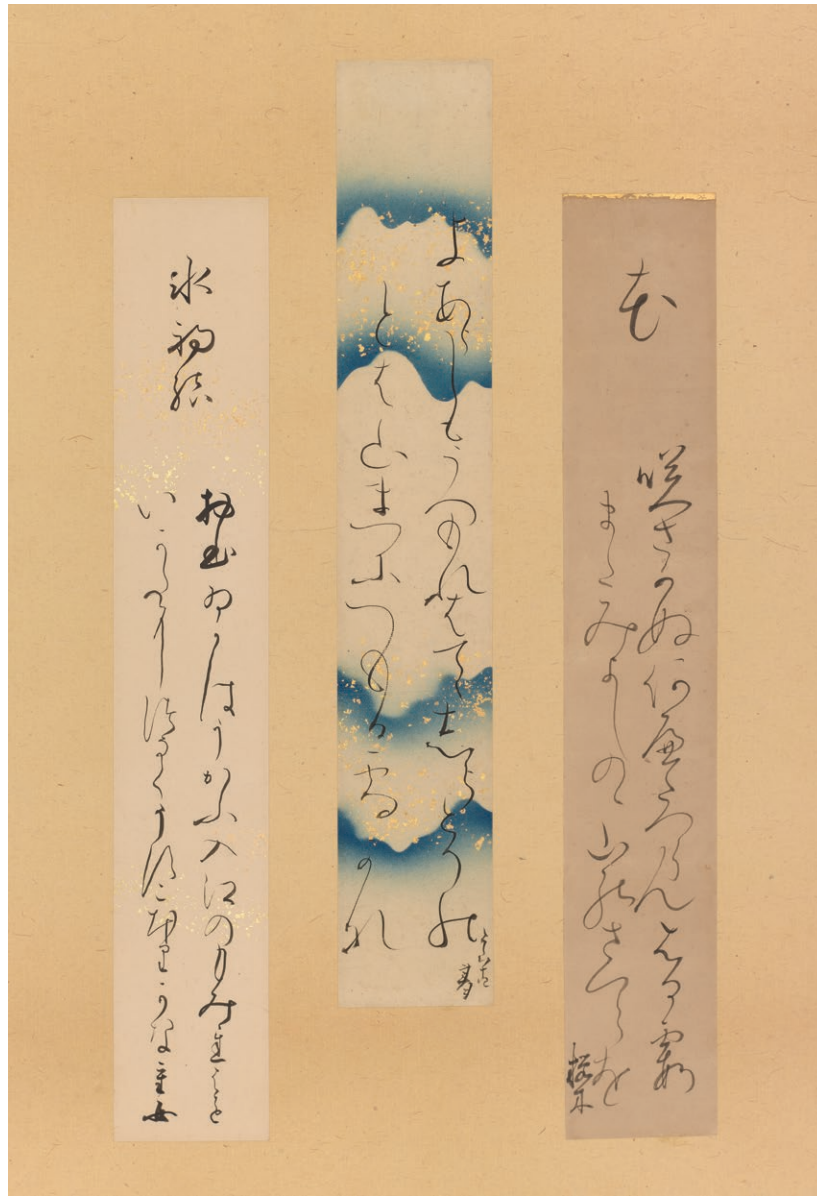


example, depicts the courtesan in Edo period-dress seated atop a white elephant—Fugen’s traditional mount in Buddhist imagery. Such works apply Buddhist non-dualistic concepts like “desire is enlightenment” (*bonnō-soku-bodai*) to contemporary figures and situations, making them appear instantly parodic and mischievous. Compared to the relatively oblique portrayals of the Eguchi courtesan in earlier art and literature, paintings such as Shunshō’s heighten her sexualized persona by association with the widespread visual culture of the brothel and through the comical inscription on the painting that is awash with double entendre.²⁰

No such floating world innuendo appears in Rengetsu’s poem, but an awareness of the Saigyō allusion allows us to recast the innkeeper as the wise courtesan who sent the monk on his way. The elevated poetic and spiritual identity of the courtesan who understands the transitory nature of existence is a figural type that Rengetsu may have embraced. It calls to mind her friendships with and artistic mentoring of female poets and calligraphers such as the courtesan Sakuragi (mid-nineteenth–early twentieth centuries) and Ueda Chikajo (1824–1894), a geisha whose relationship with Rengetsu is immortalized in a postscript she contributed to the nun’s *Ama no karumo* anthology.²¹ In the Cowles Collection, *waka* brushed in the hands of these three women survive as a physical trace of those connections, suggesting the importance

Figure 4. Painting: Katsukawa Shunshō; Calligraphy: Butsumo Keisen, *Courtesan of Eguchi*, ca. 1820s–1830s. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, 2018, 2018.853.26.

Figure 5. Ōtagaki Rengetsu, Sakuragi, Ueda Chikajo, “*The midnight storm*” *Waka Poems*, Rengetsu’s verse 1874, others 1870s. Hanging scroll; ink on decorated paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2021.2.4a-d.



of reexamining female friendship and artistic collaboration as essential organizing principles of cultural production (Figure 5). With the knowledge that Rengetsu’s biological mother may have been employed in the pleasure quarters, one can imagine the nun extending her empathic imagination to occupy the subject position of the courtesan at Eguchi.

Perhaps the tone of Rengetsu’s poem is more rhetorically distant and is better characterized as didactic in nature. In this case, it could be translated as follows:

The callousness of one
who refuses to share her abode,
take it as compassion,
on a hazy moonlit night
lying down beneath the flowers.

やどかさぬ
人のつらさを
情にて
おぼろ月よの
花の下ぶし

Rengetsu's use of the word *compassion* (*nasake*) is of interest. The compiler of Rengetsu's anthology, Kondō Yoshiki (1801–1880), apparently thought the poem would work better without the phrase—which he deemed too difficult to enunciate—suggesting instead that the callousness be “forgotten” (*tsurasa mo wasurekeri*).²² Yet such a seemingly minor change would have disrupted the allusive machinery of the verse in which the central word performs an act of transformation and conjures past associations.²³ The word *compassion* recalls, for example, the interpretation of the Saigyō-Courtesan poetic exchange offered by the Zen monk Musō Soseki (1275–1351). Musō features the two poems in his widely read *Dialogues in a Dream* (*Muchū mondōshū*, 1342), printed editions of which continued to be produced into the mid-Edo period.²⁴ The text is characterized as “vernacular Buddhist teachings” or as a “kana sermon” (*kana hōgo*) because it was not composed in Sinitic Japanese *kanbun* but in Japanese, using characters and phonetic *katakana*.²⁵

Musō's text adopts the question-and-answer format of Zen teachings. In this case, the teacher responds to queries posed by his pupil, the shogun Ashikaga Tadayoshi (1306–1352). When Tadayoshi asks why the Buddhas and bodhisattvas ignore the suffering of sentient beings, Musō quotes the *waka* of Saigyō and Tae and explains, “That which people generally regard as compassion becomes the cause of attachment to the causal world. Hence a lack of compassion and the failure of things to go as one wishes can actually help liberate one from the cycle of samsara.”²⁶ In other words, Musō preaches that “compassion” (*nasake*) denied and the seeming hardship that ensues can be a blessing in disguise. He sets the soteriological stakes high, suggesting that to spend the night in a house of courtesans is to engender deep-rooted attachments that could perpetuate the samsaric cycle and jeopardize one's entire Buddhist practice.

Rengetsu's verse similarly hinges on the notion of how to interpret compassion—the word that she places in the center of her poem—which transforms the *waka* into an illustration of cause and effect. Importantly, Rengetsu does not explicitly signal a reference to Saigyō and the “world-rejecting” with which he was so closely associated. She does not include the adjectival “momentary” (*kari no*) before “inn” (*yado*), which would have triggered immediate Buddhist connotations to the temporary lodging as a metaphor for impermanence (*mujō*). Instead, she focuses on the word *nasake*, which can mean both “sentiment” and “compassion.” This opens up the verse to a greater range of spiritual and aesthetic interpretation, *nasake* being equally crucial to the Buddhist moralistic poetics of Fujiwara Shunzei's (1114–1204) understanding of *mujō*, to Motoori Norinaga's approach to *mono no aware*, and to Roan's poetic theories that incorporate the term. Rengetsu thus masterfully universalizes her poem, allowing the topos of the refusal of lodging to be taken quite literally or to be subject to more metaphorical Buddhist readings.

Taking the representation of cause and effect one step further, we might see the poem as a rendition of Saigyō's life story compressed within the two stanzas of the verse so that the courtesan's compassionless compassion results in the monk breaking the samsaric cycle, as Musō preached. In the legendary chronology of Saigyō's life, he achieved enlightenment, dying beneath the flowers and moon, as illustrated in his death poem.

My wish	願はくは
is to die in spring	花の下に
under the cherry blossoms	はる死なむ
on that day in the Second Month	その如月の
when the moon is full.	望月のころ ²⁷

In Rengetsu's poem, the night beneath the moon and flowers may be symbolic of the night of the Buddha's nirvana—the fifteenth of the second month—as in Saigyō's aspirational verse. The poem would then flash forward from the courtesan's denial to the results of Saigyō staying on the right path. Rengetsu thus writes her own version of a *kana* sermon, in the vein of a lofty Buddhist teacher like Musō. The verse may of course still be interpreted with Rengetsu in the place of the poet-traveler being denied lodging, but by moving away from the personal anecdote, we can envision her as the teacher—as the one with the grasp of the principle of compassion. The multiple identifications enabled by the *waka* form allow for the possibility of envisioning Rengetsu as occupying several subject positions at once: the courtesan Tae who leads Saigyō to enlightenment; the Buddhist teacher who is providing a religious commentary on the classical exchange; or the nun-poet who sees herself as a kind of reincarnation of Saigyō, seeking enlightenment beneath the moon. In this latter regard, Rengetsu thus transforms the poetic anecdote to narrate the story of her own awakening.

In an ultimate act of “shared sentiment” with Saigyō, Rengetsu reworked his death poem in her own.

My wish	願はくは
is to be in the next world	のちの蓮の
seated on a lotus flower,	花の上に
gazing at	くもらぬ月を
the cloudless moon above.	みるよしもがな

Similarities between the two poems include the use of the same idiosyncratic first line and motifs of a flower and the moon.²⁸ While Saigyō remains in the worldly realm in his death poem, longing to die on the same day as the Historical Buddha, Rengetsu envisions herself already in the realm beyond—not beneath the flowers but above the lotus flower. Although Saigyō's poem became one of his most famous, as Jack Stoneman has explained, the first line was considered unorthodox for *waka*, other than for *waka* explicitly in the “Buddhist teachings” (*shakkyō*) category, since it derived from the Sinitic language of Buddhist sutras.²⁹ Even the Buddhist-inclined Shunzei called its usage by Saigyō unattractive. Rengetsu's use of the same phrase to start her own death poem is striking, and it suggests the degree to which she took inspiration from the Heian period-monk-poet and perhaps even modeled her practice on his life and work, much like Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694) had done earlier in the Edo period.³⁰

Rengetsu inscribed her death poem on a scroll between an image of the moon above and a self-portrait below (Figure 6). She portrays herself wearing the dark robes of a nun and seemingly with a walking stick in hand, an image of the peripatetic

traveler, like Saigyō or Bashō reborn.³¹ In the context of the death poem, the journey captured in the painting can only be interpreted as a spiritual one. The composition of Rengetsu's self-portrait is intriguing because it prefigures the creation of her death shroud, which is described in a remarkable anecdote recounted by Tomioka Tessai.³² When Rengetsu was in her seventies, she had asked Tessai to paint her namesake imagery of lotus flower (*ren*) and moon (*getsu*) on a white cotton cloth (*furoshiki*) she had made herself. The nun folded it up, put it away, and Tessai soon forgot about the episode. When Rengetsu passed away at the age of eighty-five, the women of the village washed her body and wrapped it in that very cloth. Beholding her enshrouded body, Tessai realized that between the images of the lotus and moon he had rendered years earlier, Rengetsu had inscribed her death verse. Unbeknownst to Tessai, Rengetsu had quietly orchestrated one final collaboration between herself and her younger student. Between Tessai's lotus and moon pictures, Rengetsu brushed a poem that imagines herself after death between the lotus and the moon. Rengetsu graphically represented herself through the Buddhist name she had taken over fifty years before in her own calligraphic lettering, representing a fervent desire, as Tessai suggests, that her body and mind in this world and the next be pure and unsullied (like the lotus flower) and achieve ultimate illumination (symbolized by the clear moon). Poetically, graphically, and pictorially, Rengetsu rehearsed the negation and subsequent rebirth of the self, and she did so in the most literal act of embodied inscription she had ever performed, using her own body covered in the shroud as the vehicle for her *waka*.

RENGETSU'S WAKA CORPUS APPEARS to be characterized by a bold assertiveness of selfhood in the foregrounded voice of the poet and in the materiality of her work: the uniquely etched incisions of haptic poetry on her pottery, the unwavering distinctiveness of her calligraphic style, the consistent inclusion of her name and age on her works, and the way her collaborators often sublimate their own styles to match her artistic register. And yet, as we have seen, this self-assertion need not be interpreted on an individualistic level but rather envisioned as symbiotic with poetic personae who came before. For an artist most readily associated with embodiment, this final inscriptive act reads as a seamless relinquishing of embodiment anchored in a poem that transforms the self by taking the personhood of her name and inserting it exquisitely into the landscape of the next world, anticipating the dissolution of body and poem in the funeral pyre.

Given the textual and visual examples examined here, it is clear that Saigyō's biography and poetic output represented much more than a source of allusions for Rengetsu. She seems to have communed spiritually with the famous monk-poet in a way that shaped her artistic output, compelling her to incorporate and transform the source texts. Such a relationship can only be gleaned when her work is contextualized and her engagement with the poetic theories of her day is analyzed, not through volumes of theory, which

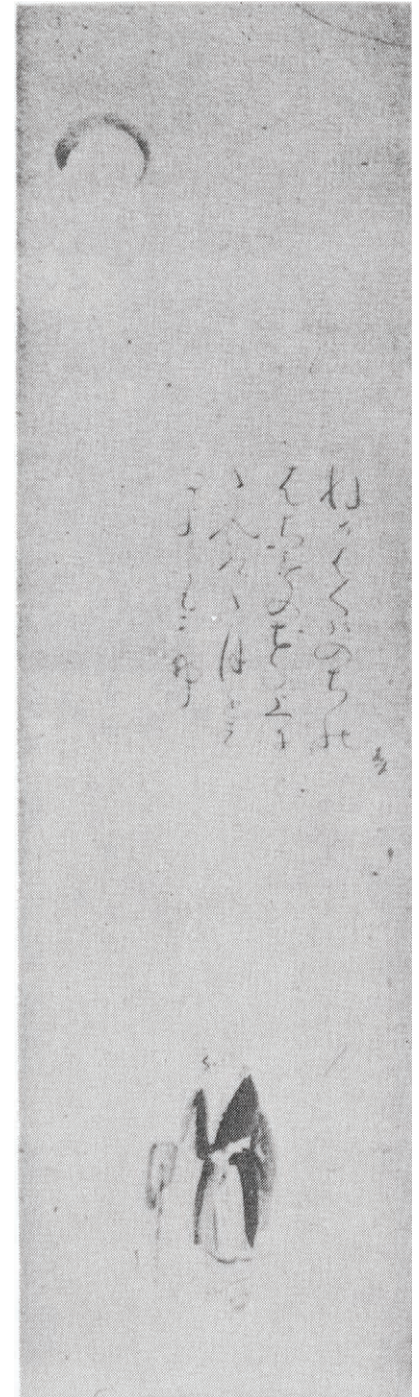


Figure 6. Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Moon Viewing Death Verse Self-Portrait*, Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Reproduced from Murakami Sodō, ed. *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*. Zōho. Expanded edition. Kyōto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1980. Unpaginated plate.

she was in no position to have written, but through her practice. There we find her *waka* poetics in action and witness the process by which she worked through poetic sources and envisioned an intersubjective relationship with them and their authors, as in her final creative act: enfolding herself within poetic worlds of past, present, and future, understood as one.

Notes

1. On Rengetsu's biography, also see Lee Johnson, *The Life and Art of Ōtagaki Rengetsu* (master's thesis, University of Kansas, 1988). While space does not allow for a discussion of Rengetsu's *waka* inscribed on pottery here, I explore the topic in "Ōtagaki Rengetsu's Haptic Poetics," a lecture delivered at the University of Chicago, Department of Art History, March 12, 2021; and I point the reader to Sayumi Takahashi's important work on the materiality of Rengetsu's poetry in "Beyond Our Grasp? Materiality, Meta-genre and Meaning in the Po(e)ttery of Rengetsu-ni," in *Hermeneutical Strategies: Methods of Interpretation in the Study of Japanese Literature*, PAJLS: Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies, ed. Michael F. Marra (West Lafayette, Ind.: Association for Japanese Literary Studies, 2004), 261–278.

2. On the cosmic end of the spectrum would be Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), who believed the restrictions imposed on the diction of *waka* enabled its spiritual connection with the past. For an expansive study on Norinaga's ideas, see Emi Joanne Foulk, "The Jeweled Broom and the Dust of the World: Keichū, Motoori Norinaga, and Kokugaku in Early Modern Japan" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2016), 104–159.

3. Thomas describes Rengetsu's poetry as moving from "impersonalism," representing the stylistic preferences of Kagawa Kageki (1768–1843) and members of his Keien school of poetry to "personalism," emphasizing the voice and perspective of the poet. See Roger K. Thomas, *The Way of Shikishima: Waka Theory and Practice in Early Modern Japan* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2008), 181–185.

4. Rengetsu's encounter with Roan's texts occurred in Nara during a trip she recounts in a prose poem travel essay titled "When I Was in Summer Retreat near the Great Buddha" ("Daibutsu no hotori ni ge o musubikeru ori"), reproduced after the last section of poems in the anthology of her work, *A Diver's Harvested Seaweed (Ama no karumo)*. See Murakami Sodō, ed., *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Rengetsu-ni Zenshū Hanpukai, 1927), 59–67.

5. Thomas, *Way of Shikishima*, 184. Rengetsu's comments occur in two letters to Murakami Tadamasu (among twenty-seven that survive), transcribed in a section of the *Rengetsu zenshū* devoted to her correspondence in Murakami Sodō, *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*, vol. 2 (Kyoto: Rengetsu-ni Zenshū Hanpukai, 1927), 30, 36.

6. Many of Rengetsu's *waka* were produced at the request of others for specific occasions and as a means of making a living; as Haruo Shirane has said of the poems of Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694), they "functioned dialogically, in a communal context, fulfilling socio-religious functions." Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 160.

7. This discussion of Roan's theories is indebted to Thomas, *The Way of Shikishima*, 76–82, and to articles cited therein: Nakamura Yukihiro, "Ozawa Roan karon no shin kentō," in *Nakamura Yukihiro chojutsushū*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1984–1989), 266–284; and Watabe Osamu, "Ozawa Roan no shisō ni tsuite," in *Kinsei waka shisō kenkyū* (Tokyo: Jichōsha, 1991), 76–94.

8. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

9. I am grateful to Jack Chris Stoneman for this and another translation in note 28.

10. An illustration of the Wada Gozan painting is illustrated in Koresawa Kyōzō et al.,

Rengetsu (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1971), plate 118; for more on Rengetsu's collaborative projects, see Sayumi Takahashi, "Ōtagaki Rengetsu's *Gassaku*: Friendship and the Spirit of Collaboration," in *Black Robe, White Mist: Art of the Japanese Buddhist Nun Rengetsu* (Canberra, Australia: National Gallery of Australia, 2007), 107–117.

11. Translation used with the kind permission of the Rengetsu Foundation Project, Kyoto; John Walker and Kazuya Ōyama, translators.

12. Michael F. Marra, *The Poetics of Motoori Norinaga: A Hermeneutical Journey* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 17.

13. Cited in Sugimoto Hidetarō, *Ōtagaki Rengetsu*, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1988), 26–27.

14. The passage is reproduced in Sugimoto, *Ōtagaki Rengetsu*, 28–29. The original publication is Nishimura Tenshū and Isono Shūsho, eds., *Kinko karwa* (Osaka: Sekibunsha, 1906), with the Rengetsu anecdote, poem, and commentary on pp. 121–123.

15. Chikamori's poem appears in the *Collection of Monthly Shrine Offering Verses* (*Tsukimōde wakashū*), compiled by the head priest of the Kamo Shrine, Kamo no Shigeyasu (1119–1191) in *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, 3rd ed., 7th printing, vol. 14, plate 1, Waka bu, maki 368 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1990), 103. Cited in Sugimoto Hidetarō, *Ōtagaki Rengetsu*, rev. ed. (Kyoto: Tōyō Shobō, 2004), 253–254.

16. *Shinkokinshū* 978, 979 (*Sankashū* 752, 753), translation from Jack Stoneman, "Constructing Saigyō: Poetry, Biography, and Medieval Reception" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2006), 188, 469–470.

17. Ikumi Kaminishi describes this change in emphasis on the character of Lady Eguchi and argues for its influence in paintings by Maruyama Ōkyo and others. See Ikumi Kaminishi, "Skillful Means (upāya) of the Courtesan as Bodhisattva Fugen: Maruyama Ōkyo's Lady Eguchi," in *Gender, Continuity, and the Shaping of Modernity in the Arts of East Asia, 16th–20th Centuries*, eds. Kristen L. Chiem and Lara C. W. Blanchard (Boston: Brill, 2017), 127.

18. The Noh play *Eguchi* fuses together the episode between Saigyō and the courtesan at Eguchi as well as a separate episode from the biography of the monk Shōkū Shōnin (ca. 907–ca. 1007) found in the *setsuwa* collection *Senjūshō* (compiled ca. 1250–1287) in which he encounters a courtesan who turns into Fugen every time he closes his eyes. See Nishio Koichi, ed., *Senjūshō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), 190–195. Discussions of this story appear in Michael F. Marra, *Representations of Power: The Literary Politics of Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), 92–93; in the context of literary representations of *asobi*, see Terry Kawashima, *Writing Margins: The Textual Construction of Gender in Heian and Kamakura Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 51–57. Representations of Shōkū and his backstory are discussed in Melissa McCormick, *Tosa Mitsunobu and the Small Scroll in Medieval Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 172–205.

19. Important examples are discussed in Kaminishi, "Skillful Means (upāya) of the Courtesan."

20. The entry for this work on the Metropolitan Museum of Art website notes the erotic double entendre and phallic imagery in the inscription.

21. The essay by Paul Berry in this volume provides more information on these women and shows how they, with the addition of Shikibu, were thought of as an informal salon of female poets. For Chikajo's postscript, see Murakami, *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*, 1:3–4 (repaginated following Rengetsu's poems and writings).

22. The editors of *Kinko karwa* (1906) (see note 14) relate Kondō Yoshiki's suggestion for revision; it does not appear in Kondō's preface to Rengetsu's anthology. The remark is cited in Sugimoto, *Ōtagaki Rengetsu*, 26. Sugimoto argues that Kondō's suggested revision completely misses the point of Rengetsu's verse, which he views as a moralistic poem, or *dōka*, the message of which would have been lost without the word for *compassion*.

23. Rengetsu was famously averse to having her poems anthologized in print, which Sayumi Takashi has compellingly argued derived from a reluctance to have her *waka* unmoored from the materiality so central to her practice. Takahashi, “Beyond Our Grasp?,” 270–271. Another reason Rengetsu may have been against the printed anthology was the concern that the compiler might reframe or revise her *waka* in a way that distorted its original import, as in Kondō’s rumored suggested revision.

24. For more on the *Muchū mondōshū*, see Molly Vallor, *Not Seeing Snow: Musō Sōseki and Medieval Japanese Zen* (Leiden: Brill, 2019); and for the full translation, see Thomas Yūhō Kirchner, *Dialogues in a Dream: The Life and Zen Teachings of Musō Soseki* (Somerville, Mass.: Wisdom, 2015).

25. For Edo period–editions of Musō’s *Muchū mondōshū* in the collection of the National Diet Library, see, for example, <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/2544529/1>.

26. For a modern transcription of the Japanese, see Kawase Kazuma, *Muchū mondōshū*, Kōdansha Gakujutsu Bunko, 1441 (Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2000), 36–46. Translated by Kirchner, *Dialogues in a Dream*, 80–81. 情けといえることは皆妄執をとどむる因縁なりされば人の情けもなく世の意に叶わぬことは出離生死のたよなるべし.

27. Jack Stoneman, trans., *Shinkokinshū* 1846 (*Sankashū* 77), in *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600*, ed. Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 578–579. The poem also appears in the prose-poem tale of Saigyō’s life (*Saigyō monogatari*).

28. Rengetsu wrote more than one death verse, including one that uses the same first line: “My wish is to die in the light of the autumn moon—if so, then I shall not wander in darkness (Negawaku wa / tsuki no kage nite / akishinan / saraba yami ni mo / mayowazara mashi); translation by Jack Chris Stoneman.

29. Stoneman points out that the verse was not included in the imperial poetry anthologies *Senzaishū* (1187), compiled by Shunzei; or *Shinkokinshū* (1207), compiled by Teika. Stoneman, “Constructing Saigyō,” 118–119. Rengetsu’s use of this unorthodox word would also accord with Ozawa Roan’s openness to incorporating “non-poetic” (*zoku*) diction in *waka*.

30. It is important to keep in mind how Rengetsu’s understanding of Saigyō is mediated through multiple layers of historical reception by Bashō and many others, including Zen monk Ryōkan Taigu (1758–1831) and the author of *Confessions of Lady Nijō* (*Tōwazugatari*, 1313), who came to be known as the “female Saigyō” (*onna Saigyō*).

31. The whereabouts of the painting are currently unknown, and although the details are difficult to discern, it clearly draws upon the well-established iconography of traveling poets, specifically that of Saigyō.

32. Murakami Sodō, *Rengetsu-ni zenshū*, vol. 3 (Kyoto: Rengetsu-ni Zenshū Hanpukai, 1927), 208. The editor of the biographical section (*denki*) of the *zenshū*, where this account is found, was the poet, critic, and publisher Yosano Tekkan (1873–1935). At the time of the collection’s publication, he had given up his pen name of “Tekkan” and reverted to “Hiroshi,” a name given to him by Rengetsu, who was a close friend of his father, Yosano Reigon (1823–1898). Hirako Kyōko, *Yosano Akiko. Nenpyō sakka-dokuhon* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1995), 36.

Four Perfections

TOMIOKA TESSAI AND A SINO-JAPANESE NETWORK,
1895–1924

I couldn't care less for fame or shame: they are like dust in the air.
寵辱加塵固無意

THE LINE ABOVE, from a poem by Tomioka Tessai (1836–1924), captures the literati ideal he expressed in his work.¹ For example, *Su Dongpo in a Borrowed Hat* shows the eleventh-century Chinese scholar-official Su Shi (or Su Dongpo, 1037–1101) (Figures 1 and 2).² It depicts Dongpo in his exile on Hainan Island off the coast of southern China, some 2,300 kilometers south of the capital city of Kaifeng, where he had served as an academician at the prestigious Hanlin Academy. According to legend, one day in his banishment, Dongpo visited a local scholar and on the way home encountered a sudden storm.³ He borrowed a bamboo hat and a pair of wooden clogs from a farmer and returned to his village. Villagers, looking at Dongpo wearing the rain gear of the local peasant, burst into laughter; even the dogs barked at him. In visualizing the story, Tessai uses kinetic brushstrokes in wet ink to create a near abstract rainscape. Dongpo appears at the bottom, walking alone in the storm, watching his steps. His humble act is in stark contrast to the dynamic surroundings, effectively conveying his physical and social circumstances. More tellingly, however, it evokes Dongpo's as well as Tessai's unconstrained character. Produced in Tessai's later years in the early twentieth century, this was the kind of work hailed by his contemporaries for its individual expression. For work like this, Tessai was, and still is, frequently compared with European modernists such as Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) and Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890).⁴

This essay investigates the circumstances of production that inspired Tessai's dynamic brushwork in later life, roughly from 1895 to his death in 1924. Instead of comparing him to European counterparts, this essay offers new insight, showing Tessai as part of a developing intellectual network that linked Japan and China. It was a time of mounting tension between the two nations, caused by the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and Japan's imperialist ambitions. Seen as a watershed of the East Asian geopolitical dynamic, this war is

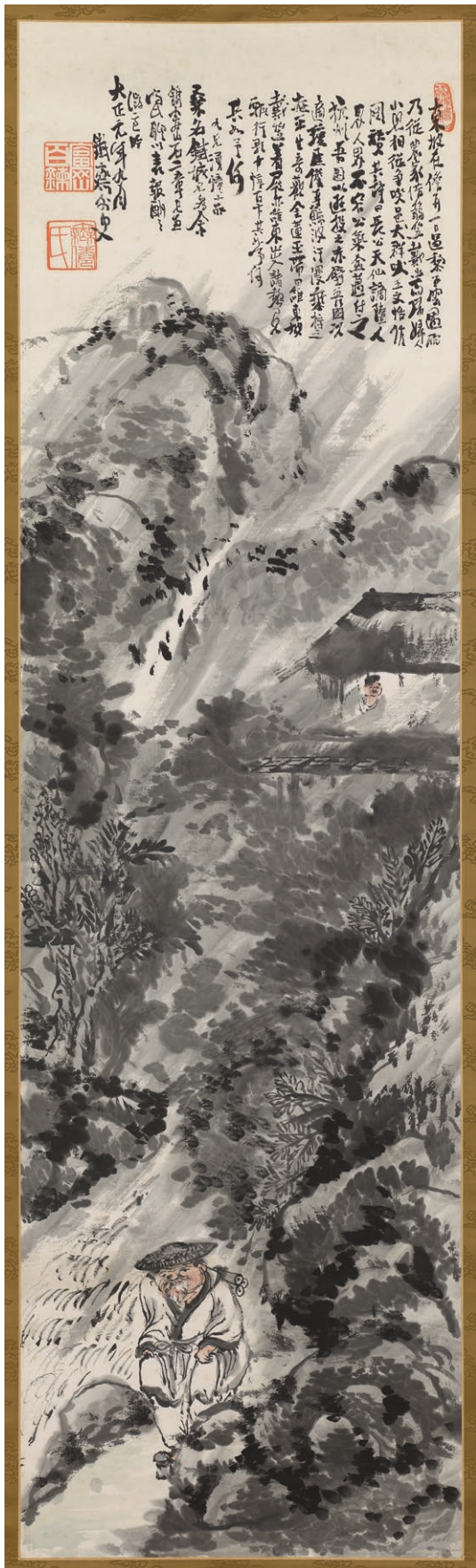


Figure 1. (Left) Tomioka Tessai, *Su Dongpo in a Borrowed Hat*, 1912. Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2018.4.24a-f.

Figure 2. (Above) Detail of Figure 1.

still considered by many as an end not only of the fashion in Japan for literati art but more broadly of its cultural affinities with the Asian continent. Recent studies, however, have begun to uncover cultural exchanges between the two nations that grew more than ever during the decades following the war.⁵ In his later life, Tessai was a key member of a network that linked Japanese and Chinese thinkers. The question is: what united these intellectuals?

Central to this investigation are a handful of Tessai's works that display the antiquarian aesthetic values that spread through the Sino-Japanese network. Among its Chinese participants were scholar-connoisseurs, the nucleus of literati culture in the dynastic era—the era that ended with the demise of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) and the 1911 Revolution. Through direct contact with Chinese intellectuals, Japanese gained new knowledge of art and even acquired works that had been kept for centuries within the circle of scholar-connoisseurs in China. Participating in this Sino-Japanese cultural milieu, Tessai developed his signature brushwork, whose sense of immediacy captivated contemporary viewers as evidence of modern expressionism latent in East Asian art. This essay closely examines Tessai's work—in terms of painting, calligraphy, poetry, and seal engraving—to reveal the circumstances of his production. The aim is to provide a fuller picture of the Japanese art world in which China continued to play a critical role well into the twentieth century.

Four Perfections

Literati art grew out of the pastimes of the scholar gentry (*wenren*) in dynastic China, who aimed to express their thoughts and feelings in various forms of art. Poetry, calligraphy, and painting were particularly highly regarded and were together known as the “three perfections” (Chinese: *sanjue*; Japanese: *sanzetsu*) of scholarly pursuits. Artists of the Qing dynasty, in addition, favored seal engraving, helping to expand the traditional “three” into “four perfections” (Chinese: *sijue*; Japanese: *shizetsu*).⁶ Seal carving at this time was part of an antiquarian aesthetic development in tune with *jinshixue* (Japanese: *kinsekigaku*, literally “metal stone studies”), a branch of knowledge that focused on inscriptions carved on metal and stone objects from China's distant past. Seal engraving was closely related to the Stele school of calligraphy (Chinese: *beixuepai*; Japanese: *higakuba*), modeled after forms of ancient characters incised on such metal and stone objects.

The four perfections helped bond like-minded thinkers and were particularly instrumental in forging connections between Chinese scholar-artists and their Japanese counterparts. Japan had a long history of cultural imports from the continent that continued even under the seclusionist policy during the Edo period. After the termination of this policy in 1854, the Tokugawa shogunate and local clans sent several missions to China.⁷ In 1871 the new Meiji government and the Qing court ratified the Treaty of Amity, starting a formal diplomatic relationship.⁸ Japanese legation officials to China in the early years included scholar-artists like Chō Sanshū (1833–1895), famous for his poetry, and Kozono Kendō (1828–1885), renowned for seal engraving. It is well known that their counterpart Yang Shoujing (1839–1915), who sojourned in Japan from 1880 to 1884, was instrumental in transmitting the Stele

school of calligraphy to Japan.⁹ Among Japanese who traveled to China were those who aimed to hone their skills and learn the latest trends in visual expression: Yasuda Rōzan (1830–1883) studied painting with Hu Gongshou (1823–1886); Nakabayashi Gochiku (1827–1913) studied calligraphy with Pan Cun (1818–1893); and Maruyama Taiu (1838–1916) studied seal engraving with Xu Sangeng (1826–1890).

It is important to note that those involved in the Sino-Japanese cultural milieu were typically engaged in more than one medium of art—often in all four of the perfections. Tessai was one such scholar-artist. Although he never traveled overseas, many of his close associates visited China. He developed friendships with Chinese visitors who were still rarely seen in his hometown of Kyoto. Together pursuing poetry, calligraphy, painting, and seal carving, Tessai and his friends became a driving force for cultural exchange between the two nations that continued to flourish despite the Sino-Japanese War.

Farewell Poem for a Friend Traveling to Qing China

One of the Japanese scholar-artists who visited China shortly after the Sino-Japanese War was the seal carver Kuwana Tetsujō (1864–1938), for whom Tessai produced *Farewell Poem for a Friend Traveling to Qing China* (1897) (Figure 3).¹⁰

A lofty scholar,	既是堂々壯夫子
He pursues the delicate art of seal carving,	却將篆刻弄雕蟲
Aspiring to the prowess of Qin and Han seals. ¹¹	欲窮秦漢圖書妙
A reed sails before a wind from ten thousand miles away.	一葦遙凌萬里風

Second month of the thirtieth year of the Meiji	明治卅年二月
[1897]	
Bidding farewell to my close friend Kuwana Tetsujō	送鉄城桑名親契遊清国
on his departure for Qing China	
Tomioka Hyakuren	鉄斎百鍊 ¹²

The last line of the poem, “A reed sails before a wind from ten thousand miles away,” recalls a well-known legend of Bodhidharma, the first patriarch of Chan (Japanese: Zen) Buddhism, who allegedly crossed the Yangzi River on a reed to reach the monastery Shaolinsi on Mount Song (Songshan) in Hunan Province before going into nine years of meditation.¹³ The story had been a frequent subject of painting, with an early example, *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi on a Reed*, dating back to sometime before 1317 (Figure 4). It bears an inscription by Yishan Yining (1247–1317), an expatriate Chinese monk who laid the foundation for the Sinitic literary genre known as “Literature of Five Mountains” (Gozan bungaku), centered on the Zen monasteries in Kyoto and Kamakura known as the Five Mountains. Their poetry as well as their painting and calligraphy, all inspired by Chinese examples, were central to the earlier development of the three perfections in the Japanese art world. Tessai favored subjects that alluded to the long history of cultural connections between the archipelago and the continent, such as the theme of Bodhidharma. Although his friend Tetsujō’s

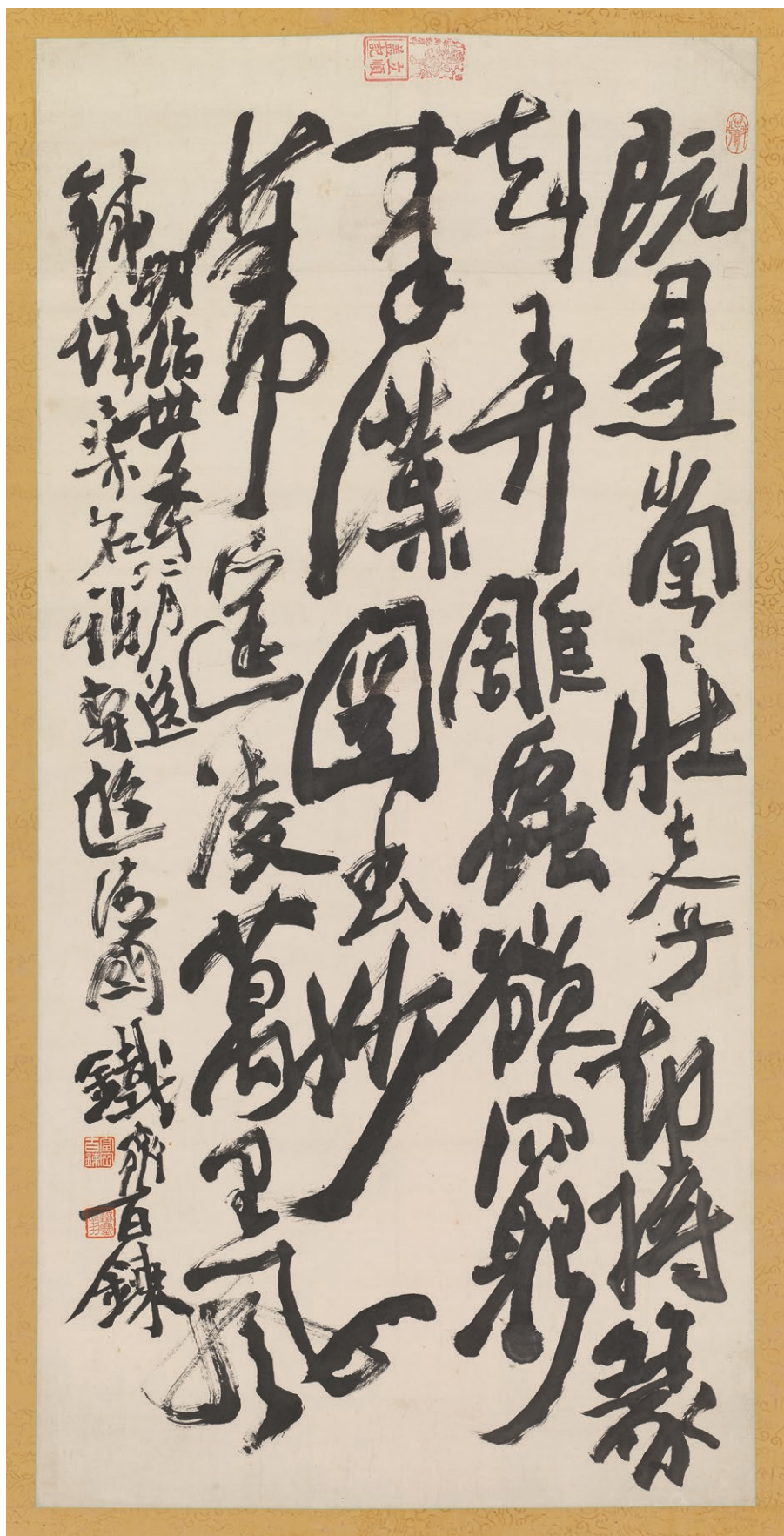


Figure 3. Tomioka Tessai, *Farewell Poem for a Friend Traveling to Qing China*, 1897. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2018.4.28a-c.



Figure 4. (Above) Li Yaofu, *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed*, Inscribed by Yishan Yining, before 1317. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Edward Elliott Family Collection, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982, 1982.1.2.

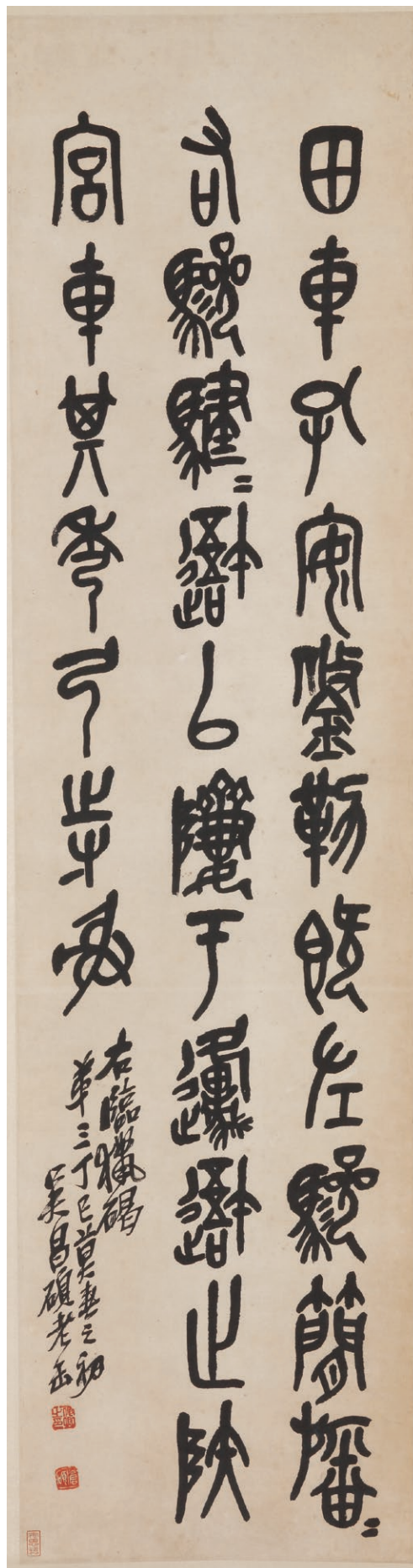


Figure 5. (Right) Wu Changshi (Wu Changshuo), *Excerpt from the Third Stone Drum Poem in Seal Script*, 1917. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Freer Gallery of Art, F1997.69.

traveling was not for religious awakening but for studying seal carving—the fourth perfection of scholarly pursuit—the metaphor of Bodhidharma seems pertinent to his departure for an unfamiliar place to gain new knowledge.

What kind of knowledge did Tetsujō seek? The third line of the poem reads, “Aspiring to the prowess of Qin and Han seals.” To be sure, seals from the Qin and Han dynasties had already been objects of inquiry in Japan during the Edo period. Kō Fuyō (1722–1784), a scholar-seal engraver who advocated for the study of Qin and Han seals, learned much from imported books such as *Album of a Collection of Old Seals* (*Jigu yinpu*, 1572), compiled by Gu Congde (1519–?).¹⁴ Kō Fuyō was arguably one of the most famous scholar-engravers of the era, yet he was one of the many intellectuals under the Tokugawa seclusionist policy who viewed China as the fountainhead of cultural pursuit and was drawn to the aesthetic of Chinese ancient seals. Given this history, it is not surprising that travelers to the continent in the post-seclusionist era from the mid-nineteenth century forward included those setting off to study seal engraving.

In China, which Tetsujō visited in 1897 and again in 1899, he explored not only the modern city of Shanghai but also the centers of traditional literati culture Hangzhou and Suzhou. Accounts of his travels are scant, but he is thought to have studied the seal carving of Zhao Zhiqian (1829–1884) and Xu Sangeng. We do know that Tetsujō met and developed a friendship with Wu Changshi (also Wu Changshuo, 1844–1927), a noted epigrapher-artist who would lead the Xiling Seal Carving Society (Xiling Yinshe, est. 1913).¹⁵ Wu was famous for his calligraphy modeled after the script on *Stone Drums* (*Shigu*), thought to have been incised in the fourth century BCE (Figure 5). His work well represents the kind of antiquarianism that was widespread among Qing thinkers.

Like much of Tessai’s later work, *Farewell Poem for a Friend Traveling to Qing China* is filled with a sense of dynamism evoked by bold, modulated brushstrokes. It contrasts starkly with Tessai’s earlier calligraphy, as in the inscription on his *Baisaō* (ca. 1870), which shows thinner and more fluid, delicate lines (Figures 6 and 7).¹⁶ The visual drama of Tessai’s later work is also due to the irregularity of the characters. *Farewell Poem* is an example of *zattaisho* (Chinese: *zatishu*), or mixed-style calligraphy, which combines different styles of script.¹⁷ Some characters, like *chō* 雕 (Chinese: *diao*) (from the right, second line, third character), are close to regular script (Japanese: *kaisho*; Chinese: *kaishu*) while others, like *shin* 秦 (Chinese: *qin*) (third line, first character), are highly cursivized. Both *zu* 囂 (Chinese: *tu*) (third line, third character) and *kore* 是 (Chinese: *shi*) (first line, second character) have a box shape flaring out at the lower left—alluding to the type of clerical script known as split style, or *bafen* (Japanese: *happun*), found in Han steles, although Tessai pushes the flaring to near deformation (Figure 8).¹⁸ He also employs wobbly lines, as in his horizontalized last stroke of *kore* (*shi*); the slightly arched *ichi* 一 (Chinese: *yi*) (third line, last character); and the elongated last stroke of *kyū* 窮 (Chinese: *qiong*) (second line, last character). Such deliberate disunity in Tessai’s work points to calligraphy by Zheng Xie (also Zheng Banqiao, 1693–1768), one of the so-called Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou, although, once again, Tessai exaggerates various stylistic features to make

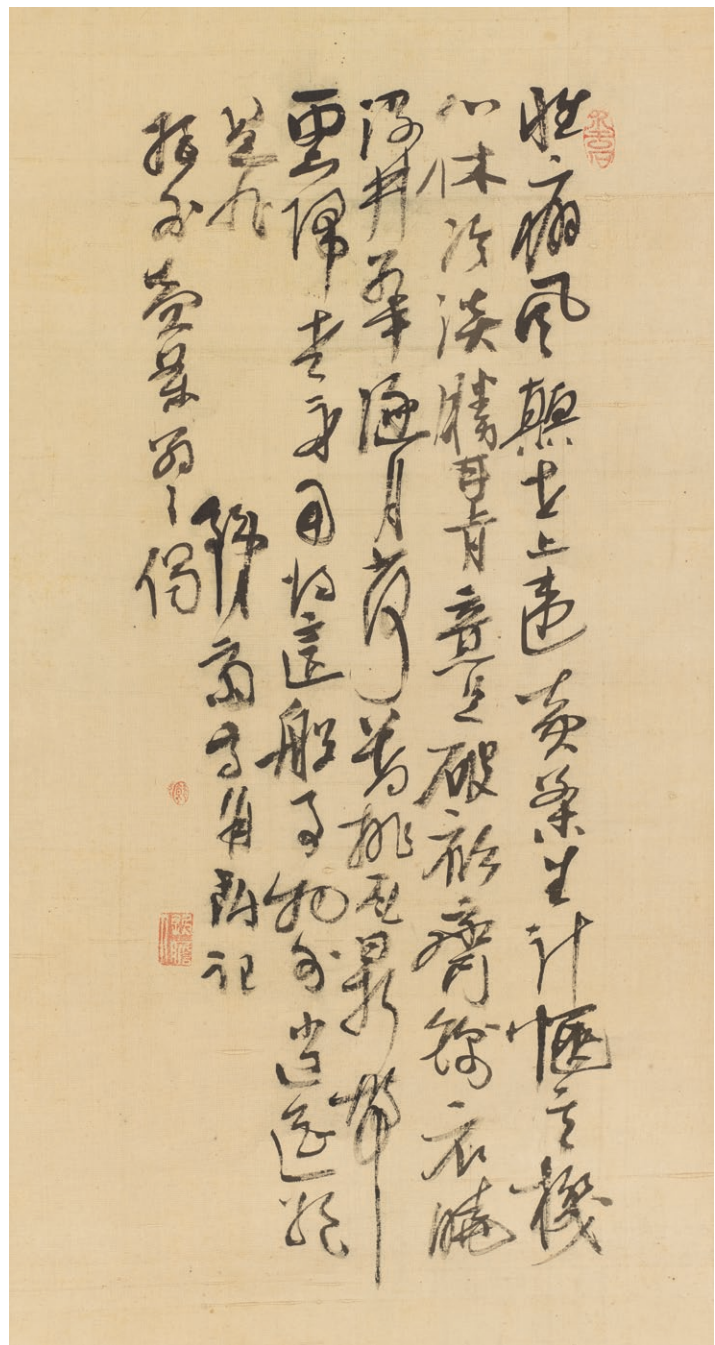
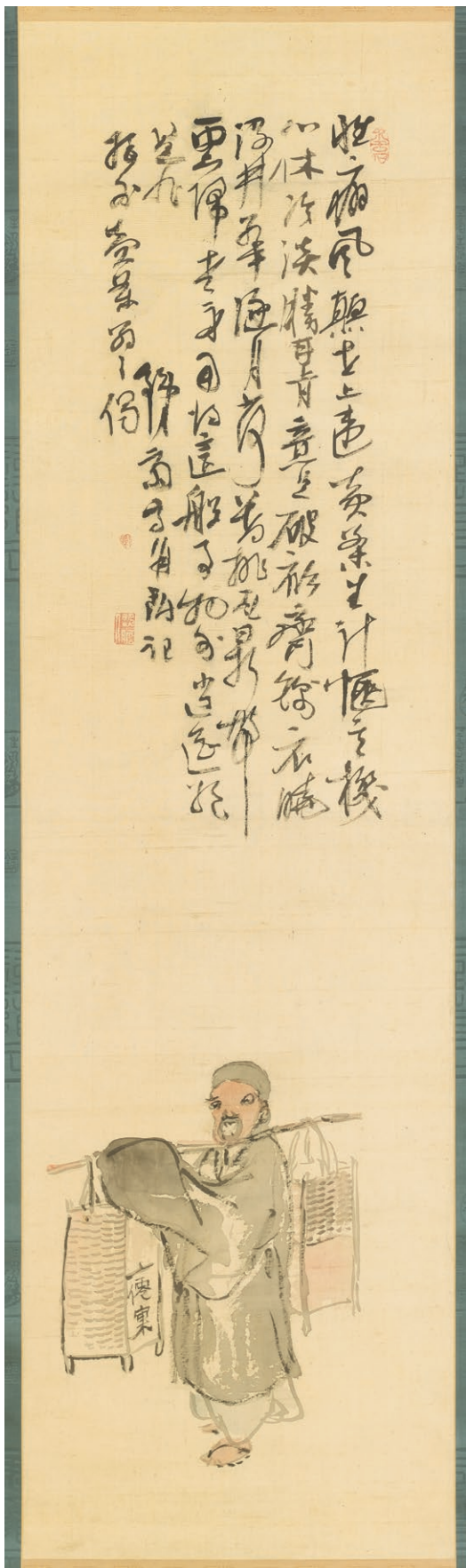


Figure 6. (Left) Tomioka Tessai, *Baisaō*, ca. 1870. Hanging scroll; ink and light color on silk. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2020.5.47a-d.

Figure 7. (Above) Detail of Figure 6.



Figure 8. *Yi Ying Stele*. Original stele, erected 153; rubbing, Song dynasty. Pages from album, ink rubbing on paper. Mitsui Memorial Museum.

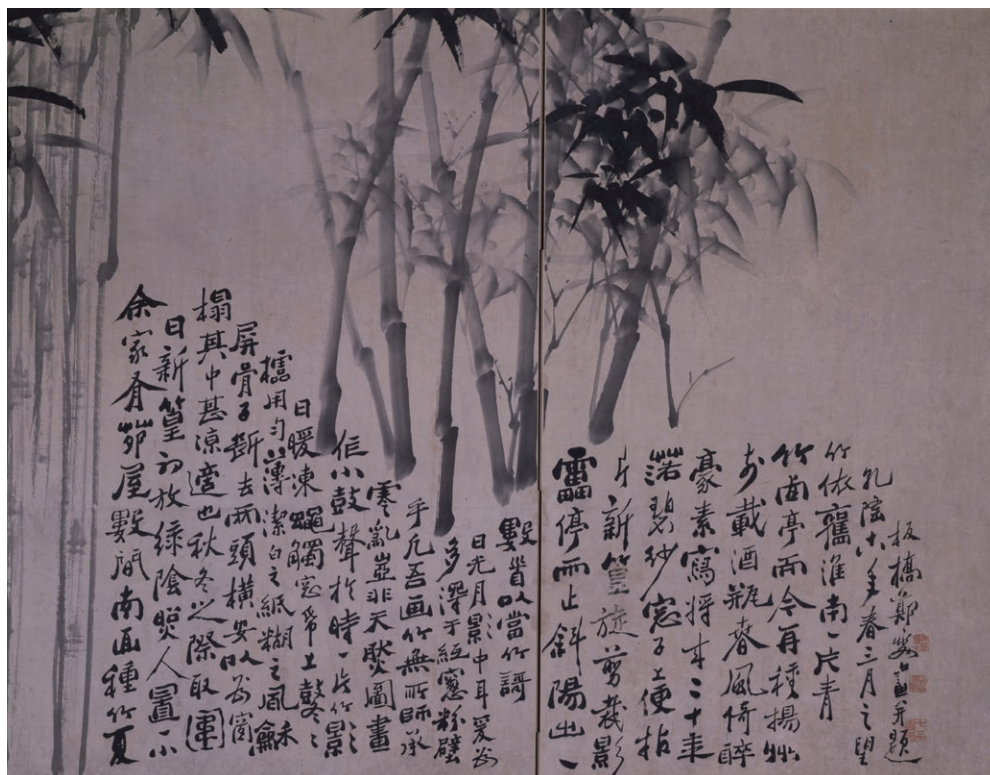


Figure 9. Zheng Xie, *Bamboo* (detail of inscription), dated 1753. Four-panel folding screen; ink on paper. Tokyo National Museum, Image: TNM Image Archives.

his work appear even more dynamic (Figure 9).¹⁹ What is more, as in the character *kaze* 風 (Chinese: *feng*) (last line, fourth character), meaning “wind,” Tessai uses the flying-white (split-hair) technique, recalling the style of calligraphy by Zhang Jizhi (1186–1263) that spread through the Zen monastic community in Japan from medieval times. Executed with a dry brush, Tessai’s “wind” visually evokes strong gusts.

Tessai was drawn to the Yangzhou Eccentrics from the early years of the Meiji era, but he was not alone in this regard.²⁰ The noted scholar-artist Okuhara Seiko (1837–1913) produced calligraphy works that resemble Zheng’s work.²¹ How Tessai and Seiko became familiar with Zheng’s style is yet to be fully explored, but Chinese works were imported through Nagasaki even during the seclusionist era, and the number of Japanese holdings gradually increased after they began traveling overseas in the mid-nineteenth century. As we shall see, Tetsujō played an important role in continuing this trend, leading to a rapid importation of Chinese objects to Japan during the decades surrounding the demise of the Qing dynasty.²²

Hall of the King of Hell

Tessai’s lifelong interest in Zheng Xie is evident in *Hall of the King of Hell*, produced in 1919 (Figures 10 and 11). It illustrates a poem by Zheng admonishing those who were too obsessed with owning antiquities, which could lead to the loss of conscience, the loss of an entire fortune, and even the loss of credibility. Zheng references writings by revered rulers and scholars from the past, urging people to focus on deeds rather than goods to bring the world peace and prosperity. The poem seems to express Zheng’s lament over the values of the affluent in Yangzhou, the city, in his time, booming with the salt trade.

Tessai’s *Hall of the King of Hell* depicts a scene of judgment by Yama (Enma), one of the ten kings of hell in Buddhism and a popular figure in Japanese art. The painting shows Yama clad in a red robe and seated behind a desk. In front of him sit various antique objects such as ceramic pieces, scrolls, and bronze vessels. At the bottom of the painting are two figures doomed to hell, begging for mercy and fearful of being punished by an ogreish *oni* giant who is ready to strike them with a long, spiked metal club. By the king stands a mirror meant to show the two figures’ wrongdoings in life. A scene of judgment by Yama is a long-standing subject in East Asian painting, with an early surviving example being produced sometime before 1195 by Jin Chushi (act. late 12th century), one of the Ningbo painters whose works had been imported to Japan in medieval times (Figure 12).²³ In producing his *Hall of the King of Hell*, Tessai may have intended a warning to those who were drawn to antiquities, including himself. Casually executed, Tessai’s figures are almost absurdly comical, but the work may have struck some of his contemporaries with satirical pungency.

Tessai liked this particular poem by Zheng Xie and inscribed it on other works, such as “Antiquities” (Kottō), a double-page opening in the album *Ink Frolics for Laughter* (*Ishō bokugi gachō*, 1923) (Figure 13). The picture here shows the kind of bronze objects that made their way not only to Japan but also to North America and Europe in the early twentieth century. When traveling to Kyoto in 1907, Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919), an American industrialist and collector, met Tessai several times, twice visiting his estate.²⁴ On the same trip, Freer purchased a Shang dynasty

wine vessel (*jia*) from Fujita and Company (Figure 14).²⁵ We do not know what exactly took place between Tessai and Freer, but they surely shared an interest in antiquities. It is not hard to imagine that this kind of common aesthetic interest laid a foundation for an extensive scholarly network that connected Japan and China, especially given Japan's deep-rooted cultural kinship with the continent.



Figure 10. (Left) Tomioka Tessai, *Hall of the King of Hell*, 1919. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, 2021, 2021.398.3.

Figure 11. (Above) Detail of Figure 10.



Figure 12. Jin Chushi, *Ten Kings of Hell* (detail, the fifth king, Yama), before 1195. One of five of a set of ten hanging scrolls; ink and color on silk. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1930, 30.76.293.



Figure 13. (Above) Tomioka Tessai, *Antiquities*, From *Ink Frolics for Laughter*, 1923. Double-page opening from album; ink and color on paper. Deposited at Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji, Tessai Museum.

Figure 14. (Facing) *Ritual Wine Warmer (Jia) with Taotie and Birds*, ca. 1400–1250 BCE. Bronze. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Gift of Charles Lang Freer, 1907.37.



Su Dongpo in a Borrowed Hat

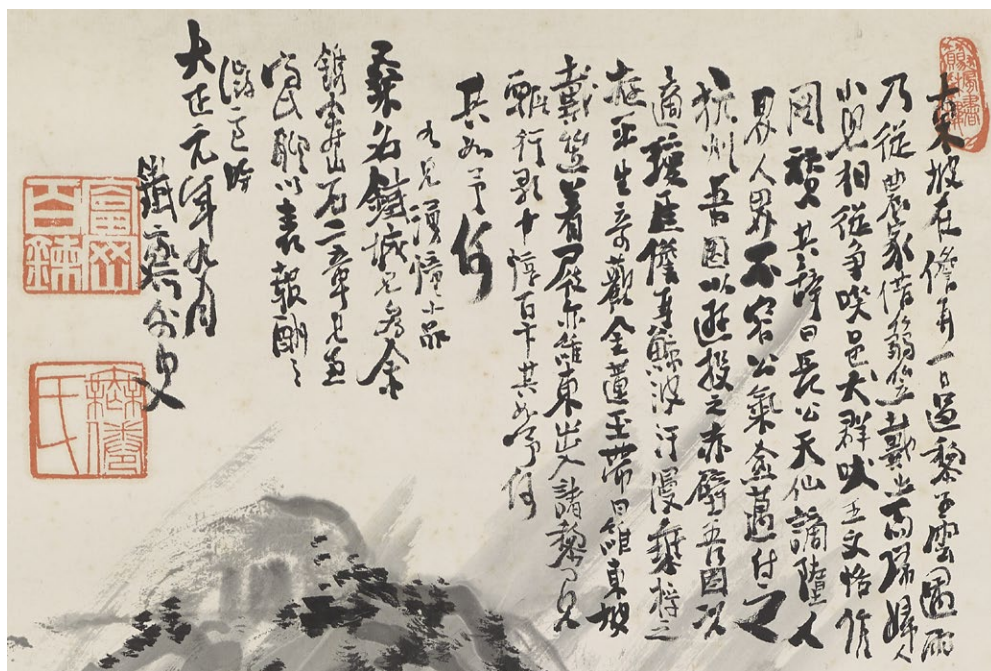
In 1912 Tessai produced *Su Dongpo in a Borrowed Hat*. This work, mentioned at the beginning of this essay, exemplifies the dynamic brushwork in Tessai's later career. The uninhibited feel of the painting is matched by the poem inscribed at the top, which is ascribed to Wang Tao (Wang Wenke, 1020–1080) (Figure 15).²⁶ It describes Su Dongpo as a free-spirited thinker who was twice banished from the capital Kaifeng (and twice called back) before being sent to exile for the third time, to the far south on Hainan Island.

Changgong [Su Dongpo] had been an immortal of the sky.	長公天仙
Condemned and fallen to the human world.	謫墮人界
The human world did not accept him.	人界不容
His spirit grew increasingly vital.	公氣愈邁
Removed [from the capital, Kaifeng] to Hangzhou,	付[sic, 斥]之杭州
He amused himself.	吾因以遊
Sent to the Red Cliff [in Huangzhou],	投之赤壁
He made himself at home.	吾因以適
[Banished to] Danyai Qionger [i.e., Hainan Island],	瓊崖儋耳
Crossing a vast sea, riding huge waves,	鯨波汗慢
He enjoyed going on a raft.	乘桴之遊
He is at ease at strange sights.	平生奇觀
Once he was granted a jade sash and was sent off with	金蓮玉帶
gold-lotus lanterns. ²⁷	
That was Dongpo.	曰維東坡
He now wears a bamboo hat and wooden clogs.	載笠着屐
This is also Dongpo.	亦維東[坡]
Su freely mingles with the <i>Li</i> [aborigines],	出入諸黎
Carrying a gourd, singing a song,	負瓢行歌
Utterly sincere and full of delight.	十惇百卞
Nothing can stop him.	其如予何
Nothing can stop him.	其如予何 ²⁸

Tessai adds a few lines after the poem to explain the event that inspired his work.

My friend Kuwana Tetsujō carved two	桑名鐵城兄爲余鑄壽山石二章見惠
seals made of Mount Shou stone as a	
gift for me.	
I painted this as a small token of	寫此聊以表報酬之微意
gratitude.	
Ninth month, first year of Taishō [1912].	時大正元年九月 鐵齋外史
Tessai Gaishi	

“Mount Shou stone” (Shoushanshi) refers to high-quality soapstone (pyrophyllite) harvested in the village of Shoushan in Fujian Province, a material desirable to scholar-artists engaged in seal engraving.²⁹ The last four characters of the inscription



read “Tessai Gaishi” 鐵齋外史, one of his artistic names (*gō*), followed by two square impressions of seals cut by Tetsujō (Figure 16). The same impressions appear in *Muryōjubutsudō Seal Album* (*Muryōjubutsudō inpu*), which features 309 seals that Tessai left behind.³⁰

The seals that Tessai used, although rarely analyzed, provide important information about the artist’s surroundings as well as the art of seal engraving. Actual seals (as opposed to their impressions) have characters cut in mirror image, reversed from the left to the right. A seal carved in intaglio, when stamped with red ink on white paper or silk, produces white characters (Japanese: *hakubun*; Chinese: *baiwen*) against a red background; a seal carved in relief produces red characters (Japanese: *shubun*; Chinese: *zhuwen*) against a white background. In *Su Dongpo in a Borrowed Hat*, the white-character seal (top) reads: “Tomioka Hyakuren” 富岡百鍊, “Hyakuren” being the official name Tessai used from the late 1860s. The red-character seal (bottom) reads “Muken shi” 無倦氏 (Chinese: *Wujuan shi*) or “tireless fellow,” referring to his scholarly nickname (*azana*) “Muken.” It alludes to the Confucian *Analects*, which consider *wujuan* (Japanese: *muken*) or “tirelessness” to be a critical trait for those who perform official duties.³¹ This red-character seal, referring to Tessai by his scholarly nickname, is also appropriate for the subject of the painting: Su Dongpo, a scholar-official who carried out his duties against the odds he faced in his tumultuous life.

Seals often convey layers of literal meaning but also function as a means of visual expression. Tours de force in archaizing, the two brand-new seals carved by Tetsujō demonstrate ingenuity in design, matched by precision in handling the “iron-brush” (Japanese: *teppitsu*; Chinese: *tiebi*)—that is, cutting tools for seal engraving.³² The cut surfaces of these seals are relatively large, each about 5.5 × 5.5 centimeters. Tetsujō’s carving, as shown in the impressions, has a sense of clarity created with even lines and pronounced corners even though every element is roughened to a varying degree



Figure 15. (Left) Detail of Figure 1.

Figure 16. (Above) Detail of Figure 1. Seals carved by Kuwana Tetsujō, (top): “Tomioka Hyakuren” 富岡百鍊, (bottom): “Muken shi” 無倦氏 (“Tireless fellow”).

by the natural grain of the stone as well as by Tetsujō's skill in adding a sense of age. Particularly illuminating are the ways in which the characters interact with their boundaries: the top impression consists of four tightly arranged characters with slim borders that are in part obliterated, recalling worn-out seals. In the bottom impression, the lower right character, *ken* 倦 (Chinese: *juan*), has vertical lines extended to faintly touch the underside of the frame, as though the seal itself has accumulated old red ink, thickened, and begun to fill the narrow margin at the bottom. Most striking here is the character *shi* 氏 (Chinese: *shi*); its diagonal, gently arched line—unusually long in proportion—has the tip extended to faintly contact the underside of the frame. Parallel to this is a shorter line to the left, subtly curved and partially adjoining the frame. These visual elements yield a remarkable sense of equilibrium, and the character as a whole looks as though it is balancing with a slim, extended leg, leaning against a wall for support. Taking into account that actual engraving had to be done in mirror image, the artistry here is extraordinarily complex. It is difficult to discern specifically what aspects of seal engraving Tetsujō learned in China, but these archaized brand-new seals, as impressed on Tessai's painting, provide a glimpse into the antiquarian taste shared by Chinese and Japanese literati in modern times.

In China, Tetsujō not only studied seal engraving but also purchased a few dozen paintings. They included works widely recognized today as canonical in the history of Chinese painting, such as *Tranquil Evening Album* (*Anwantie*) by Bada Shanren (1626–1705) and *A Waterfall in Mount Lu* by Shitao (1642–1707), both now in the Sen'oku Hakukokan in Kyoto. Tetsujō's collection expanded over the years to include another well-known work by Shitao, *Returning Home* (Figures 17 and 18). It bears a colophon by Tessai that quotes Zheng Xie's passage on Shitao. Both Bada Shanren and Shitao, well-known Individualists of the Qing dynasty, gained much popularity among cosmopolitan Japanese and Chinese as their mutual bonds grew in the early twentieth century.³³

Tetsujō spearheaded this development but was hardly alone in bringing artworks to Japan from China. In 1914 Lian Quan (1863–1932), a Qing scholar-official turned educator-publisher, brought to Japan about one hundred paintings that he owned.³⁴ These included Shitao's album *Illustration of Su Shi's Poems on the Seasons* (now in the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts), whose box bears an inscription by Tessai. Hashimoto Kansetsu (1883–1945), a painter in Kyoto who was versed in Chinese literature and frequented the continent, painted *Plum Blossoms*, which was modeled after a work by Shitao that he saw in Shanghai in 1922 (Figure 19). He published the book *Shitao* in 1926, which features the aforementioned *Returning Home* and five additional works by Shitao.³⁵ Kansetsu himself owned Shitao's *Ten Thousand Ugly Inkblots* (1685, now in the Suzhou Museum), which was displayed at the 1925 exhibition of Chinese paintings commemorating Tessai's death, along with some fifty other paintings.³⁶ Although the imports from China at this time covered the Shang dynasty to the Republican era, this exhibition focused on Ming and Qing paintings and included works by the contemporary artist Wu Changshi, reflecting the desire of Japanese intellectuals to catch up with the latest artistic trends on the continent.

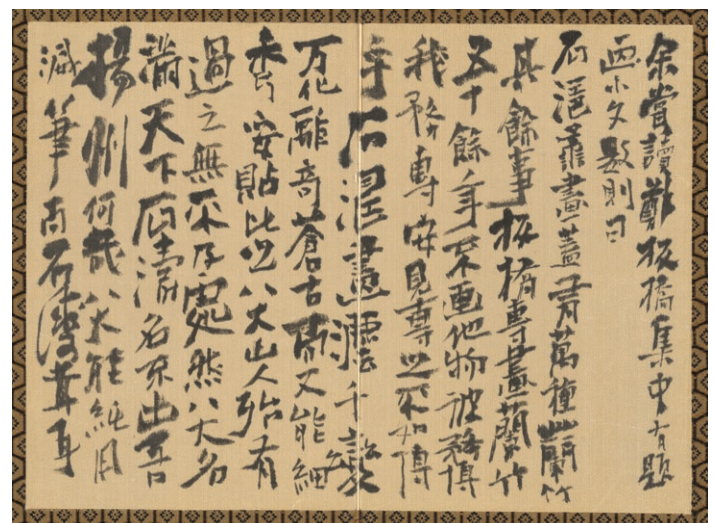
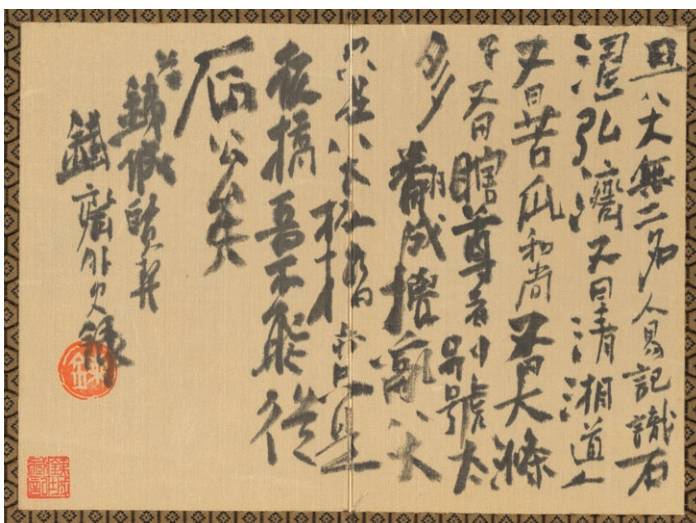
What did Tessai learn from these imports? He was an individualist to such a degree that it makes it difficult to discern exactly what paintings inspired his work.

His *Su Dongpo in a Borrowed Hat* nevertheless has similarities to Shitao's work, such as *A Man in a House Beneath a Cliff* (Figure 20).³⁷ Both paintings show a near abstract landscape, executed with loose, kinetic brushstrokes along with blotchy marks in ink in Tessai's case, and with spatters in light colors in Shitao's. The brush traces in Tessai's painting produce a dynamic, stormy atmosphere, while in Shitao's, an almost incorporeal rock formation. Shitao's painting has a lone figure in a hut facing the viewer. Depicted with a fine, well-controlled brush, this scholar appears still, making



Figure 17. (Left) Shitao (Zhu Ruoji), *Pages from Returning Home*, ca.1695. Album; ink and color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, from the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Family, gift of Wen and Constance Fong, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Dillon, 1976, 1976.280a-n.

Figure 18. (Below) Tomioka Tessai, *Colophon to Shitao's Returning Home* (fig. 17). Ink on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, from the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Family, gift of Wen and Constance Fong, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Dillon, 1976, 1976.280a-n.



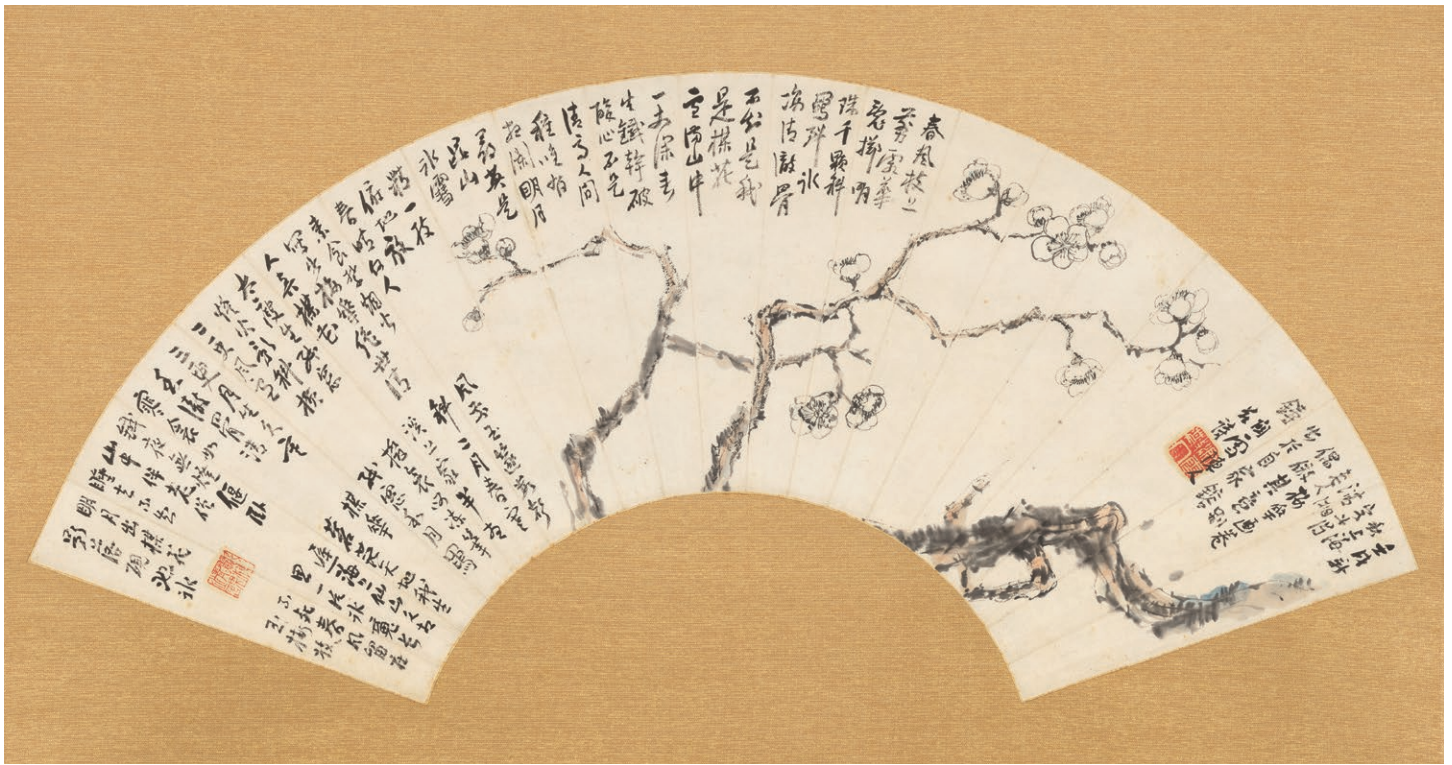


Figure 19. (Above) Hashimoto Kansetsu, *Plum Blossoms*, 1922. Fan mounted as hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, 2019, 2019.420.39. Image source: Art Resource, New York.

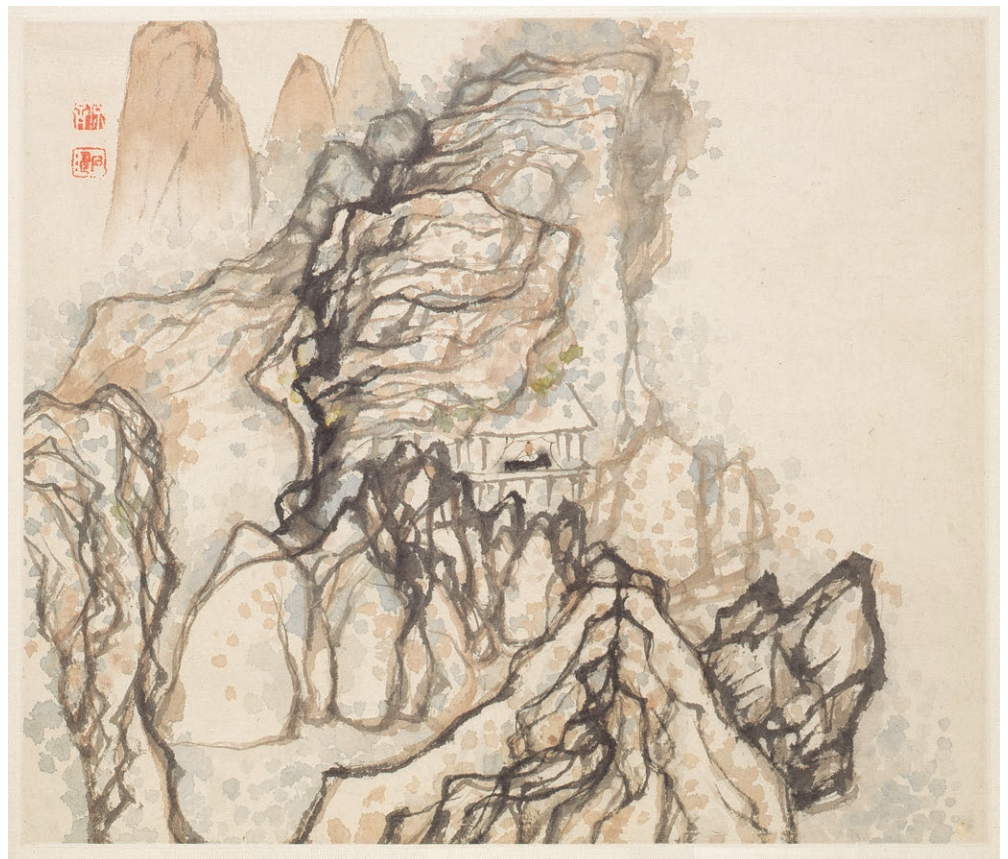


Figure 20. (Right) Shitao (Yuanji), *A Man in a House Beneath a Cliff*, late seventeenth century. Album leaf; ink color on paper. The C. C. Wang Collection, New York, photographed by John Bigelow Taylor.

Figure 21. Detail Figure 1.
Seal carved by Kuwana
Tetsujō “Shifū Shorō”
賜楓書樓 (“Gracious
Maple Book Pavilion”).

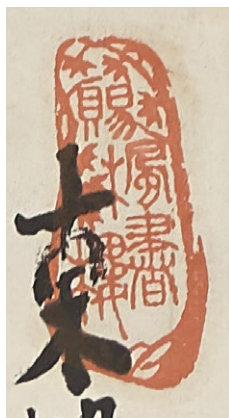


Figure 22. Nagao Uzan, “Tōba heki” (Chinese: “Dongpo pi”) 東坡癖 (“Dongpo Obsession”), early twentieth century. Seal impression. Deposited at Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji, Tessai Museum.



Figure 23. Wu Changshi, “Dongpo tongrisheng” (Japanese: Tōba dōjitsusei) 東坡同日生 (“Born on the Same Day as Dongpo”), 1917. Seal impression. Deposited at Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji, Tessai Museum.

a stark contrast to his fantastic surroundings—a contrast that leads the spectator to imagine that the otherworldly landscape reflects the scholar’s mind. Similarly, in Tessai’s work, Dongpo, watching his steps, simply walks along. His composure makes a striking contrast to his stormy surroundings, which appear to express Dongpo’s uninhibited nature.

Curiously, in his painting, Tessai adds another figure in a two-story building above, looking out to gaze on Dongpo below. This man is likely the artist, who strongly identified himself with the Chinese scholar. The building here may have been modeled after Tessai’s two-story library, whose name, “Gracious Maple Book Pavilion” (Shifū Shorō), appears in the impression of a seal in the upper right corner, carved once again by Tetsujō (Figure 21).³⁸

Tessai was not the only scholar who identified with Dongpo. Since at least the twelfth century in China and the fifteenth century in Japan, there were numerous paintings depicting Dongpo or themes related to him.³⁹ Dongpo was deeply admired by generations of scholars—both Chinese and Japanese—so much so that some used the phrase “Dongpo obsession” to express their sentiments.⁴⁰ One of the self-proclaimed Dongpo addicts was the poet-scholar Nagao Uzan (1864–1942), a friend of Tessai’s who engraved a seal for him reading “Tōba heki” 東坡癖 (Chinese: “Dongpo pi”), or “Dongpo Obsession” (Figure 22). Nagao, who lived in Shanghai for eleven years and was an editor for the Commercial Press (Shangwu Yinshuguan), was well connected to learned men in China. Versed in all of the four perfections, Nagao forged a particularly close friendship with Wu Changshi and later asked him to engrave a seal for Tessai.⁴¹ Carved in 1917, this seal, reading “Dongpo tongrisheng” 東坡同日生 (Japanese: *Tōba dōjitsusei*), or “Born on the Same Day as Dongpo,” was one of the seals Tessai used most frequently in his final years (Figure 23). It was a delightful coincidence for Tessai that he and Dongpo shared a birthday: the nineteenth day of the twelfth month in the lunar calendar.

Nagao, who moved from Shanghai to Kyoto in 1914, played a significant role in connecting the Chinese and Japanese art worlds. Together with Tomioka Kenzō (1873–1918), Tessai’s son and a Sinologist at Kyoto Imperial University, Nagao organized a

Figure 24. *Farewell Party for Luo Zhenyu* (from the left, Nagao Uzan, Inukai Tsuyoshi, Luo Zhenyu, Tomioka Tessai, and Naitō Konan), 1919. Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji, Tessai Museum.



series of Su Dongpo birthday gatherings (Japanese: Ju-Sokai; Chinese: Shou-Suhui) as he had done with his friends in Shanghai.⁴² About a dozen scholars and artists were invited to these gatherings in Kyoto, including Tessai, Tetsujō, and Naitō Konan (1866–1934), a renowned Sinologist and Kenzō’s colleague at the university. Also joining them was Luo Zhenyu (1866–1940), a former high-ranking official of the Qing and a connoisseur-collector who fled to Kyoto during the 1911 Revolution. These men were core members of what I call “the Kyoto Circle,” a center of a social network across national borders that linked like-minded thinkers who gravitated toward Chinese antiquities (Figure 24).⁴³ At the Su Dongpo birthday gatherings, each participant brought artworks and artifacts inspired by Dongpo, offering excellent opportunities for study in person. Much to their delight, Wu Changshi and Wang Zhen (Wang Yiting, 1867–1938), also a famous artist, sent their works from the continent to be displayed at the 1920 gathering.⁴⁴ Another important member of the network was Inukai Tsuyoshi (1855–1932), a liberal policymaker and renowned calligrapher. Inukai was one of the chief sponsors of a *Red Cliff* gathering held at the Uji River, south of Kyoto, in 1922.⁴⁵ This gathering, again organized by Nagao, commemorated Su Dongpo’s famous prose poems *Red Cliff Rhapsodies* (*Chibifu*). To raise funds for the event, Tessai produced two paintings: *Red Cliff All Around* and *Former Red Cliff Rhapsody*, both now in the Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji in Takarazuka. Tetsujō brought Tessai’s *Su Dongpo in a Borrowed Hat* to be displayed for the occasion.

Orchid Pavilion Gathering

The last painting in this essay that illustrates Tessai’s connection to a Sino-Japanese network and the impact of China on the Japanese art world is *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, produced in 1913 (Figure 25). Like *Su Dongpo in a Borrowed Hat*, this work



Figure 25. Tomioka Tessai, *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, 1913. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Promised Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles.

Figure 26. Detail of
Figure 25.



shows the signature style of Tessai's later work, done with wet, kinetic brushstrokes that evoke an expressionistic feel. The Orchid Pavilion gathering refers to a poetry party in 353 CE that was hosted by the "calligraphy sage" Wang Xizhi (303–361) at his Orchid Pavilion (Lanting) in Kuaiji (in modern Zhejiang Province).⁴⁶ Wang later compiled the poems composed by his guests and added the "Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering" (Lantingxu), which has been, and still is, one of the most celebrated works in the history of East Asian calligraphy.

Tessai's composition has a waterfall in the upper right, a gentle stream meandering through the lower terrain, and a large pavilion standing over the stream. In the building are Wang Xizhi, engaged in writing, and a young man looking out to see geese on the water below (Figure 26). A legend has it that the graceful movements of goose necks inspired Wang's elegant calligraphy. Seated along the stream are Wang's scholar friends with pieces of paper scattered about them. On the stream



Figures 27 (above) and
28 (left). Details of
Figure 25.

float wine cups. The guests were requested to compose poems before cups reached them and, if they failed, the penalty would be to drink the wine. As is often the case in his paintings, Tessai adds humorous scenes that evoke everyday life. At the bottom of the picture is a page collecting an empty tray while balancing himself on a narrow bridge (Figure 27). To the left are two men who appear to have finished their compositions or else have given up on them, cozy and content, enjoying the wine. Echoing the idyllic image, the inscription in the upper left reads, “On a day of mild breeze and gentle air” 惠風和暢日 (Japanese: *keifū wayō bi*; Chinese: *huifēng héchāng rì*) (Figure 28). It refers to a phrase in the “Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering” written by Wang Xizhi (discussed later in this essay).

Tessai's *Orchid Pavilion Gathering* is accompanied by a box with an inscription by Naitō Konan. It states that this work at the time belonged to Ueno Riichi (1848–1919), a chief executive of the newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* who requested the painting be displayed at the 1913 Orchid Pavilion gathering held at Tenju'an, a sub-temple of Nanzenji in Kyoto.⁴⁷ Wang Xizhi's poetry party inspired countless scholarly gatherings across East Asia for centuries, and large commemorative events were customarily held every sixty years in accordance with the traditional sexagenary dating system. The year 1913 marked the 1,560th anniversary and the twenty-sixth sixty-year cycle from the original Orchid Pavilion gathering held in 353. The Tenju'an gathering was led by Naitō and was sponsored by Tessai, Kenzō, Ueno, and two dozen other like-minded men. In all likelihood, Tessai produced his *Orchid Pavilion Gathering* to raise funds for the event.

To commemorate the occasion, Naitō and others organized an exhibition at the Kyoto Municipal Library featuring more than two hundred Chinese and Japanese objects related to Wang Xizhi.⁴⁸ No original work by Wang has survived; however, Naitō was able to showcase two works that were (and still are) considered among the closest to Wang's own hand. One was *Letter to Official Kong* (*Kong shi zhong tie*), a Tang-dynasty tracing copy of a letter by Wang Xizhi that was brought to Japan in the eighth century (now in the Maeda Ikutokukai); the other was a rare Song dynasty rubbing of *On the Seventeenth Day* (*Shiqitie*), reproducing twenty-nine letters by Wang made from stone tablets carved on the orders of Tang Taizong (598–649; r. 626–649).⁴⁹ Once owned by the noted calligrapher Jiang Chenying (1628–1699), this album was in the collection of Luo Zhenyu, who sold it to Ueno Riichi.

Also displayed in the exhibition were about three dozen paintings with themes related to Wang Xizhi. They included five works ascribed to the Ming dynasty depicting the Orchid Pavilion gathering and some fifteen examples by Japanese painters such as Ike Taiga (1723–1776), Aoki Shukuya (1737–1802), and Nakabayashi Chikutō (1776–1853), showing the spread of the theme within the circle of Sinophile artists during the Edo period.⁵⁰ Continuing this trend in the Meiji era, in 1884 Tessai produced a painting of the Orchid Pavilion gathering. On the occasion of the 1913 gathering in the Taishō era, he conducted research on visual prototypes, resulting in the handscroll *Thoughts on the Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, which was also displayed.

In his 1913 hanging scroll *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, there is one covert but telling feature that alludes to a style of calligraphy in China that predates Wang Xizhi. The aforementioned inscription on the scroll quotes a phrase from Wang's preface, "mild breeze and gentle air," or *keifū wayō* 惠風和暢 (Chinese: *huifeng hechang*) (Figure 29). The third character, meaning "gentle" or "harmony," is commonly written as *wa* 和 (Chinese: *he*), as shown in a rubbing of a multigenerational copy of the original "Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering," brushed by Wang himself (Figure 30).⁵¹ Tessai's work, however, shows the character in a rare ancient form—*wa* 𠂔 (Chinese: *he*) (Figure 31)—that can be found in the *Yi Ying Stele* (*Yi Ying bei*), erected in 153 CE, some two hundred years before Wang's time (Figure 32). The *Yi Ying Stele* was an important model for Qing calligraphers and, sure enough, the same old form *wa* (*he*) was used by Zheng Xie, whose works, as discussed earlier, triggered Tessai's creative

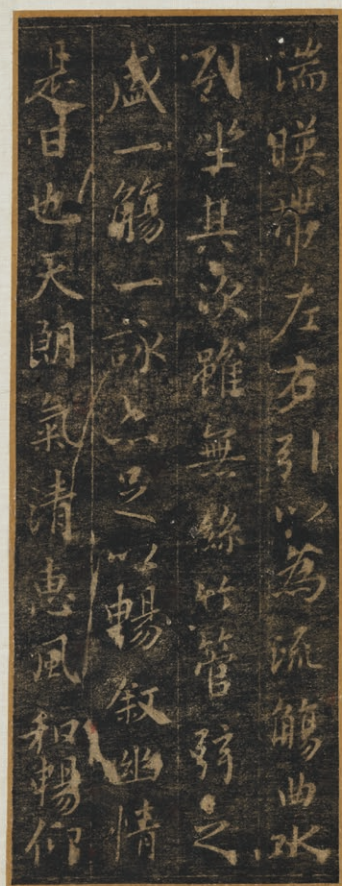


Figure 30.
Detail of Figure 29.
Character 和.



Figure 31.
Detail of Figure 25.
Character 和.



Figure 32.
Detail of Figure 8.
Character 和.

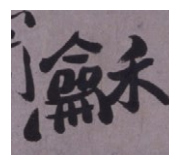


Figure 33.
Detail of Figure 9.
Character 和.

Figure 29. *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, Dingwu version, Xuyanxian edition. Original text by Wang Xizhi (303–361), 353; rubbing: Song dynasty. Pages from album; ink rubbing on paper. Tokyo National Museum, Image: TNM Image Archives.

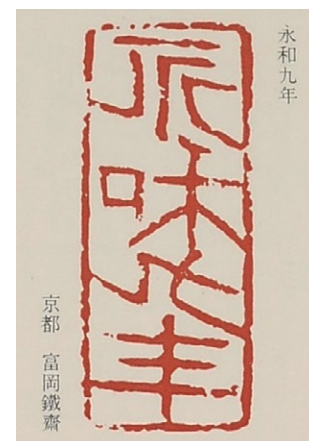
impulse early in his career (Figure 33). Whether the use of this unusual form of the character was inspired by a rubbing of the stele, Zheng's calligraphy, or some other work is not known, but Tessai was certainly informed by the Qing antiquarian aesthetic derived from metal and stone objects from the distant past. Anachronistically employed, the archaic *wa* in Tessai's *Orchid Pavilion Gathering* must have caught the eyes of his literati friends.

Yet how extensively did such a subtle visual play—alluding to ancient culture in China—resonate in the minds of contemporaries? There were many who studied ancient forms of characters. To commemorate the 1913 gathering in Kyoto, Kuwana Tetsujō led a collaborative project, producing the *Orchid Pavilion Seal Album* (*Rantei*



Figure 34. (Left) Page from *Orchid Pavilion Seal Album*, 1913. Kansai University Library.

Figure 35. (Below) Detail of Figure 34. Impression of the first seal, carved by Tomioka Tessai. It has the four characters “Eiwa kyūnen” (Chinese: Yonghe jiunian) 永和九年, or the “Ninth year of the Yonghe era” (353 CE) reversed from the left to right. The reversal was possibly due to a casual mistake by Tessai.



inpu) (Figure 34).⁵² It offers impressions of 61 seals, each showing several characters and altogether making up the entire 324 characters of Wang Xizhi's "Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering." These seals were engraved by forty learned men, and Tessai was given the honor of carving the first 4 characters, "Eiwa kyūnen" 永和九年 (Chinese: Yonghe jiunian), or the "Ninth year of the Yonghe era" (353 CE, Figure 35). The 1913 gathering had several hundred attendees, including Luo Zhenyu and the poet-scholar Wang Guowei (1877–1927). Furthermore, the Kyoto event was held in association with its counterpart at the Xiling Seal Carving Society in Hangzhou, which had about one hundred attendees, and a more intimate gathering in Shanghai, with about thirty attendees, both of which Nagao and several other Japanese joined. In Beijing, Liang Qichao (1873–1929), a scholar-journalist who had lived in political asylum in Japan for over a dozen years, led an Orchid Pavilion gathering with forty participants.⁵³

An Orchid Pavilion gathering was also held in Tokyo. By far the largest, this event attracted over 1,100 participants. It was led by the calligraphers Kusakabe Meikaku (1838–1922) and Nomura Motosuke (Soken, 1842–1927); the art historian Imaizumi Yūsaku (1850–1931); and the art administrator Masaki Naohiko (1862–1940), who was then the president of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō).⁵⁴ Attendees included key figures in literati art such as the seal engraver Kawai Senro (1871–1945); the calligrapher Nishikawa Shundō (1847–1915); and the painter Komuro Suiun (1874–1945). Also present were the architect Itō Chūta (1867–1954); the oil painter Nakamura Fusetsu (1866–1943); and the *nihonga* painter Terasaki Kōgyō (1866–1919), who worked in the traditional medium and incorporated European pictorial techniques. The range of participants here calls for further investigation into Sino-Japanese cultural exchange and its wide impact on modern Japanese art.

"I AM A SCHOLAR, not a painter," Tessai famously claimed.⁵⁵ His assertion may sound like an almost outmoded cliché of the scholar-amateur artist for someone who lived through the era of modernization. The Japanese art world itself underwent major changes, including the adoption of European classifications, most conspicuously "fine art" (*bijutsu*), but also related categories such as "painting" (*kaiga*), "sculpture" (*chōkoku*), and "craft" (*kōgei*).⁵⁶ To be sure, already in his time Tessai was enormously popular as a painter, but his work does not appear to fit neatly into such categories. Rather, it belonged to a Sino-Japanese literati network, which Tessai and his friends helped expand as they engaged in poetry, calligraphy, painting, and seal carving.

From today's viewpoint, it may still be difficult to understand that such a bond between China and Japan based on art was possible during the time of Japanese imperialism. It might be equally difficult to conceive that China contributed significantly to modern Japanese art. Richly layered with visual and literary expression, Tessai's work, featuring the four perfections, offers a window into a terrain in human history that awaits further exploration.

Notes

1. This line is taken from an inscription on Tessai's painting titled *Blue-Green Landscape* (dated 1890, now in Toraya Bunko, Japan). For a translation of the entire poem, see Tamaki Maeda, "Tomiooka Tessai's Narrative Landscape: Rethinking Sino-Japanese Traditions" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2004), 152. Unless otherwise noted, all the translations in this essay are by the author.

2. The painting is based on a well-known legend of Su Dongpo, which will be discussed later in this essay. On the life and work of Su Dongpo, see Ronald C. Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1994).

3. The origin of the story goes back as early as the Song dynasty. See Kunigō Hideaki, "Nihon ni okeru So Shoku zō: Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan hokan no mohon o chūshin to suru shiryō shōkai," *Museum* 494 (1992): 9–10.

4. Tessai has frequently been compared with Post-Impressionist painters, perhaps most often with Cézanne. Such accounts are too many to enumerate here, but examples include Ono Chikkyō's (1889–1979) remark cited in Uchiyama Takeo, "Tessai to Kyōto gadan," in *Tomiooka Tessai: Zurokuben*, eds. Uchiyama Takeo et al. (Kyoto: Shinbunsha, 1991), 352; and Bruno Taut, *Houses and People of Japan* (London: John Gifford, 1989), 268–269.

5. For example, see Joshua A. Fogel, ed., *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). In 2018 the University of California, San Diego, held a conference titled "Modern Japanese Art and China," organized by Tamaki Maeda and Joshua A. Fogel.

6. On the four perfections in Chinese art, see Shi Shuqing (Shi Jusei), "Chūgoku shoga no kanshō," in *Bunbutsu kanteika ga kataru Chūgoku shoga no sekai*, trans. Ōno Shūsaku (Tokyo: Daishūkan Shoten, 2001), 2–7.

7. On Japanese missions to China at the end of the Edo period, see Joshua A. Fogel, *Maiden Voyage: The Senzaimaru and the Creation of Modern Sino-Japanese Relations* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014).

8. On direct contact of Japanese artists with Chinese counterparts at the end of the Edo period and early decades of the Meiji period, see Paul Berry, "The Meeting of Chinese and Japanese Literati: Hu Gongshou, Yasuda Rōzan, and the Controversy over National Style," in *Literati Modern: Bunjinga from Late Edo to Twentieth-Century Japan: The Terry Welch Collection at the Honolulu Academy of Arts*, eds. Paul Berry and Michiyo Morioka (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2008), 16–25; Rosina Buckland, *Painting Nature for the Nation: Taki Katei and the Challenges to Sinophile Culture in Meiji Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Joshua A. Fogel, "Lust for Still Life: Chinese Painters in Japan and Japanese Painters in China in the 1860s and 1870s," in *Acquisition: Art and Ownership in Edo-Period Japan*, ed. Elizabeth Lillehoj (Warren, Conn.: Floating World, 2007), 149–168; Chen Jie, "Travels to Japan by Chinese Painters in the 1870s and 1880s," in Fogel, *The Role of Japan*, 13–41, 309–313; Kanda Kiichirō et al., eds., *Shodō zenshū*, vol. 25, *Nihon: Meiji, Taishō* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1957); and Yu-chih Lai, "Tea and the Art Market in Sino-Japanese Exchanges of the late Nineteenth Century: *Sencha* and the *Seiwan meien zushi*," in Fogel, *The Role of Japan*, 42–68, 313–318.

9. The Stele school of calligraphy was known in Japan as Rikuchōha (Six Dynasties School), but recent scholarship in Japanese tends to instead use the term *higakuha*, the Japanese reading of "*beixuepai*," or the "Stele School of calligraphy."

10. For biographical accounts of Kuwana Tetsujō, see Ajioka Yoshindo, "Kuwana Tetsujō," in *Chūgoku shoga tanbō*, ed. Kansai Chūgoku Shoga Korekushon Kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Nigensha, 2011), 13; and Sobukawa Hiroshi, "Kindai ni okeru Kansai Chūgoku shoga korekushon no keisei," in *Kansai Chūgoku shoga korekushon no kako to mirai*, eds. Kansai Chūgoku Shoga Korekushon Kenkyūkai (Nishinomiya-shi, Hyogo: Kansai Chūgoku Shoga Korekushon Kenkyūkai, 2012), 7–18.

11. The two-character compound *tosho* (Chinese: *tushu*), literally “pictures and letters,” commonly refers to “books and scrolls” but also means “seals” that scholars stamped on them as signs of ownership. Morohashi Tetsuji, *Dai Kan-Wa jiten* (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1966), 3, 100.
12. Thanks are due to Shi-ye Liu for her help with a few characters that were hard to decipher and translate. In addition, I have referred to a version translated by Wen Li, Yan-zhuang Zhang, and Jingmin Zhang to decipher a couple of other characters.
13. Yoshiaki Shimizu, “Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed,” in *Awakenings: Zen Figure Painting in Medieval Japan*, eds. Gregory Levine and Yukio Lippit (New York: Japan Society, 2007), 76–77; and Li Yaofu, *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed*, before 1317, ink on paper, 33 3/4 × 13 5/16 in (85.7 × 33.8 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, accessed March 28, 2020, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/40515>.
14. Nakata Yūjirō, “Nihon inshō gaisetsu,” in *Shōdō zenshū: Bekkan II: Inpu Nihon*, eds. Nakata et al. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1968), 1–18, esp. 14–16. For an overview of seal carving in Japan and China, see also Paul Berry, “Seals: Art of the Microcosm,” in *Literati Modern: Bunjinga from Late Edo to Twentieth-Century Japan: The Terry Welch Collection at the Honolulu Academy of Arts*, eds. Paul Berry and Michiyo Morioka (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2008), 318–325; and Jason C. Kuo, *Word As Image: The Art of Chinese Seal Engraving* (New York: China Institute in America, 1992).
15. Kuwana Tetsujō, “Go Shōsaki to sono sakuhin,” *Geien* 1, no. 4 (1919): 5.
16. On Tessai’s calligraphy, see Nonaka Ginsetsu, *Tomioka Tessai: Senkyō no sho* (Tokyo: Nigensha, 2002).
17. On *zattaisho*, see Kawachi Toshiharu, “Zattaisho,” in *Nihon, Chūgoku, Chōsen: Shodōshi nenpyō jiten*, ed. Shogaku Shodōshi Gakkai (Tokyo: Kayahara Shobō, 2005), 156–157.
18. On *bafen*, see Wen C. Fong, “Chinese Calligraphy: Theory and History,” in *The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliott Collection*, eds. Robert E. Harrist Jr., and Wen C. Fong (Princeton, N.J.: The Art Museum, Princeton University, 1999), 32.
19. Zheng, famous for his mixed-style calligraphy, called his style *liufenban* (literally, six and a half of ten), which was in part inspired by *bafen* (literally, eight of ten), or split style. Kakui Hiroshi, “Min, Shin no sho: Heimei na gyōsho to jūkōna shofū,” in *Kokyū Hakubutsuin*, ed. Kakui Hiroshi, vol. 11, *Min, Shin no sho* (Tokyo: Nippon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1998), 69; and Suzuki Hiroyasu, “Tei Shō [Zheng Xie],” in *Nihon, Chūgoku, Chōsen*, 234.
20. For example, in 1871 Tessai produced *Candy Seller*, a painting inspired by a work ascribed to Jin Nong (1687–1763), one of the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou. For *Candy Seller*, see *Tessai kenkyū* 33 (1977): unpaginated.
21. Naritasan Shōdō Bijutukan, *Kindai bunjin no itonami* (Tokyo: Tankōsha, 2006), 37–38; and Kawashima Junji, *Gasan kara miru Okuhara Seiko* (Tokyo: Rinshobō, 1991). Paul Berry kindly brought Kawashima’s work to my attention. Kawashima speculates that Seiko first studied reproductions of Zheng Xie’s calligraphy in woodblock-printed books during the Keiō era (1865–1868). See Kawashima, *Gasan kara*, 907–19. See also Michiyo Morioka, “Okuhara Seiko: 44. Elegant Mood of Mountain Residence,” in *Literati Modern*, 142–143, 291–292.
22. On the importation of Chinese paintings in the early twentieth century, see Tamaki Maeda, “Re-Canonizing Literati Painting in the Early Twentieth Century: The Kyoto Circle,” in Fogel, *The Role of Japan*, 215–227, 353–358.
23. Jin Chushi, *Ten Kings of Hell*, before 1195, ink and color on silk, 51 × 19 1/2 in (129.5 × 49.5 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, accessed April 9, 2020, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/44509?searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=Jin+Chushi&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=2>.

24. On Freer's meeting with Tessai, see Frank Feltens, "Meeting Tessai: Works by Tomioka Tessai from the Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection," *Orientalism* 51, no. 3 (May/June 2020): 9–10.
25. According to the National Museum of Asian Art online catalog, it was purchased from "Y. Fujita and Company, Japan." Frank Feltens kindly informed me that this "Y. Fujita" refers to Fujita Yasuke and Yasaburō, who operated shops in Tokyo, Kyoto, and New York. When Freer purchased this work, he thought it was a Han or Zhou piece, but it is now recognized as a Shang. On the bronze vessel, see "Ritual wine warmer (*jia*) with taotie and birds," ca. 1400–1250 BCE, bronze, 16 7/16 × 8 7/16 × 8 3/4 in (41.8 × 21.5 × 22.3 cm), Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., accessed September 16, 2020, <https://asia.si.edu/object/F1907.37/>; and Freer Gallery of Art, John Alexander Pope, and Rutherford J. Gettens, *The Freer Chinese Bronzes*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1967), 126–31. For more about Freer's travel to Japan, see Thomas Lawton and Linda Merrill, *Freer: A Legacy of Art* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1993), 59–97.
26. Tessai excerpts this poem from the *Yongchuang xiaopin* (Miscellaneous notes from the Yongchuang Pavilion), compiled by the Ming scholar Zhu Guozhen (1557–1632). According to Zhu, the poem was composed by Wang Tao (Wang Wenke). Wang, however, could not have composed this poem because he died before Su Dongpo was sent into exile on Hainan Island in 1097.
27. To be seen off with gold-lotus lanterns from a visit to the palace was the highest honor for statesmen in Dongpo's era. Maeda, "Tomioka Tessai's Narrative Landscape," 247–248.
28. The Chinese characters in brackets indicate corrections to Tessai's inscription made in Odakane Tarō et al., eds., *Tomioka Tessai, shiryōhen* (Kyoto: Kyoto Shinbunsha, 1991), 48; see also *Tessai kenkyū* 69 (1990): unpaginated. The brackets in the translated text are mine.
29. On techniques and materials in seal engraving, see Ohara Toshiki and Katsume Hiroshi, with Nakashima Yoshiharu, *Zukai: Tēnoku nyūmon* (Tokyo: Mokujisha, 2000).
30. Tomioka Masutarō, ed., *Muryōjubutsudō inpu*, 5 fascicles (Kyoto: Sunkōdō, 1926).
31. Morohashi Tetsuji, *Dai Kan-Wa jiten*, 7, 435.
32. On style, technique, and history of seal engraving, see Berry, "Seals"; Kuo, *Word as Image*; and Nakata, "Nihon inshō gaisetsu."
33. Kure Motoaki, "Sekitō e no akogare to sono jissai: Taishō kōki no 'Kaiisha' no gakatachi o megutte," in *Nihon bijutsu zenshū*, ed. Itakura Masaaki, vol. 6, *Higashi Ajia no naka no Nihon bijutsu* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2012), 204–205; and Aida-Yuen Wong, "A New Life for Literati Painting in the Early Twentieth Century: Eastern Art and Modernity, A Transcultural Narrative?" *Artibus Asiae* 60, no. 2 (2000): 297–326.
34. On Liang Quan's collection, see Ōmura Seigai, ed., *Shōbanryūdō gekiseki* (Tokyo: Shinbi Shoin, 1914). This Shitao painting was also published in Naitō Konan, *Shinchō shogafu* (Osaka: Hakubundō, 1916). On Liang Quan, see Suzuki Hiroyasu, "Ren Sen no Nihon ni okeru katsudō: Shūzōka to shitenō gyōseki o megutte," *Shogaku shodō kenkyū* 6 (1996): 71–86.
35. Hashimoto Kansetsu, *Sekitō* (Tokyo: Chūō Bijutsusha, 1926).
36. On the 1925 exhibition of Chinese painting, see Kōhansha, ed., *Kōhansha Shina meiga senshū* (Kyoto: Bunkadō Shoten, 1926); and Aoki Masaru, "Tessai-ō to Kōhansha," in *Aoki Masaru zenshū*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1970), 341–343.
37. On *A Man in a House Beneath a Cliff* by Shitao, see Jonathan Hay, *Shitao: Painting and Modernity in Early Qing China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 251–253.
38. Tessai, together with Kenzō, were famous for their collection of books. Tessai had two libraries built in his estate: the two-story Shifū Shorō (1911) and the three-story Kai-seikaku (Kuixing Pavilion, 1922), the latter of which was named after Kuixing, the deity of the Polar Star and the patron of learning.
39. One of the oldest and most common themes for painting related to Su Dongpo is

Red Cliff, inspired by *Rhapsodies on Red Cliff* (*Chibifu*), two prose poems he composed in 1082. On images of *Red Cliff* in the Song dynasty, see Jerome Silbergeld, “Back to the Red Cliff: Reflections on the Narrative Mode in Early Literati Landscape Painting,” *Ars Orientalis* 25 (1995): 19–38. On paintings in Japan with themes related to Su Dongpo, see Kunigō, “Nihon ni okeru,” 4–22; and Kunigō Hideaki, “Nihon ni okeru So Shoku zō (2): Chūsei ni okeru gadaï tenkai,” *Museum* 545 (1996): 3–27.

40. On “Dongpo obsession,” see Nagao Masakazu, “Kyōto no Ju-Sokai,” *Shoron* 5 (Fall 1974): 42–44.

41. Tomioka Masutarō, comp., “Tessai Nenpu,” in *Tomioka Tessai, Zurokuben*, 363.

42. These gatherings were held in 1916, 1917, 1918, 1920, and 1937. Nagao organized the 1916 and 1917 gatherings with Tomioka Kenzō, who died in 1918. Nagao was the sole organizer for the 1918, 1920, and 1937 gatherings. See Tomioka Masutarō, comp., “Tessai Nenpu”; and Nagao Masakazu, “Ju-Sokai to Sekihekikai,” 2 pts., *Bokubi* 252 (1975): 2–4; 253 (1975): 2–5.

43. On the Kyoto Circle, see Maeda, “Re-Canonizing Literati Painting.”

44. On the works by Wu Changshi and Wang Zhen, see Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, ed., *Chūgoku kindai kaiga to Nihon* (Kyoto: Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2012), 53, 55, and 269.

45. Kashiwagai Tomoko, “Tomioka Tessai no mita Sekihekikai,” *Shoron* 39 (2013): 130–147.

46. There are countless publications on Wang Xizhi, including a well-researched and lavishly illustrated catalog: Tokyo Kokuritu Hakubutsukan, Mainichi Shinbunsha, NHK Puromōshon, eds., *Shosei: Ō Gishi* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, NHK, NHK Puromōshon, 2013). On the Orchid Pavilion gathering and its reception in China and Japan in later periods, see the *Shosei: Ō Gishi* catalog, 113–64. On paintings of *The Orchid Pavilion Gathering* in the Edo period, see Kazuko Kameda-Madar, “Copying and Theory in Edo-Period Japan (1615–1868),” *Art History* 37, no. 4 (2014): 709–727.

47. On the 1913 Orchid Pavilion gathering, see Tō Tokumin (Tao Demin), ed., *Taishō kichū Ranteikai e no kaiko to keishō: Kansai Daigaku Toshokan Naitō Bunko shozōhin o chūshin ni* (Osaka: Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2013).

48. On the list of the objects that were displayed in the 1913 exhibition in Kyoto, see Suwa Gen’ichi, “Taishō kichū no Kyoto Ranteikai ni tsuite,” in Tō (Tao), ed., *Taishō kichū* (Osaka: Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2013), 169–189.

49. This *On the Seventeenth Day* album has a title piece by Luo Zhenyu, indicating it was a Tang rubbing, but today it is widely considered a Song. For more about the album, see Sugimura Kunihiko, “Zu 15-1 Tōtaku jūshichi jō, zu 15-2 Naitō konan batsu; Naitō Bunko,” in *Taishō kichū Ranteikai e no kaiko to keishō: Kansai Daigaku Toshokan Naitō Bunko shozōhin o chūshin ni* (Osaka: Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2013), 104; Akao Eikei, “Jūshichi jō (Sōtaku): Ō Gishi ichijō,” in *Hitsuboku seishin: Chūgoku shoga no sekai: Tokubetsu tenrankai Ueno korekushon kizō 50 shūnen kinen*, ed. Kyōto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan (Kyoto: Asahi Shinbunsha, 2011), 184; and Tamamura Kiyoshi, “Jūshichijō,” in *Nihon, Chūgoku, Chōsen*, 126.

50. The painters of the works ascribed to the Ming are not identified in the list of the objects published in Suwa, “Taishō kichū no Kyoto Ranteikai ni tsuite,” 169–189.

51. Emperor Taizong had the scholar-calligrapher Ouyang Xun (557–641) and others make copies of “Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering” in *linshu* (copying done with the original close at hand). A stone tablet was carved based on Ouyang’s copy, and its rubbings as well as rubbings of stone tablets made after the Tang tablet survive to this day. These rubbings and other reproductions all have the common form of *wa* 和 (Chinese: *he*).

52. See Tō, *Taishō kichū*, 81–85; and Kamei Taku, “Rannteï Inpu,” in Tō, *Taishō kichū*, 124. Kamei wrongly states that 60 people carved seals to cover all the 324 characters. But the album shows 61 seals carved by 40 people—some of whom carved multiple seals.

53. On the Beijing gathering, see Liang Qichao et al., “Kichū Keishū shi [Guichou Xiji

shi],” in *Taishō kichū Ranteikai e no kaiko to keishō: Kansai Daigaku Toshokan Naitō Bunko shozōhin o chūshin ni* (Osaka: Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2013), 201–206.

54. It was held at the Nihonbashi Kurabu and 1,169 people registered. On the Tokyo gathering, see “Rantei shūketsu kinenkai kiji,” first published in *Shoen* (1913), reprinted in *Taishō kichū Ranteikai e no kaiko to keishō: Kansai Daigaku Toshokan Naitō Bunko shozōhin o chūshin ni* (Osaka: Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2013), 191–199.

55. Tarō Odakane, *Tessai: Master of the Literati Style*, trans. Money L. Hickman (Tokyo: Kōdansha International, 1965), 12; Tsuruta Takeyoshi, “Tessai: Sono bunjinteki shikō,” in *Tomioka Tessai: Zurokuhen*, eds. Uchiyama Takeo et al. (Kyoto: Shinbunsha, 1991), 348. These and other secondary sources suggest that Tessai often asserted that “I am a scholar, not a painter,” especially in later life. Indeed, Tessai made this claim when the *yōga* painter Masamune Tokusaburō (1883–1962) visited him in 1921. See Masamune Tokusaburō, “Tessai-ō no omoide,” *Geijutsu shinchō* (September 2002): 54. See also Michiyo Morioka’s essay in this volume.

It should be noted that Tessai used the two-character compound “*ju sha*” (Chinese: *ru zhe*), which is translated into “scholar” here. “*Ju sha*” could mean “scholar” in general, or “Confucianist” or “Confucian scholar” more specifically, as “*ju*” (Chinese: *ru*) could mean “scholar” or “Confucianist,” while “*sha*” (Chinese: *zhe*) means “person.” For the meaning of “*ju*,” see Morohashi Tetsuji, *Dai Kan-Wa jiten*, 1: 950. I employ “scholar” rather than “Confucianist” or “Confucian scholar” to allude to the breadth of Tessai’s scholarly knowledge. Money Hickman also uses “scholar.” Tessai in his youth studied Confucianism—in particular, Neo-Confucianism in the vein of Wang Yangming (1472–1529)—as well as Buddhist and Shinto texts. He also embraced the learning of Shingaku, a school of ethics that combined Confucian, Buddhist, and Shinto ideas. His scholarly interest expanded later to include a range of subjects related to the history of China and Japan. Known as a Confucian scholar at the end of the Edo period, Tessai was a Shinto priest from 1876 to 1881. He lectured on historical figures and ancient customs (presumably Japanese and Chinese) at the Kyoto City School of Arts (Kyoto-shi Bijutsu Gakkō) from 1893 to 1904. Together with Kenzō, Tessai was well known for his collection of books; he built two libraries, as mentioned in note 38. For detailed discussion of Tessai’s lifelong studies, see Odakane Tarō, *Tomioka Tessai no kenkyū*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Geibun Shoin, 1944).

56. On institutionalization in the Japanese art world and newly adopted categories in art, see Kitazawa Noriaki, *Me no shinden* (Tokyo: Buryukke, 2010); and Satō Dōshin, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty*, trans. Hiroshi Nara (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2011). Satō’s book was first published in Japanese in 1999.

Tessai and His Space of Seclusion

IKE TAIGA, SU DONGPO, SHITAO, AND THE COLLECTING
OF *SHINWATARI* CHINESE PAINTINGS

THE CONCEPT OF SECLUSION in East Asia does not actually exist as a physical space. Nevertheless, it is constructed by the means of several actions: the composition of literature, the study of history, the formation of ideology, and the creation of art. Through constant assembly, an existent space within East Asian history—that is to say, a heterotopia (*isbo*) that is fully contiguous with the space of daily life—has come to exist.

In 1918 the eighty-three-year-old Tomioka Tessai (1836–1924) lost his beloved son, Kenzō (1873–1918). He then began to feel a new and intense pressure to support his family—which included his wife, Haruko; his son’s wife, Toshiko; and his four grandchildren, Yayoi, Fuyuno, Masutarō, and Natsue—with his art. Right up to his death at the age of eighty-nine, he was utterly unable to “seclude” himself from having to sell paintings for a living.¹ In East Asia, seclusion has had a long history as an aspirational ideal. But with the changes in the advent of the modern age, this ideal became harder and harder to accomplish. For those artists who produced art for a living, seclusion assumed an ambivalent shape, sandwiched between ideal and reality. Tessai’s expansive social circle not only included a network of scholars and researchers but also a commercial dimension manifested by those who purchased his works. In this way, the concept of literati arts in East Asia evolved into such equivocal forms as demonstrated by Tessai’s own case. However, as prior research has already indicated, Tessai firmly committed to pursuing the ideal of seclusion over the course of his entire career and continued to assume that image in his art, poetry, and personal living space.

Tessai seems to have had an immense interest in the secluded spaces and dwellings of the literati, and—relying on their surviving works and his own imagination—Tessai often painted the secluded spaces of such notable literati as Su Dongpo (1037–1101), Rai San’yō (1781–1832), Guanxiu (832–912), Mi Fu (1051–1107), Muqi (d. 1269), and Wang Hui (1632–1717).² This essay first considers the continuity of Tessai’s work to that of the Japanese literatus Ike Taiga (1723–1776) in order to determine what kind of space Tessai thought was appropriate for seclusion. Using works in the



Figure 1. (Above)
Tomioka Tessai,
A Scene from the
Taigadō, 1888. Hand-
scroll; ink and color
on paper.

Figure 2. (Right)
Tomioka Tessai in
his studio. Kiyoshi-
kōjin Seichōji, Tessai
Museum.



Cowles Collection as a particular focus, the essay then reflects on how Tessai's—who never once in his life visited China—paintings were changed by the collection of *shinwatari* Chinese paintings being brought to Kyoto at that time.

Tessai and Ike Taiga

The work and lifestyle of the Kyoto-based literati painter Ike Taiga were to become the first objects of aspiration and reverence for Tessai during his early life. Tessai climbed Mount Fuji as Taiga had done and portrayed Taiga's daily life in *A Scene from the Taigadō* (Figure 1). This section focuses on the ways in which Tessai imagined and depicted Ike Taiga's everyday life.



The first illustration in *A Scene from the Taigadō* depicts Taiga in his art studio—the Taigadō—surrounded by his own works and enjoying his ordinary life, meager though it is. Tessai’s idea for this composition likely came from such works as the *Genealogy of Ike Taiga’s Paintings* (*Ike Taiga gafu*, Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji) and *Biographies of Modern Eccentrics* (*Kinsei kijin den*, 1790), which depict Taiga in the same manner and is known to have been in Tessai’s possession. Here it is noteworthy that Tessai consciously deleted the figure of the accomplished painter Gyokuran, Taiga’s wife, a stark decision that serves to amplify his focus and veneration for Taiga. This image of a man pursuing his art and living harmoniously in honorable poverty seems to have been Tessai’s ideal. A well-known photograph of Tessai (Figure 2) that shows him sitting blithely amid a chaotic profusion of piled-up books is no simple snapshot but must instead be understood from the perspective of the idealized literati images and self-portraits that Tessai himself was so fond of.³

The long and shaky textural strokes and light color washes seen in the earlier works of Tessai’s thirties and forties (Figure 3) are strongly influenced by such Edo

Figure 3. Tomioka Tessai, *Landscape*, 1870. Two-panel folding screen; ink and light color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2019.4.1.



Figure 4. (Above) Ike Taiga, *Scholar in Retirement*, ca. 1750. Handscroll; ink and color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2020.5.16a-e.

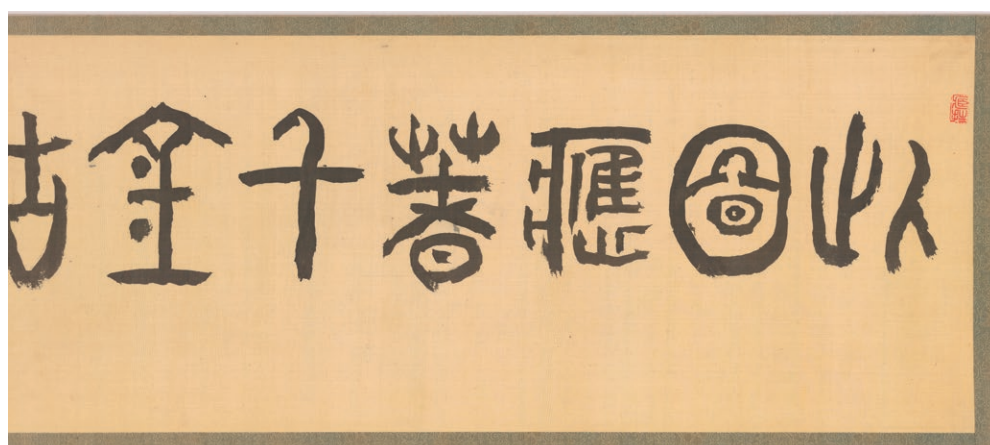


Figure 5. (Right) Detail of Figure 4. Colophon by Tomioka Tessai.

period-literati artists as Ike Taiga, Tanomura Chikuden (1777–1835), and Okada Beisanjin (1744–1820). An important work when considering Tessai’s continuity from Edo period-literati painting is Taiga’s *Scholar in Retirement* (Figures 4 and 5).⁴ In this work, Taiga depicts the rare space of leisure that is the ideal of the literatus, translating into visual form the poem “Qiuri jian ju (At Ease on an Autumn Day)” that heads the first scroll of *Old Man Pao’s Family Collection* (*Pao weng jiacang ji*) by the Ming dynasty literati painter Wu Kuan (a.k.a. Pao An, 1435–1504). A lone figure sits before a *gugin* (*kokin* or *kūkin*, a seven-string zither) inside a modest building with tiled and thatched roofing. In a garden, two chairs are set out in anticipation of a friend’s visit. This is a “closed space”—a space that is isolated by a bamboo thicket, a grove of trees, and even a brook. It is connected to the outside world only by means of a narrowly opened gate and a tiny bridge. While the work itself follows the lineage of Chinese study and garden paintings (often referred to as “by-name pictures”; Chinese: *bieye tu*), we know that Taiga’s actual home in Kyoto was a dilapidated hut in Makuzubara outside the south gate of the Gion Shrine that measured no more than 3 *ken* (18 *shaku*, or 5.5 square meters).⁵ Thus, we can see how the image of the secluded literatus that

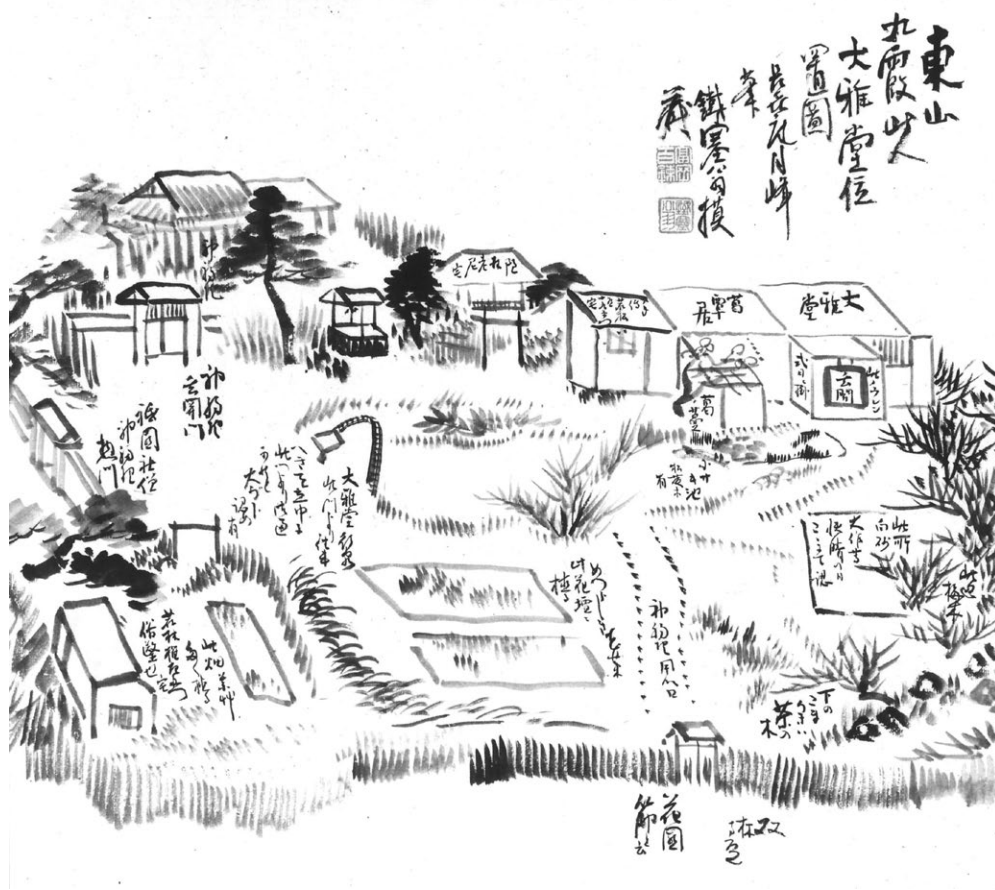


Figure 6. Tomioka Tessai, *Sketch of Ike Taiga's Studio, Taigadō*, ca. 1870s. Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji, Tessai Museum.

was perfected in the Ming dynasty was brought to Kyoto, affirmed, and revived in the living spaces of the literati there.

Tessai, too, had an interest in Taiga's residence and reproduced a plan of the space (Figure 6). Around October 1922, Tessai's art studio, the Buddha Hall of Infinite Longevity (Muryōju butsudō), a place whose name suggests an almost consecrated space, was completed. It was at this time that he produced a work that depicts the library of his own home, the Tower of the Eminent Bureaucrat (Kaiseikaku), which still stands in Kyoto today and whose name draws direct reference to Chinese architecture (Figure 7). This work, too, is rendered in plain monochrome and depicts an artist's studio enclosed by a fence and a three-story concrete library to the right. This reflects the essential configuration of a literati study. In 1903 the sixty-eight-year-old Tessai inscribed the comment, "Surely, this work should be considered priceless" 此図応著千金沽, in the upper right corner of *Scholar in Retirement* and affixed the following colophon:

Dong Qichang says, "If you have not applied the brush to numerous scrolls or traveled a lengthy road, you cannot be a painting master."⁶ Ike Taiga carved a seal reading, "although I've traveled ten thousand leagues, I've not yet read ten thousand books" 既行万里道未読万卷書.... Other people call Ike Taiga the master of the Southern School, but it really is just as he says.⁷

Figure 7. Tomioka Tessai, *Sketch of His Own Residence, Keiseikaku*, 1922. Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji, Tessai Museum.



For Tessai, this illustrated scroll provided an important visual ingredient for both forming a mental picture of Taiga—an artist who had also lived in Kyoto and whom Tessai deeply admired—and for comprehending his thought processes. Taiga had no children, but the Taigadō was built on the site of his residence, and his pupil Aoki Shukuya (1737–1802) became the second-generation successor to the Taiga lineage. Later this lineage was inherited by Giryō (1800–1865) and Seiryō (1807–1869). In 1905 the Taigadō was demolished to make way for the modern-style Maruyama Park. This was yet another demonstration of how literati painting changed from the Edo period as new artistic values arrived in Kyoto. Following Tessai, Taigadō Seiryō’s son, Jōryō (posthumously known as Rokumyō, 1839–1910), added this colophon to the scroll:

When I was a child, one rarely saw the works of my ancestor, Ike Taiga, but recently they have begun to appear in the world and should surely be called [works of] the “True Dharma Eye of the Wangchuan Villa” (Mōsen no shobōgen). . . . Various literati may appear in the days to come, but none shall be a match for the works of Ike Taiga. Even if their work should compare, their character never will. In my view, painting and calligraphy are “divine arts” (*shinjutsu*). If one’s character is not the equal of his, their artwork will not be equal [from the start].⁸

Taigadō Jōryō shows respect for his ancestor and espouses the great cause of traditional literati painting: the worth of an artwork lies in the painter’s “individuality.” Furthermore, he notes that Taiga has decisively inherited the position of the “True Dharma Eye of the Wangchuan Villa”—in other words, that of Wang Wei (699–759), who was considered the founder of literati painting. However, the reception of Wang

Wei was entirely different in Taiga's day than it was in Tessai's. From the mid-Meiji era on, many *shinwatari* Chinese paintings had been introduced, mainly in the Kansai region. From this point on, Kyoto painting—and Tessai's in particular—achieved a new evolution different from that of Taiga and Chikuden in the Edo period.

Tessai and Collections of *Shinwatari* Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy in the Kansai Region

In 1910 a group from Kyoto Imperial University that included Naitō Konan (a.k.a. Torajirō, 1866–1934), Tomioka Kenzō, Kanō Naoki (1868–1947), and Ogawa Takuji (1870–1941) traveled to Beijing to conduct a survey of Dunhuang manuscripts and viewed a collection of Chinese paintings and calligraphy at the home of the Manchu politician and collector Duanfang (1861–1911). The following year, in the wake of the societal disorder that followed the 1911 Revolution, aristocrats in Beijing began to put their collections up for sale. Naitō Konan, Nagao Uzan (1864–1942), and Luo Zhenyu (1866–1940)—who had sought refuge in Kyoto—helped the industrialists of Kansai secure these paintings and calligraphic works, and by the mid-1920s, collections of Chinese paintings and calligraphy in the Kansai region had been formed. These collections are characterized by their affiliation with Chinese “tradition,” setting them completely apart from the traditional literati art of the Edo period.⁹ At this time, Tessai was in his seventies and, as the senior figure in the Kyoto world of Sinology, painting, and calligraphy following the death of Tanomura Chokunyū (1814–1907), was heading into a phase of artistic expansion.

By this time, Tang Di's (d. 1364) *Illustrated Scroll of the Wangchuan Villa* (*Wangchuan tu juan*) (Figure 8) had already been brought to Kyoto. This work carries a note

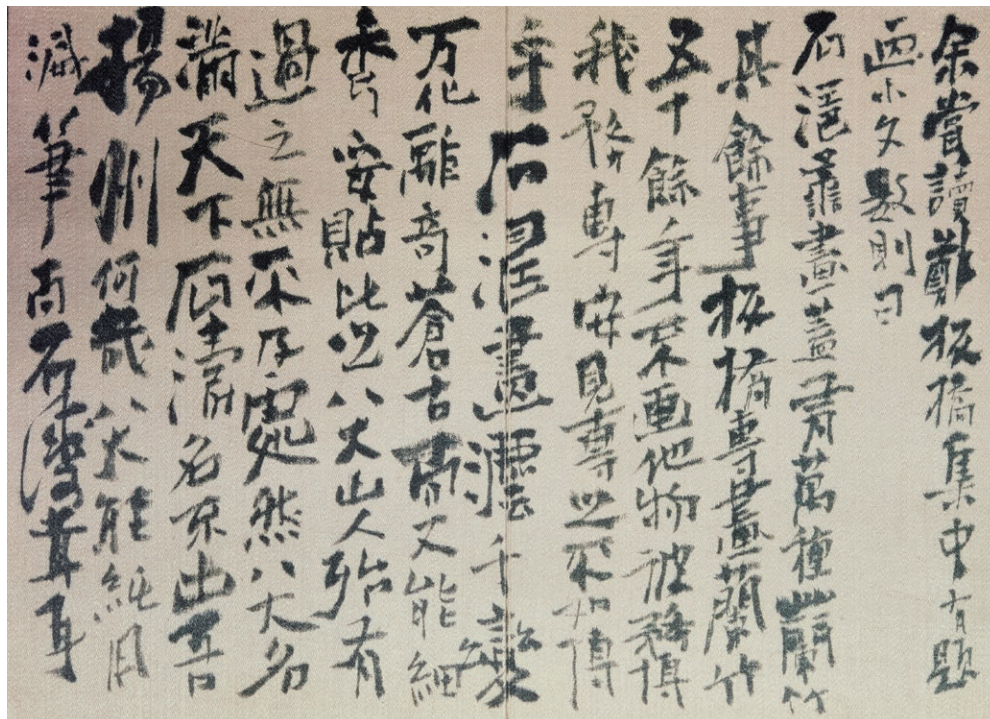


Figure 8. Tang Di, *Illustrated Scroll of the Wangchuan Villa* (detail), fourteenth century. Handscroll; ink and color on silk. Kyoto National Museum.

of authentication by Kose Shōseki (1843–1919), dated to 1905, as well as a colophon by Tani Tetsuomi (1822–1905) and the collection seal of Kuwana Tetsujō (1864–1938). Moreover, Ogawa Takuji is said to have received an ink rubbing of *Illustrated Scroll of the Wangchuan Villa* (dated to 1618) from his close friend Tomioka Kenzō.¹⁰ These works were exceedingly well known among the Sinology circles of Kyoto, which included Tessai. According to its preface, Tessai's *The Old Site of the Wangchuan Villa* (Figure 9) depicts Wang Wei's holiday residence, the Wangchuan Villa, which was mentioned in the Qing dynasty publication *The Scenic Sites of Guanzhong* [Shaanxi] (*Guanzhong shengji tu zhi*, 1776), written by Bi Yuan (1730–1797). However, the iconography is based on that of much earlier Wangchuan Villa images. In depicting a residence screened by trees amid a space enclosed and almost shrouded by mountains, Tessai suggests a space barely inhabited by people. It is a reconstruction in which, from our vantage point, a stream flows out from the depths of the painting's far distance and a tiny road becomes the gateway to the outside world. Interestingly, Tessai has depicted many such screened-off spaces. In such works as *Gathering to Celebrate Old Age* (Figure 10) and *Admiring the Moon from a Grotto* (Figure 11), large boulders and tunnel-shaped entrances shown in the foreground play a principal role in “separating” uncultured spaces from those that are refined and real spaces from those that are imagined.¹¹

What, then, is Tessai's place in the history of the development of Chinese and Japanese literati painting? Naitō Konan, a scholarly friend of Tessai's and close personal acquaintance of his son, Kenzō, had the following to say on the value of Tessai's paintings:

Wang Shimin [1592–1680] of the early Qing dynasty was right in keeping to the painting laws of Huang Gongwang [1269–1354], but he lacked the appropriate mentality. Only Chen Hongshou [1598–1652] among figure painters and Shitao [1642–1707] among landscape painters kept to the old rules with a frank and proper disposition. In Japan, only Tessai's figure paintings are obstinately unconventional, differing in appearance from Chen Hongshou's but possessing the same spirit. His landscapes are unrestricted in their form and differ in appearance from Shitao's. But they possess the same spirit.¹²

Konan further opined that “[Tessai's] painting method adopts the superlative spirit and wet ink technique (*guxiumorun*) of Xiangguang [Dong Qichang, 1555–1636]” and that he “comes close to surpassing Ershui [Zhang Ruitu, 1570–1640] and Longyou [Yang Wencong, 1596–1646].” Of the *yamato-e*-style works of Tessai's youth, Konan offers the fascinating opinion that they “examine the methods of the Tang painters through the Tosa school.”¹³ In his view, the Song dynasty tradition of literati painting and the Tang dynasty tradition of painting that gave rise to *yamato-e* after its transmission to Japan were unified in Tessai. Ueno Riichi (a.k.a. Yūchikusai, 1848–1919), who was then the owner of the *Asabi Shimibun*, collected numerous *shinwatari* Chinese paintings and works of calligraphy on the advice of Naitō Konan and Nagao Uzan.¹⁴ Among them were many works by artists that Konan considered the originators of Tessai's painting lineage, including Huang Gongwang, Dong Qichang, Chen Hongshou, and Yang Wencong. These had an entirely different character from



Figure 9. Tomioka Tessai, *The Old Site of the Wangchuan Villa*, 1917. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2020.5.51a-g.

Figure 10. (Left)
Tomioka Tessai,
Gathering to Celebrate Old Age, 1916.
Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, 2021.398.2.

Figure 11. (Right)
Tomioka Tessai,
Admiring the Moon from a Grotto, 1916.
Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper.
Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2019.3.32a-g.



the Chinese paintings collected during the Edo period. In 1938 Konan's *A History of Chinese Painting* (*Shina kaigashi*) was published posthumously. The book was based on these collections and articulated a new historical viewpoint on the history of Chinese painting that went beyond the Edo period perspective. It was within this painting history, which he believed to be the legitimate one, that Konan sought to position Tessai.

Curiously, however, in Tessai's works we see almost no strong impact on personal painting style from the *shinwatari* Chinese artworks located in the Kansai region. For example, the Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji has over four hundred of Tessai's works, while the Kyoto City Kyocera Museum of Art has in their collection copies of older paintings made by Tessai. The subjects of the copies vary, and they draw from *kowatari* (old importations) works, such as those by Emperor Huizong (1082–1135) and Muqi that were once part of the Higashiyama collection. Tessai also copied so-called intermediate importations (*nakawatari*) by painters like Shen Quan (ca. 1682–1760) that came to Japan during the Edo period as well as *shinwatari* pieces. From this we may surmise that—due to both the wide-ranging focus of his painting study and his interest in ancient texts and natural history—Tessai had a large number of reproductions in his possession.

Among those, Tessai was deeply devoted to the study of both Su Dongpo and Shitao. It is well known that Su Dongpo's career and perspective on seclusion were Tessai's ideal in his later years.¹⁵ Indeed, Su Dongpo occupied a special place in the Kansai world of Chinese culture enthusiasts with such festivals as the Jusokai (a celebration held annually in honor of Su Dongpo's birthday), and Tessai, in particular, often depicted themes from Dongpo's work. As for Shitao, his *Eight Scenic Spots in the Huangshan Mountains* (*Huangshan basheng*) (Figures 12 and 13), which at that time was owned by Ishii Rinkyō (1884–1930), bears a box lid inscription written by Qian Shoutie (1897–1967). In it Shoutie writes that when Hashimoto Kansetsu (1883–1945) compared himself to Jin Nong (1687–1763) and Shoutie to Luo Ping (1733–1799), Shoutie responded to this comparison by saying, "If that is so, Rinkyō is Bada Shanren and Tessai is Shitao."¹⁶ Tessai's devotion to Shitao has been extremely well known since that time.

Tessai also saw works by Shitao, such as *Returning Home*, which was once in Kuwana Tetsujō's collection (Figure 14). The painting includes colophons by both Tessai and Cheng Qi (1911–1988, Figure 15). In 1914, at the age of seventy-nine, Tessai also borrowed *Sketches on the Seasonal Poems of Su Dongpo* (*Dongpo shixu shiyi*, Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts) from the collection of Abe Fusajirō (1868–1937), who was then the president of the Toyobo Corporation, and made a copy of it (Figure 16).¹⁷ In the original album, Tessai's much-beloved Shitao painted twelve album leaves to match twelve monthly poems by Su Dongpo. In copying this work, Tessai arguably placed himself in the lineage of Su Dongpo and Shitao. Interestingly, Tessai's copy begins with something not in the original work—an illustration, *The Former Residence of Old Man Qingxiang* [Shitao] (*Seishō rōjin kokyo*), that imagines the residence as a space shielded by massive boulders. The accompanying poetic inscription reads, "I took my guest to the shores of the lake, where, in the midst of a stand of bamboo, we could converse to our heart's content. If we could come to a mutual understanding,

there would be no need to bring up Ji Kang (Ji Kang sent a letter ending relations to a friend who had recommended me for government service. If you are not a friend like this, I should thus be able to continue my life of seclusion)” 送客臨湖水迎僧話竹房相期傾倒事不必問稽[sic]康.¹⁸

Here, too, the artist is isolated from social disorder through shielding the personal space of seclusion. So what did Tessai learn from Shitao? Honda Shigeyuki (1882–1945) once noted:

However, what I find odd is that Shitao's paintings have been occasionally imported in the last twenty or thirty years [from 1910 on] but not so much before that. Only one work appears in Chokunyū's *Selected Works of Southern Painting* [*Nanga shinryō*] in abridged form, and Shitao's characteristics are not fully visible. Still, since long before the venerable Tessai had been making paintings like those of Shitao. Is this perhaps a coincidence?¹⁹

Figure 12. (Right)
Shitao, *Eight Scenic Spots in the Huangshan Mountains* (*Huangshan basheng*), seventeenth century. Album; ink and color on paper. Sen'oku Hakukokan.

Figure 13. (Below)
Detail of Figure 12.
Qian Shoutie, Box Inscription, twentieth century.



Tessai was fascinated by the liberal brushwork and beautiful ink wash of those works of Shitao's that he was able to see. Nevertheless, Tessai's painting style had already been established by the time he reached his seventies, so we might say that his painting technique was not greatly influenced by these works.²⁰ However, it was Shitao's way of life amid the social disorder surrounding the collapse of the Ming dynasty, the freedom of his brushwork, and the composition of his works that provided Tessai—a loyalist during the Meiji Restoration—with a strong directive for his literati painting practice and a response to the question of how one ought to engage with an ever-changing world. For example, that perspective on life is evident in *Abode of Peace and Happiness*, which depicts the residence of the Northern Song dynasty Confucianist



Figure 14. (Left) Shitao, *Returning Home*, ca. 1695. Album; ink and color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, From the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Family, Gift of Wen and Constance Fong, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Dillon, 1976, 1976.280a-n.

Figure 15. (Below) Tomioka Tessai, *Colophon to Shitao's Returning Home* (fig. 14). Ink on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, From the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Family, Gift of Wen and Constance Fong, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Dillon, 1976, 1976.280a-n.

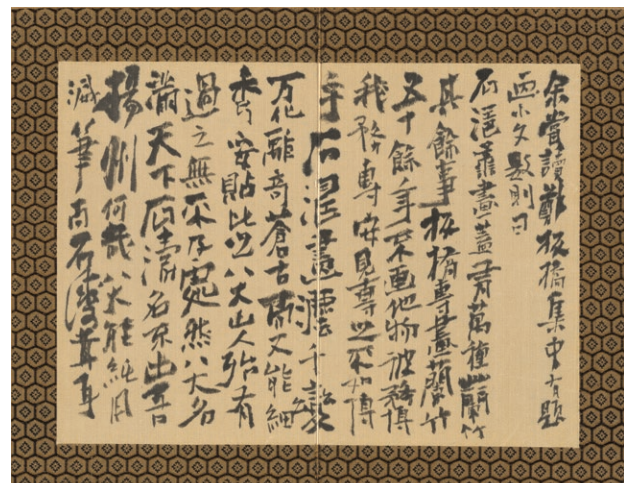
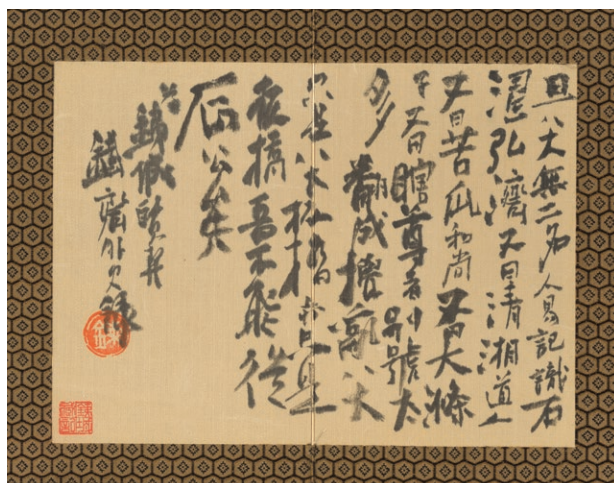




Figure 16. Shitao, *Seasonal Poems of Su Dongpo (Dongpo shixu shiyi)*. Album; ink on paper. Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts.

Shao Yong (1012–1077) that was built by his students after his move to Luoyang (Figure 17). A narrow mountain road leads to a gate where a young boy waits to greet visitors. Shao Yong converses with a guest amid the blooming plum trees around his residence, Anlewo, or “Abode of Peace and Happiness.” Chairs have been set out in the garden to entertain more guests. Tessai took Shao Yong as his painting subject many times.²¹ This is likely because Shao Yong was not a true scholar but instead fraternized with conservative bureaucrats like Sima Guang (1019–1086) and Fu Bi (1004–1083), who pursued lives of seclusion in Luoyang after the New Policies Party of Wang Anshi (1021–1086) came to power in the then-capital of Kaifeng. Su Dongpo, too, was one of these old party conservatives who was exiled after rejecting the New Policies Party. These men met in Luoyang after departing Kaifeng, followed the teachings of Shao Yong, and enjoyed a productive period together in that place; they did not, however, completely abandon society.

Men from Chinese history like Yang Wencong, Ni Yuanlu (1593–1644), Huang Daozhou (1585–1646), Shitao, and Bada Shanren (1626–1705) lived during the upheaval of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties and exhausted the limits of their loyalty to the collapsing Ming empire by following the dynasty into the grave or else renouncing the world and living as “survivors.” For those reasons they were greatly esteemed. This was quite different from the literati of the Edo period, such as Ike Taiga, who spent all his life in the carefree existence of an ordinary scholar-artist. It is therefore fair to say that *shinwatari* Chinese artworks brought with them a new set of values. In this way *shinwatari* Chinese painting and calligraphy collections in Tessai’s Kansai region developed a close connection with social and political issues. The primary audience for these works were social leaders such as industrialists and scholars.²² Politicians like Inukai Tsuyoshi (1855–1932) also joined Chinese art appreciation groups in Kansai, and they built friendships with Tessai. Subsequently, the spaces of seclusion that artists were expected to paint were not simply deep mountain valleys or remote utopias. Instead, the landscapes in which one rested and pondered deeply were always connected to the outside world via a single, narrow road so that if the outside world had need of you, you could return to it. It is precisely this particular type of seclusion that Su Dongpo and Shitao exemplified in their works and that Tessai depicted as well.



Figure 17. Tomioka Tessai, *Abode of Peace and Happiness (Residence of Shao Yong, 1011–1077)*, 1915. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.

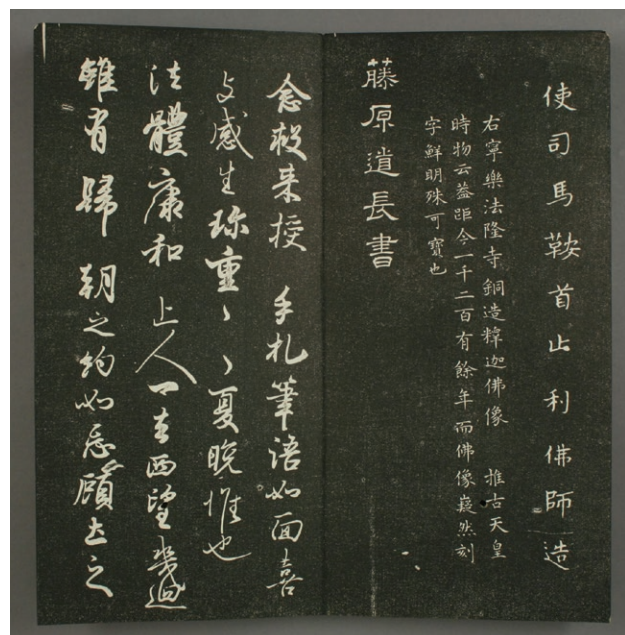
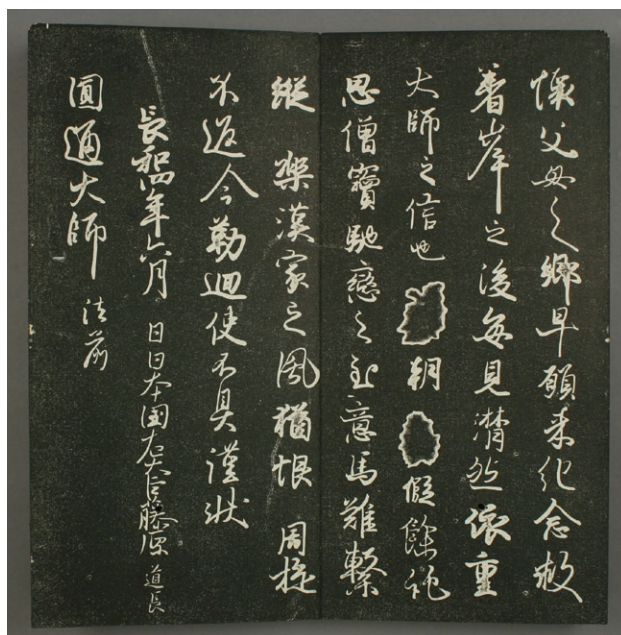


Figure 18. Tomioka Tessai, *Priest Jakushō [Entsū Daishi] Honored in China*, 1912. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2020.5.49a-g.

Tessai and “China”: Art Sales and Literati Paintings

In contrast with his son, Kenzō (who traveled to China three times), Tessai never went to China. He professed himself extremely pleased when Kenzō brought back books and stationery that he had purchased in China, along with *Mandala Grotto* (*Mandara kutsu*), a painting commissioned from Wu Changshuo (1844–1927) that Tessai eventually hung in his study. The painting *Priest Jakushō Honored in China* is another important artwork to consider here. It depicts the exploits of the Japanese priest Jakushō (962–1034), who traveled to Northern Song China and never returned (Figure 18). An interesting aspect of the work is that it records a letter to Jakushō from Fujiwara Michinaga (966–1028). The text was included in the second volume of *Collection of the Classics* (*Shūkojō*), a copybook of classical calligraphy compiled by Hōjō Gen (a.k.a. Hyōsai, 1765–1838) (Figure 19). A copy of the letter sent to China is thought to have remained in Japan, and Tessai learned of it from the copybook.²³ This letter exchange involving Jakushō is recorded in the *Garden of Talks* by Yang Wengong (Yang Wengong *tanyuan*, quoted in Jiang Shaoyu, *Huangzhaoliyuan* [Miscellany of classified accounts of the (Song) dynasty], 1145). Copies of the full version are rare since they were only published in Japan as a printed book in 1621. Tessai may have been familiar with it as well. In 1903, on his return from travels in Tokyo and Tōhoku, he paid a visit to the site of stele commemorating Ōe Sadamoto (Jakushō) at Chōrakuji in Mikawa Province (present-day Aichi Prefecture). Despite the fact that he was Japanese, Jakushō’s calligraphy was highly praised by the scholar-officials of the Northern Song dynasty, who likened it to that of Wang Xizhi (303–361) and Wang Xianzhi (344–386). This was surely a painting subject that appealed to the connection Tessai continued to maintain with China through his art, study, and cultural exchange with his many Chinese friends while never leaving Japan.

Figure 19. Hōjō Gen (Hyōsai), *Collection of the Classics* (*Shūkojō*), 1793–1795. Woodblock-printed book; ink on paper. Waseda University Library, Tokyo.



Another example here is *Huaisu Writing on a Bashō Leaf*. The painting depicts the famed Tang dynasty master of the mad cursive calligraphy style, Huaisu (725–785), who is seen practicing his script (Figure 20). According to legend, on finding that he had run out of paper, Huaisu resorted to writing on the leaves of a banana tree (*bashō*) instead. According to Tessai's grandson Masutarō, Tessai loved to write on different objects like books and furniture that were close at hand—likening himself to Huaisu in his work.²⁴ However, writing on banana leaves, which quickly rot, carries additional meaning in East Asia; namely, the “thing being written” is not a “work [for sale]” but rather it is something undertaken entirely for one's own enjoyment. In other words, such materials signify the ideal literati artwork. In a similar manner, the Tang dynasty monks Hanshan (Japanese: Kanzan) and Shide (Japanese: Jittoku) inscribed poems that they themselves had “composed” onto rocks and leaves on Mount Tientai and then feigned utter ignorance of them—a repudiation of China's “artistic tradition.” A book of calligraphy and paintings by Hua Yan (1682–1756) is one example of a work that revels in the paradoxical nature of writing on banana leaves, and Tessai, too, left behind a work on this theme: *Banana Leaf Poems* (*Shōyōren*, 1915, Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji).

Likewise, Huaisu is said to have found by chance in a well at Longxing Temple in Yongzhou an old Han dynasty seal that stated, “Seal of the military commander Sima” (*Jun Sima yin* 軍司馬印) (Figure 21). According to Qian Yong (1759–1844) in his *Miscellaneous Remarks of the Lu Garden* (*Luyuan conghua*), Huaisu made continual use of the seal for the rest of his life. A considerable number of these official seals seem to have been made during the Han dynasty and eventually, after several had been excavated, they were brought to Japan. Tessai believed that his seal was the one that belonged to Huaisu and treasured it. The seal of “military commander Sima,” once in Tessai's possession, remains extant today and is now in the collection of the Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji in Takarazuka. We may then suspect that one major motivation in depicting Huaisu was Tessai's interest in superimposing the acts of obtaining a “military commander Sima” seal and writing on banana tree leaves onto his own situation of selling paintings for a living.

In considering the question of Tessai's own identity, an exceedingly rare self-portrait, *Living by One's Brush: Self-Portrait*, from Tessai's later years presents a profoundly interesting case (Figure 22).²⁵ Tessai can be seen standing in an everyday space, a rattan bed pushed to the side while painting tools and tea utensils are scattered about a Japanese-style writing desk. The inscription on the painting opens with a quote from the first volume of Xin Wenfang's (late thirteenth–early fourteenth centuries) *Biographies of Tang Talents* (*Tang caizi zhuan*, 1308): “Weaving clothes from my heart, eating produce from my brush” 心織而衣、筆耕而食.²⁶ The line alludes to a story about the Tang dynasty poet Wang Bo (647–676) being inundated with so many requests for his poems that he gained a reputation for not toiling to earn his food. Instead, he wove his clothing with his heart and cultivated his fields with his writing brush. Wang Bo was known for writing poems in a single stroke and not revising them afterward. For that reason, he was also called Fugao (Japanese: Fukkō, literally “drafts from his belly”). Kenzō had purchased the twenty-ninth and thirtieth volumes of the Tang dynasty compilation *Collected Works of Wang Bo* (*Wang Bo ji*,



Figure 20. (Left)
Tomioka Tessai, *Huaisu Writing on a Banana Leaf*, 1918. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Promised Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles.



Figure 21. (Above)
Impression of seal "Seal of the military commander Sima" (Jun Sima yin 軍司馬印). Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji, Tessai Museum.



Figure 22. (Right)
Tomioka Tessai, *Living by One's Brush: Self-Portrait*, 1921. Hanging scroll; ink and color on satin. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2019.3.35a-e.

ca. seventh or eighth century, Tokyo National Museum), and Tessai later inherited them.²⁷ It is possible that Tessai felt particularly sentimental about the genius poet who had died prematurely.

The inscription continues, “In the beginning, I did not produce works like this. Only when I was overflowing with the ‘spirit of rice porridge’ did I achieve self-expression with the brush” 余原無此書畫 是即粥飯乃氣 噴現個墨戲也. This “spirit of rice porridge” may be a phrase inspired by Zen thought implying that, although we seek advanced enlightenment, in the end we cannot escape the fact that “eating” is the root of our existence. Perhaps this depiction of everyday space is meant to refer to this phrase. No matter how noble the spiritual nature of literati painting, in the end the artist cannot escape the fact that, in the world at large, their art functions as a means of “eating” (by selling and, therefore, living). In fact, Tessai was sustained by a network of supporters, like the Kaizuka family in Fukuoka who received this self-portrait, Kondō Buntarō (1839–1918) in Ehime Prefecture on the island of Shikoku, and Tatsuumi Etsuzō (1835–1920) in Hyōgo Prefecture. This itself reflects the human condition. In placing idealized space amid the everyday, the elevated mental state achieved by the literatus Tessai is thus paired with humor.

The figure of Avalokiteshvara (Japanese: Kannon; Chinese: Guanyin) appears within the inner thoughts that Tessai brings forth, which reflects a distinctly Buddhist element in Tessai’s self-image as is also evident in the name of his studio, Buddha Hall of Infinite Longevity. Tessai’s Kannon seems to embody the free spirit that crosses the boundary between this world (society) and nirvana (reclusion) at will. *Avalokiteshvara at Mt. Potalaka* depicts Kannon lying down on the jagged rocks of a gloomy cavern, but as noted earlier, this kind of enclosed space served as both a living space for the literati and as a symbol of their inner spirit (Figure 23).²⁸ Thus, here Kannon takes on an unrestricted countenance that is bounded by nothing. The bodhisattva gazes at the viewer and seems to emit an inner light. Here Tessai’s inner freedom and spirit, which continued to shine brightly even in a troubled world, are readily legible.

The Legacy of Tessai’s Art

In 1880 the Kyoto Prefectural School of Painting (now the Kyoto City University of Arts) was founded through the efforts of Tanomura Chokunyū and others. In 1893 Tessai assumed a professorship at the school. However, due to government policies designating art as a component of industry promotion, personal cultivation—the first ideal of traditional literati painting—was rapidly discouraged. After that, literati painting—whose position within modern art education had been established by the four schools of the cardinal directions—subsequently lost its place within Japan’s modern art education system.²⁹ After his resignation from the Kyoto Prefectural School of Painting, Chokunyū established a private school of literati painting. In 1896 Tessai, Taniguchi Aizan (1816–1899), and others founded the Association of Japanese Southern School Painting (Nihon nanga kyōkai) to bolster the teaching of the next generation of literati artists. Additionally, the Gashindō school was built



Figure 23. Tomioka Tessai, *Avalokiteshvara at Mt. Potalaka*, 1915. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.

Figure 24. Kondō Kōichirō, *Gathering after Memorial Exhibition for Tomioka Tessai*, 1925. Album leaf; ink on paper. Reproduced from Kōhansha, ed., *Kōhansha Shina meiga senshū / Kōhansha hen*, vol. 2 (Kyoto: Bunkadō Shoten, 1926–1929).



in Kyoto's Nyakuōji neighborhood, and Chokunyū's children and grandchildren—all the way down to his great-grandson Tanomura Chokugai (1903–1997)—gathered there alongside many young men who aspired to be the next generation of literati painters. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Japanese literati art and its audience were supplanted by the large numbers of “artists” churned out by modern art schools and by the education system, while literati art as a whole gradually declined.

On the other hand, however, the Chinese paintings and calligraphy successively brought to Tessai's Kansai region precipitated the literati and Chinese studies boom, whose extent was not limited merely to industrialists and scholars but also spread widely to encompass ordinary merchants, artists, teachers, and members of the rural intelligentsia. For example, the Kohansha Society for Chinese Art Studies was formed with Nagao Uzan, Naitō Konan, Kanō Naoki, and Ogawa Takuji as advisers. Almost a dozen people, including Kondō Kōichirō (1884–1962), Aoki Masaru (1887–1964), and Hitomi Shōka (1887–1968), participated. After Tessai died during the association's second year, a memorial exhibition of Chinese paintings was held in 1925, and many works collected by Tessai were put on display. The catalog published in conjunction with the second annual exhibition held the following year featured a work by Kondō Kōichirō depicting a friendly get-together following Tessai's memorial exhibition (Figure 24). From this, we can see that the class of Chinese art collectors expanded from a smattering of industrialists to encompass a diverse network of people through the study of Chinese poetry and classics. At the same time, the techniques of Shitao's work and other Ming and Qing literati paintings, such as the dry brush technique (*kappitsu*) and the use of transparent coloration, passed to Hashimoto Dokuzan (1869–1938), who went on to become the abbot of Shōkokuji after studying Sinology with Tessai. The questions of how to balance color and monochrome ink and how to translate literati painting to a large-scale format were left to the next generation of literati painters, like Mizuta Chikuho (1883–1958). Tessai's scholarship would come

to be absorbed into the modern field of Chinese studies by such figures as Honda Shigeyuki. We might therefore say that Tessai served as an intermediary during an era when the universal value that “China” commanded in Japan was gradually being supplanted by “the West”—in other words, European and American ideals.

TESSAI'S PAINTINGS are often called “scholarly.” In the vast expanse of their rich subject matter, Tessai's works have a dynamic power to build community and to encourage a diverse array of people to read, think, appreciate, and talk about their meaning. With humor, Tessai teaches us about the words and lives of the great men of China and Japan that he so admired. He also reminds us of such concepts as human existence that have played a central role throughout the long history of East Asia. Many of those who see Tessai's work might imagine themselves as the idealized figures in his paintings and seek the personal experience of encountering their free spirit through his art. Without a doubt, this is the core of his paintings' appeal.

Notes

1. “The death of Kenzō on December 23, 1918, was a severe blow to the family... Fortunately, Tessai hid the tears of his sorrow for his son who had been his only support and roused himself on our behalf... ‘Today,’ he said, ‘though Kenzō is gone, I am not yet old. Let me bide with my grandchildren for a while.’ We could do nothing but cry with gratitude as he threw himself into his art both day and night with more energy than ever before.” Tomioka Toshiko, “Chichi, Tessai no koto,” in *Tessai shūsei*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1976), 368.

2. For example, *Rai-ō kotaku* (The former residence of Old Man Rai [Rai San'yō], from *Jūnen kenren jō*; 1907, age seventy-two; Kiyoshikōjin Tessai Museum); *Ō Sekitani sōdō zu* (The humble abode of Wang Shigu [Wang Hui]; 1911, age seventy-six; Tatssuma Archaeological Museum); *Ō Gen no chikurō zu* (The bamboo tower of Wang Yuan [Su Dongpo]; 1917, age eighty-two; Kiyoshikōjin Tessai Museum); *Zengetsu no yamai zu* (The mountain residence of Chan Yue [Guanxiu]; 1923, age eighty-eight; Kiyoshikōjin Tessai Museum); *Mokkei yamai zu* (The mountain residence of Mokkei [Muqi]; 1923, age eighty-eight; private collection); and *Bei-ō yūsei zu* (Old Man Mi [Mi Fu]'s life of seclusion, from *Ishō bokugi jō*; 1924, age eighty-nine). For the change in Tessai's perspective on seclusion, see Xiaomei Zhan, “Jū shin sho yoku [Cong xin suo yu] shirazu nen no kyōchi made: Tessai no in'itsu sekai,” in *Tessai no Yōmeigaku: Washi no ga o mirunara mazu san o yonde kure* (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2004), 101–146.

3. On the subject of Tomioka family photographs, Nakamura Yazaemon, director of the Benridō Gallery from 1901 to 1925, has noted, “They brought a photographer in every year without fail; the photographing of the family and the grandparents became an annual event.” There are other photos taken by Tessai's grandson, Masutarō. Tomioka Masutarō, “Tessai no omoide,” in *Tessai taisei*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1976), 345–365.

4. Paul Berry, “Japanese Literati Painting and Its Relationship to Chinese Culture,” in *Poetic Imagination in Japanese Art: Selections from the Collection of Mary and Cheney Cowles*, ed. Maribeth Graybill (Portland, Ore.: Portland Art Museum, 2020), 155.

5. For the Edo period–reception of Ming dynasty literati villa paintings, see Noda Asami, “Utsukushiki teienga no sekai: Edo kaigashi ni okeru ‘teienga’ no shōchō to shiteki ichi,” in *Utsukushiki teienga no sekai: Edo kaiga ni mire genjitsu no risōkyō* (Shizuoka: Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, 2017).

6. That is to say, if you have not done those things, you cannot produce literati paintings.
7. Ike Taiga's seal actually reads "Although I've traveled ten thousand leagues, I've not yet read ten thousand books" 已行千里道 未讀萬卷書. This is an expression of humility meaning that, while he has traveled the whole of Japan and enriched his artistic toolbox, his learning has not caught up with his experience.
8. See Fukushi Masaya, "Ike Taiga: Tomo to tabi to fūkei no gaka," in *Ike Taiga: Ten'i muhō no tabi no gaka—tokubetsuten* (Kyoto: Yomiuri Shinbunsha, 2018), 259–268.
9. See Sofukawa Hiroshi and Kansai Chūgoku Shoga Korekushon Kenkyūkai, eds., *Chūgoku shoga tanbō: Kansai no shūzōka to sono meihin* (Tokyo: Nigensha, 2011).
10. Kaitsuka Shigeki, "Kaku Chūjō (Guo Zhongshu), *Katagi Ōi mōsen zukan*," in *Shō-joshū shōoku Chūgoku shogamoku* (Kyoto: Shinbunkaku Bijutsukan, 1983), unpaginated.
11. Furthermore, the precedent for this composition, an image from Dong Qichang's *Wuling Taoyuan tu* (The peach blossom spring of Wuling), was also copied by Tessai (Kiyoshikōjin Tessai Museum). Honda Shigeyuki notes that Tessai's home and study had "the feeling of an enchanted cave." This, too, indicates an enclosed space worthy of literati habitation. Honda Shigeyuki, *Tomioka Tessai* (Tokyo: Chūō Bijutsusha, 1926), 40.
12. Naitō Konan, "Tomioka Tessai-ō benmen gasatsu batsu" (July 1919), in *Konan bunzon*, vol. 10, *Naitō Konan zenshū*, vol. 14 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1976), 212.
13. Naitō Konan, "Tessai gashō jo" (February 1912), in *Konan bunzon*, vol. 10, *Naitō Konan zenshū*, vol. 14 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1976), 116–117.
14. See Ueno Yūchikusai *shūshū Chūgoku shoga zuroku* (Kyoto: Kyoto National Museum, 1966).
15. For more on the relationship between Tessai and Su Dongpo (Su Shi), as well as the Kyoto Circle, see Tamaki Maeda's contribution to this volume.
16. Matsuo Tomoko, "Ishii Rinkyō Chiba ni izuru funnji," in *Seitan 135-nen Ishii Rinkyō* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 2018).
17. *Tessai kenkyū* 10 (1973), 10. Tsuruta Takeyoshi's essay "Tessai to Chūgoku kojiga," in *Chūgoku koji o egaku* (Takarazuka: Kiyoshikōjin Tessai Bijutsukan, 1990), suggests a connection with Chinese painting. See also Uematsu Mizuki, "Tessai no utsushita Chūgoku kaiga: Mohon to funpon," *Kikan bi no tayori* 187 (2014).
18. Ji Kang is one of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, who held himself separate from political concerns to devote himself to the pursuit of art and culture.
19. Honda Shigeyuki, "Nihonga yori nanga he," in *Tomioka Tessai to nanga* (Tokyo: Yukawa Kōbunsha, 1935), 155.
20. Kure Motoyuki, "Sekitō (Shitao) e no okogare to sono jissai: Taishō kōki no 'Toki-ginu no okumi' no gakatachi o megute," in *Nihon bijutsu zenshū*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2015), 204–205.
21. He also depicted Shao Yong in *Anrakuka zu* (Anlewo, the residence of Shao Yong; 1914, age seventy-nine; private collection). See *Tessai kenkyū* 16 (1974): 18.
22. Tsukamoto Maromitsu, "Inukai Tsuyoshi and the Okayama Literati Circle: Entrepreneurship, Politics, and Literati Painting," trans. Joshua A. Fogel, in *Modern Japanese Art and China*, eds. Tamaki Maeda and Joshua A. Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming).
23. Kanda Kiichirō, "Chūgokujin o odorokaseta Jakushō hōshi no sho," in *Boku rin-kanwa* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1977), 17–23. *Abe no Nakamaro Minshū bōgetsu zu: Entsū Daishi Gomon insei zu* (Abe no Nakamaro in Mingzhou under a full moon; Jakushō's seclusion in Wumen [Suzhou]; 1914, age seventy-nine; Tatsuumi Archaeological Museum) features the same subject, and Tessai himself appended the same text to the painting on the folding screen. See *Tessai kenkyū* 55 (1981): unpaginated. Another such painting is *Entsū Daishi Gomon insei zu* (Jakushō's seclusion in Wumen [Suzhou]; 1918, age eighty-three; Toyama Memorial Museum).

24. For example, *Huaisu Writing on Bashō Leaves* (1920, age eighty-five), printed in *Tessai kenkyū* 4 (1971); and *Kaiso zu* (Portrait of Huaisu; 1918, age eighty-three; Kurumazaki Shrine).
25. *Tessai kenkyū* 18 (1975): 21.
26. See *Tang caizi zhuan* (Japanese: *Tō saishi den*), published by Uemura Jirōemon, Kyoto, in 1647.
27. Naitō Konan, “Tomioka-shi zō Tōshō Ōbotsu (Wang Bo) shū zanyokan batsu,” in *Hōza anbum* (December 1921); reprinted in *Naitō Konan zenshū*, vol. 14 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1976).
28. These words of praise are taken from the second volume of Zhen Wu’s (1280–1354) *Meihua daoren yi mo*: 大定光中 現自在相。楊柳瓶中 陀羅石上。心如止水 水如心。稽首大悲觀世音。(Within the illumination of enlightenment, the unrestricted form is revealed. The jaw with the willow in it is placed on an uneven stone. The mind is like a calm water, and the water is like the mind.)
29. The four schools were Japanese-style painting and classical *yamato-e* (East); Western-style painting (West); literati painting (South); and the Kano and Sesshū schools of painting (North).

Discovering Tessai

MASAMUNE TOKUSABURŌ AND YŌGA PAINTERS

MASAMUNE TOKUSABURŌ (1883–1962) met Tomioka Tessai (1836–1924) for the first time in the late autumn of 1919. Tessai, in the final years of his life, was at the pinnacle of his career, enjoying a surge in nationwide recognition. Masamune, fresh from his first round of study in Europe, was a young *yōga* (Western-style painting) artist in Tokyo.¹ He gained prominence as a leading member of the Nikakai (Second Section Society), established in 1914 in radical opposition to the conservatism of the Bunten, the prestigious national exhibition sponsored by the Ministry of Education since 1907. Masamune later wrote a vivid account of his first encounter with Tessai.

Several years earlier, when Tessai's son Kenzō was still alive, I had requested a painting. After it was done and mounted, I wanted to have the box inscribed by the master. I went to visit Kenzō's wife with no expectation of meeting Tessai. I was led to a rather dark, old tatami room . . . and Toshiko [Kenzō's wife] came to greet me. . . .

It was the year Renoir [1841–1919] died. While in Kyoto, I gave an interview about my memories of Renoir, which happened to be published in *Osaka Asahi* newspaper. In my discussion, I compared Renoir's late years to those of Tessai. When the paper came out, I was shocked to see the large-size title of the article, which referred to Renoir as "the Tomioka Tessai of France." After talking about the Renoir article and asking Toshiko about the master's daily life, she told me that he was willing to see me. I felt elated.

Even to this day, I remember our meeting with clarity. Tessai was eighty-four years old at the time. He walked into the room as if out of breath. He was wearing a *jittoku* [a short coat] of dark color and his neck was wrapped in a cloth covering. His kimono appeared to be dark *chamijin* [brown fabric patterned with fine stripes]. From his bold brush style, I had imagined a big man, but Tessai was small and almost delicate in stature. With white hair and a reddish face, he resembled a Daoist immortal. Due to the advanced age, his words were

Figure 1. Tomioka Tessai, *Mount Fuji*. Framed; charcoal on paper, Kiyoshikō-jin Seichōji, Tessai Museum.



sometimes difficult to understand, but his voice was strong. It seemed as if the voice penetrated and sank into his lungs. Tessai must have been writing something. I noticed his fingers and hands were smudged with ink.²

For Masamune, the 1919 visit marked the beginning of a deep friendship with the renowned scholar-painter. In subsequent years, he visited Tessai whenever he traveled to Kyoto, sometimes accompanied by his wife. On those occasions, Tessai offered him meals, took him to visit various places in Kyoto, and allowed the young painter to closely observe his activities in the studio. In turn, Masamune meticulously recorded in his journal everything he learned from Tessai, most notably the elder master's painting process and method as well as his candid remarks about himself and painters of the past and present. The exchange may not have been entirely one-sided, as attested by *Mount Fuji* (*Fujisan zu*, 1924), the only example of a charcoal drawing by Tessai in his entire oeuvre (Figure 1). A surprisingly adept handling of the unfamiliar medium, the drawing was done on "charcoal paper" (*mokutanshi*), which Masamune had given to Tessai's granddaughter to assist in her study of Western painting.³

Moreover, the warm relationship between the two artists resembled that of a teacher and pupil. Although unofficial and informal, their comradeship is demonstrated by the fact that Tessai gave Masamune the pseudonym (*gō*) Bishū (literally, "Bi Province"), which is derived from an ancient term for Okayama, Masamune's home prefecture.⁴ Proud of this artist name, Masamune used it later in his career as he learned to paint in the literati style and developed a connoisseurial understanding of Tessai's paintings. He was often asked to authenticate Tessai's work, a practice



Figure 2. (Above) Tomioka Tessai, *Ainu Man with a Japanese Man Carrying Fish and Wood*, mid-1870s. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.

Figure 3. (Near right) Detail of Figure 2. Box front inscription by Masamune Tokusaburō for *Ainu Man with a Japanese Man Carrying Fish and Wood*.

Figure 4. (Far right) Detail of Figure 2. Box verso inscription by Masamune Tokusaburō for *Ainu Man with a Japanese Man Carrying Fish and Wood*.

that is illustrated by two hanging scrolls in the Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection: *Ainu Man with a Japanese Man Carrying Fish and Wood* (mid-1870s) (Figure 2) and *Plum Blossom Studio* (1911). On the box containing the first work, Masamune inscribed the lid with the title in his distinct calligraphy, adding the date and his Bishū signature on the verso (Figures 3 and 4).

A number of *yōga* painters venerated Tessai, including Umehara Ryūzaburō (1888–1986), a leader of the Kyoto *yōga* circle after the 1910s.⁵ Among them, however, Masamune was Tessai's most ardent admirer. He wrote numerous essays on the literati master and published a book titled *Tomioka Tessai* in 1942. Featuring nearly one hundred illustrations of Tessai's paintings and calligraphy, the book provides rich information and insight on Tessai's life and art that were drawn from Masamune's personal experiences with him. In recognition of the literati master's obsession with seals, Masamune listed 309 seals out of about 1,000 he believed were used by Tessai during his lifetime. *Huaisu Writing on a Banana Leaf* (1918) appears in conjunction with the discussion of the seal "Gunshiba in" 軍司馬印 ("seal of Gunshiba") used by Tessai in the painting (Figure 5).⁶





Figure 5. Tomioka Tessai, *Huaisu Writing on a Banana Leaf*, 1918. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Promised gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles.

Tessai in the Taishō Era

A man of astonishing creativity with a career spanning over six decades, Tessai achieved the most fame during the last fifteen years of his life. Although Tessai had earned accolades in the Kyoto art world by the late Meiji era, it was not until the Taishō era that his name became widely known beyond the Kyoto and Osaka areas. One important catalyst was the Takashimaya Kimono Store, a precursor of the eponymous modern department store. In 1909, the Takashimaya organized *Hundred Scrolls by Today's Master* (*Gendai meika hyakufuku gakai*), the success of which led to the establishment of its fine arts division to open the art market to a wider public. The exhibition showcased both well-established and up-and-coming artists working in *nihonga* ("Japanese-style painting"), mainly from Kyoto and Tokyo.⁷ Included in this groundbreaking exhibition was Tessai's *Autumn Landscape*. Yasuda Yukihiro (1884–1978), a talented young *nihonga* painter affiliated with the Japan Art Institute (Nihon bijutsuin) led by Okakura Kakuzō (1863–1913) in Tokyo, later reminisced about the event:

The exhibition of one hundred paintings by modern masters at the Takashimaya in 1909 was an epochal event. . . I was in Numazu and could not visit the exhibition but perused the catalog with keen interest. . . What impressed me most strongly was a painting by Tomioka Tessai. . . [Before] I had only thought of his work as ink play or the hobby of a *bunjin* [literatus]. But this catalog and others that came in the following years made me realize for the first time the magnitude of his presence. Imamura Shikō [1880–1916], who had viewed the work in person at the [1909] exhibition, talked with unbridled excitement [about Tessai], and we kept discussing [his art] with great enthusiasm.⁸

After introducing Tessai in the inaugural exhibition, Takashimaya organized three solo exhibitions of Tessai's works (1921, 1922, and 1924), each accompanied by a catalog of the paintings in the exhibit: *Paintings for Clearing One's Heart*, *One Hundred Paintings of Dongpo*, and *Ink Play at Age Eighty-Eight*. The company invested considerable resources into displaying Tessai's work. For example, *Paintings for Clearing One's Heart* featured Tessai's title inscription and prefaces by Kano Kunzan (1868–1947), Naitō Konan (1866–1934), and Nagao Uzan (1864–1942), all preeminent Sinologists in Kyoto. The prefaces were followed by high-quality illustrations of Tessai's paintings and calligraphy. Takashimaya also included the literati master in many group exhibitions and organized Tessai's posthumous shows in 1925 and 1927. For Tessai, who had shunned the government-sponsored Bunten, Takashimaya became the single most important venue to disseminate his art beyond the Kansai region. While self-effacingly lamenting that he painted to support his family, Tessai willingly participated in the exhibitions until his death and enjoyed a friendship with Iida Shinshichi (1859–1944), the fourth-generation head of the family that founded Takashimaya. On the occasion of the opening of the Edobori branch in Osaka in 1919, Tessai created the signage for the Takashimaya Fine Arts Division



Figure 6. Takashimaya Art Gallery signage. Takashimaya Archives.

(Takashimaya bijutsubu) in his usual powerful calligraphy. Transformed into a permanent version in the form of a wood panel half a century later, the sign today marks the front entrance to the Takashimaya Art Gallery in Osaka (Figure 6). That Tessai was at times affectionately referred to as “Takashimaya’s Tessai” (Takashimaya no Tessai) confirmed his strong connection with this company.⁹

Tessai occupied a unique spot in the Taishō-era art world, which not only witnessed a dynamic confluence of influences from the East and West but also saw an escalating schism between the old and new. On the one hand, the demise of the Qing dynasty led to the exportation of many Chinese artworks, stimulating the formation of new collections of Chinese paintings in Japan. The availability of high-quality works served to fuel a reemerging interest in Chinese culture and art. On the other hand, a new wave of European influences invigorated Japanese artists by introducing postimpressionism. The modern concept of individualism and subjectivity, as embodied by the works of Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), and Henri Matisse (1869–1954), emboldened both *yōga* and *nihonga* painters to advocate for greater freedom in art. The widely known essay “Green Sun” (Midori no taiyō), published in 1910 by the sculptor-painter-poet Takamura Kōtarō (1883–1956) in the literary magazine *Subaru*, was an early declaration of the absolute power of individual expression. In the following decade young painters working both in *nihonga* and *yōga* formed new organizations that provided alternative exhibition venues in defiance of the Bunten. The fresh stimuli from the West also prompted Japanese painters to reexamine and prioritize the East Asian literati concept of self-expression over technical achievement and resulted in the formation of the *shin nanga* (“New Southern Painting”) movement. The term *shin nanga* appeared around 1917 and soon evolved into a broad phenomenon that engulfed both *nihonga* and *yōga* circles.¹⁰ With the loosening of stylistic perimeters associated with orthodox literati painting, the artists involved in the *shin nanga* movement explored multiple modes of expression and pushed boundaries toward unprecedented diversity.

Tessai was located at the juncture of these crosscurrents. Called an “old and new genius” as early as 1915, he came to embody a link between the past and present and the East and West.¹¹ While stubbornly maintaining allegiance to the age-old East Asian literati ideal and continuing his quest independently, Tessai achieved a startlingly modern visuality in his paintings that was characterized by dazzling colors

and energetic brushwork. The appreciation of Tessai's art grew conspicuously in the latter half of the Taishō era. In the recollection of Yano Kyōson (1890–1965), one of the leaders of the *shin nanga* movement, *yōga* painters' collective enthusiasm for Tessai preceded that of their *nihonga* counterparts.¹²

Masamune's Artistic Evolution

Masamune was born the son of an intellectually inclined family in Okayama Prefecture. His three brothers became a novelist (Hakuchō, 1879–1962), a scholar of Japanese literature (Atsuo, 1881–1958), and a botanist (Genkei, 1899–1993), respectively. In 1902 Masamune moved to Tokyo to study *nihonga* at a private school run by Terasaki Kōgyō (1866–1919). He soon decided to pursue *yōga* instead and became a student in the Western painting division of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tokyō bijutsu gakkō). Among his teachers was Kuroda Seiki (1866–1924), who had introduced to Japan the plein air concept of light and atmosphere after his studies in France. Upon graduating in 1907 Masamune achieved early success at the Bunten while participating in the White Horse Society (Hakubakai) exhibition (1910) led by Kuroda. The works accepted at the Bunten, *White Wall* (1909) and *Reflection of the Sunset* (1910), represent attractive Japanese pastoral landscapes depicted with rhythmical impressionist brushwork. Masamune's promising start as a young oil painter was further bolstered by his two solo exhibitions: first in 1910 at the Rōkandō in Tokyo—an experimental art gallery newly opened by Takamura Kōtarō—and a second at a gallery in Osaka in 1913.

As Masamune launched his career, the primary goal of *yōga* painters no longer resided in mastering Western techniques for the accurate reproduction of nature. Like many Japanese oil painters of his generation, Masamune drew inspiration from Europe in the works of impressionist and postimpressionist painters. In 1913, critical of what he perceived to be the excessive dogmatism of the Bunten government exhibition, Masamune joined the movement to add a second *yōga* section to the Bunten to allow for more experimental works. With no reform by the government, the movement led to the founding of the independent Nikakai in 1914. In the same year Masamune traveled to Paris and studied works by Claude Monet (1840–1926), Renoir, and van Gogh and visited Matisse before the war cut short his stay.¹³ Upon returning home in 1916, he showed thirty-six paintings at the third Nikakai exhibition to great fanfare. By the time *Chūō bijutsu*, an influential art journal of the time, published in 1918 a collection of essays by various artists on Masamune's life and art—a confirmation of his growing stature in the Tokyo *yōga* circle—Masamune's paintings were widely known for a consistent use of the *tenbyō* (pointillism) technique, or the extensive application of color dots and strokes, combined with a variety of influences from French artists such as Monet, Renoir, Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), and Matisse. For the next three decades, the Nikakai would become the main arena of Masamune's activities. It was in conjunction with the promotion of the group's exhibition in Kyoto in 1919 that Masamune found his first opportunity to visit Tessai.

By the time Masamune met Tessai, he was keenly aware of the changing tenet

in the *yōga* world. A prolific and gifted writer who regularly contributed articles to newspapers and art magazines, Masamune wrote in 1917 that Japanese artists faced a situation in which they “recognized the value of Cubist theory while they also appreciated *nanga*” and that it was time for the Japanese to consider the preservation of the national character while absorbing the influence of foreign-imported culture.¹⁴ His statement represented the sentiment broadly described as *yōga* painters’ *tōyō kaiko*, or “yearning for East-Asian tradition and aesthetics,” which intersected with the *shin nanga* movement. Already in the early Taishō era, Masamune’s artistic temperament predicated a certain affinity with literati aesthetics. Reviewing the 1917 Nikakai show, the art critic Yashiro Yukio (1890–1975) commented that Masamune’s brush style was “clumsy as if unmanageable yet approachable in feeling,” while another described his painting as impressionistic and “anti-technique.”¹⁵ Reviewers of the 1919 Nikakai exhibition noticed that Masamune’s paintings conveyed a “*nanga*-like feeling,” particularly in his work titled *Snow Mountain*.¹⁶ After meeting Tessai later that year, Masamune visited a *nihonga* painter in Kyoto and “for amusement” tried painting with traditional Japanese pigments under the instruction of his friend, likely his first experiment with *nihonga* mediums.¹⁷ Two years later the art journal *Mizue* published Masamune’s essay in which he praised the vigor of Tessai’s ink brushwork and proclaimed that being able to view Tessai paintings in private collections in Kyoto gave him great pleasure.¹⁸

In 1921 Masamune went to Paris for the second time. Before boarding a ship in Kobe, he saw Tessai’s first one-person exhibition *Glory of Southern-School Painting by Tomioka Tessai* (*Tomioka Tessai Nanshū seika ten*) at the Takashimaya and visited him immediately afterward. To Masamune, Tessai emphasized the supreme importance of inscriptions in his painting, confessing that, although he added a few birds-and-flowers compositions to brighten up the exhibition at the organizer’s request, those themes were appropriate only for women and children. He then chuckled that prominent scholars were facing difficulties to write a preface for *Painting for Clearing One’s Heart* (*Sōshin zuga*), a book of Tessai’s paintings to be published in conjunction with the 1921 exhibition, because they knew that Tessai detested being called a painter.¹⁹ Even while in Europe, Masamune kept corresponding with Tessai and once entrusted his painting *The Seine*, intended for the Nikakai exhibition, with a fellow oil painter, Yamashita Shintarō (1881–1966), to request Tessai’s critique. Tessai responded, “Some paintings are refined but bad, others are rough but good. This painting is awkward and good.”²⁰

Unlike his earlier visit to Paris, which had been adversely affected by the war, Masamune’s second sojourn allowed him to move energetically in and out of Paris, stopping by Renoir’s studio, meeting Matisse again, and viewing Monet’s *Water Lilies* at his studio in Giverny. He also traveled to Italy, Germany, and Austria. After returning to Japan in June 1924, Masamune showed eighteen paintings, mostly landscapes he had created in Europe, at the eleventh Nikakai exhibition later that year. His works continued to exhibit the pointillist technique while displaying a wider range of new influences. Masamune visited Tessai in November 1924 for the last time. On December 31 of that year, Tessai died. The following day Masamune took an early-morning train to Kyoto to pay respects to the Tomioka family.



Figure 7. Masamune Tokusaburō, *Chrysanthemums*, 1952. Oil on canvas. Iida City Museum.

Throughout the Shōwa era Masamune maintained both *yōga* and *nihonga* practices. His early examples of full-fledged literati painting, *Enjoying Rain at a Mountain Residence* and *Quiet Residence in the Shade of the Willow*, had appeared in the 1925 issue of the journal *Bijutsu gabō* along with his oil painting of a female nude.²¹ He continued to participate in the annual Nikakai exhibition until its dissolution in 1944 while also organizing solo shows of his *nihonga* in 1941 and 1942. After the war, he founded a new *yōga* group, the Second Era Society (Nikikai), with former Nikakai participants and remained an active member until his death in 1962.²²

The importance of color in Masamune's oil painting had been noted as early as the Taishō era by an art critic who described his approach to depicting nature "as if playing music in color."²³ Masamune's late oil paintings display an even more striking use of color (Figure 7). In the opinion of Nakagawa Kigen (1892–1972), a *yōga*

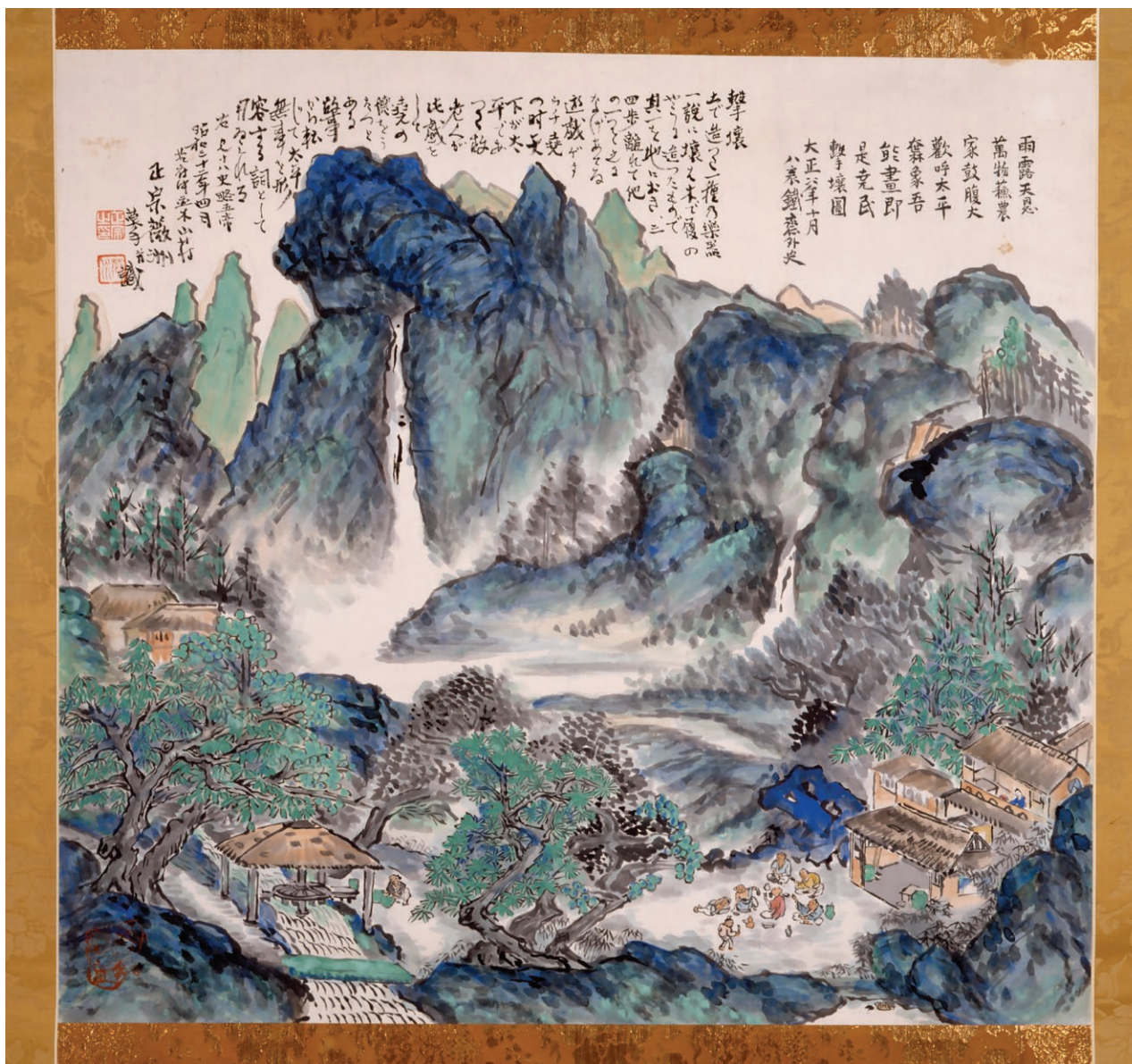


Figure 8. Masamune Tokusaburō (Bishū signature), *Game of Wooden Clog Throwing*, 1957. Copy of a work by Tomioka Tessai. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. Fuchū City Museum.

colleague and a fellow admirer of Tessai, Masamune's exuberant colors derived more directly from his emulation of Tessai than from impressionism.²⁴ Examples of Masamune's literati painting with the Bishū signature date to the last decades of his life and reveal a strong influence from Tessai in his penchant for prominent inscription, loose brushwork, and bright coloring. Masamune taught himself by studying more than twenty of Tessai's paintings. It is known that his final wish shortly before his death was to organize an exhibition of all the versions of Tessai's works he had made (Figure 8).²⁵ For Masamune, who came to be called "literati oil painter" (*Bunjin yusai gaka*), the impact of Tessai's legacy was particularly far reaching and long lasting.²⁶

Tessai's Paintings from the Perspective of Yōga Painters

Tessai's Taishō-era oeuvre displayed stylistic qualities that Masamune readily identified and appreciated from his *yōga*-trained perspective. Masamune interpreted Tessai's "Mi dots" as a variation of pointillism in Western painting, his rich color as comparable to that of an impressionist palette, and his energetic brushwork on par with the expressive potency of fauvism.²⁷ Furthermore, Masamune and his colleagues saw Tessai's composition as "resembling *yōga*" (*yōga no gamen to yoku niteiru*) in that he often covered the entire surface rather than leaving "blank white" (*yohaku*), that is, the evocative empty space intentionally left unpainted typical of traditional Japanese painting (Figures 9–12).²⁸



Figure 9. Tomioka Tessai, *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, 1913. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Promised gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles.



Figure 10. Tomioka Tessai, *Admiring the Moon from a Grotto*, 1916. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2019.3.32a-g.

Figure 11. (Left)
Tomioka Tessai,
*Sweeping Away the
World's Dust*, 1916.
Hanging scroll; ink
and color on paper.
Freer Gallery of Art,
Smithsonian Insti-
tution, Washington,
D.C.: The Mary and
Cheney Cowles Col-
lection, Gift of Mary
and Cheney Cowles,
F2018.4.25a-g.

Figure 12. (Right)
Tomioka Tessai, *Pure
Conversation While
Viewing a Water-
fall*, 1924. Hanging
scroll; ink and color
on paper. The Met-
ropolitan Museum of
Art, New York, Mary
and Cheney Cowles
Collection, Promised
Gift of Mary and
Cheney Cowles.



Of various features in Tessai's painting, it was by far his handling of color that most mesmerized *yōga* painters. In the words of Umehara Ryūzaburō, "the marvelous contrast between black ink and malachite green, or gold and vermillion" represented "the excellence of Tessai's color sensibility, unprecedented in East-Asian painting of the present or past."²⁹ Derived from his earlier study of *yamato-e*, Tessai's proclivity for rich color was fully manifested during the Taishō era. Tessai often concentrates the brightest colors as the focal point of the composition, as exemplified in *Painting to Celebrate Longevity* of 1914 (Figure 13). In this work, foreground figures highlighted in orange, ocher, and red under the brilliant umbrella of green leaves stand out against the rocky background depicted primarily in ink. Similarly, in *Blind Men Appraising an Elephant*, painted in 1921, Tessai draws the viewer's eye to the actions of the figures clothed in intense blue and orange around the gray body of the elephant and reinforces the painting's thematic message (Figure 14). Skillful use of contrasting hues is also notable in *Workers Traveling over the Mountain* of 1919, in which Tessai juxtaposes the blue and green of the figures with the crisp orange of the foliage that frames them (Figure 15). The same orange is repeated in the distant trees while the green is dabbed throughout the landscape with seeming spontaneity. Even in the context of the 1910s when the *nihonga* palette brightened up markedly, *yōga* artists praised Tessai as one of the foremost colorists of the time.

Just as important as the expressive power of color in their appraisal was Tessai's mastery of "tone" (*tōn* or *chōshi*), or overall balance and harmony in color, which *yōga* artists considered paramount to the success of their own compositions. *Priest Jakushō Honored in China* (1912) demonstrates Tessai's virtuosity in creating complex color schemes (Figure 16). With the figure of Jakushō in a purple robe as the central point of the painting, Tessai applies greens and blues of various shades to the surrounding landscape. While the leaves are depicted in vivid malachite green, a pale wash of green is applied to the ground underneath the figures and is repeated on the surface of the distant mountain. Most intense, azurite blue sparkles on the rectangular rocks behind Jakushō and almost imperceptibly touches the rocks on the opposite side and the tiled roof of the architecture behind him. A softer blue color caps the tops of the rocks in the foreground, echoed by mountain peaks in the distance. The light orange of the tree foliage near the figures introduces warmth while bringing the attention back to the group. A seemingly intuitive assemblage of multiple colors, each with varying tones and intensity, Tessai's choice and organization of colors perfectly complement and balance one another to create an image of breathtaking beauty.

Figure 13. (*Facing, left*) Tomioka Tessai, *Painting to Celebrate Old Age*, 1914. One of a pair of hanging scrolls; ink and color on silk. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.

Figure 14. (*Facing, right*) Tomioka Tessai, *Blind Men Appraising an Elephant*, 1921. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2019.3.34a-f.





Figure 15. Tomioka Tessai, *Workers Traveling over the Mountain*, 1919. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2018.4.26a-f.

Figure 16. Tomioka Tessai, *Priest Jakushō [Entsū Daishi] Honored in China*, 1912. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2020.5.49a-g.



Masamune and his friends also welcomed Tessai's skill in creating an illusion of volume and space, which they found lacking in older, more traditional Japanese painting. During the Taishō era, Tessai broke from the earlier literati practice of repeating codified brushstrokes that tended to create surface patterns and began to explore a much freer brush technique to convey a greater sense of three-dimensionality and spatial depth.³⁰ In the 1912 *Su Dongpo in a Borrowed Hat*, Tessai depicts the rocks in the foreground with a combination of ink lines, washes, and extensive texture dots (Figure 17). The concentration of dark dots in the foreground contrasts with the much lighter ink tone of distant mountains, suggesting spatial depth in the rainy landscape scene. In *Idle Conversation by Maples* (1912), aggregates of angular ink lines that render the rock formations become less pronounced and lighter in tone in distant peaks to create a sense of the near and far (Figure 18). In another example, *Quietly Watching the Ever-Flowing Water* (1919), Tessai fills the surface of the rocks along their contours with layers of ink washes, brushstrokes, and color dots to illustrate their rounded form (Figure 19). *Gathering to Celebrate Old Age* (1916) exhibits Tessai's more unconventional approach: irregular-shaped lines of changing thickness in diluted ink are combined with layers of color wash to suggest the three-dimensional form of jutting rocks (Figure 20).

Finally, in Tessai's paintings, *yōga* painters recognized a particular brand of realism that Masamune described as "a feeling of naturalness" (*shizenkan*).³¹ For example, Tessai often deviates from the formulaic figure depiction common in literati painting. Individualized with varied poses and gestures—sometimes limbs stretch with casual abandon and mouths open without inhibition—his figures project a sense of vitality and animate the scenes they inhabit (Figure 21). The figures imbue Tessai's paintings with a palpable human quality and distinguish them from conceptualized representations of lofty literati landscapes. Tessai followed his maxim "Read ten thousand books and travel ten thousand *li*" 萬巻の書を読み萬里の路を行く. Classical literature and history books provided Tessai with thematic inspiration and academic gravitas. The key to translating ideas into compelling pictorial images, however, was "traveling ten thousand *li*," a phrase that signified one's firsthand experiences with the real world. Gregarious and curious, Tessai was a keen observer of human behavior and natural phenomena. Not only in his everyday surroundings but also during his travels throughout Japan, Tessai kept a mental depository of observations that became

Figure 17. (*Facing, left*) Tomioka Tessai, *Su Dongpo in a Borrowed Hat*, 1912. Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2018.4.24a-f.

Figure 18. (*Facing, right*) Tomioka Tessai, *Idle Conversation by Maples*, 1912. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2018.4.23a-g.

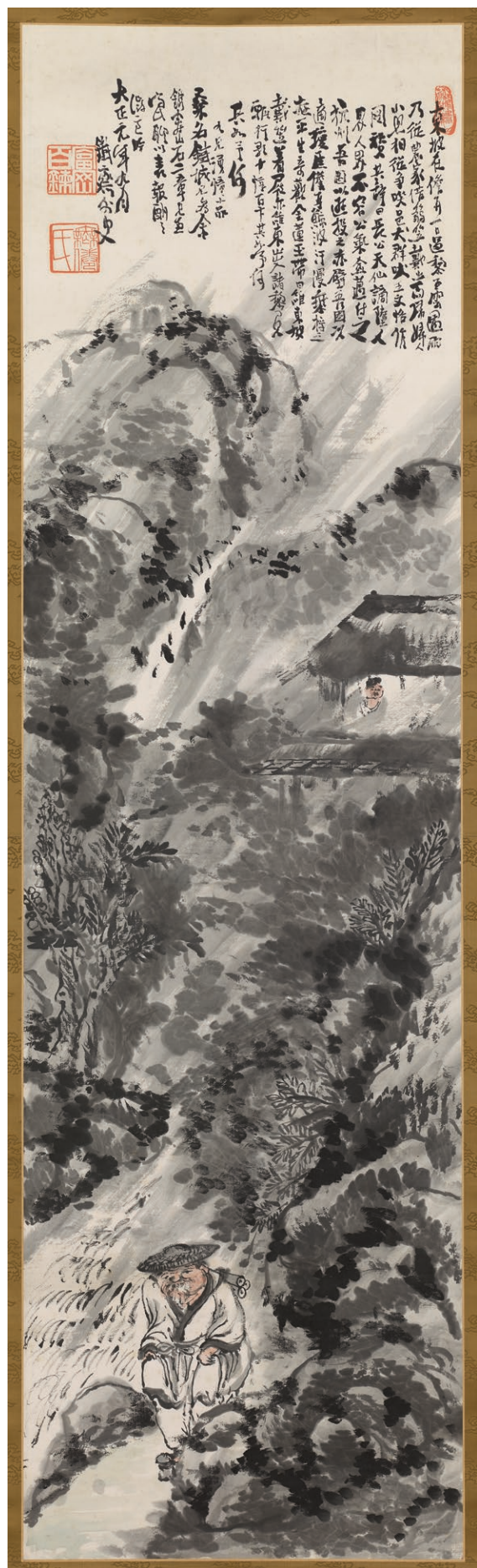


Figure 19. Tomioka Tessai, *Quietly Watching the Ever-Flowing Water*, 1919. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2018.4.27a-e.

Figure 20. Tomioka Tessai, *Gathering to Celebrate Old Age*, 1916. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, 2021, 2021.398.2.





Figure 21. Detail of
Figure 12.

a valuable resource for his paintings. Furthermore, one should note that although Tessai did not aim for the visual realism based on sketching from life (*shasei*)—the foundation of Kyoto *nihonga*—he did not reject the scientific tenet inherent in the *shasei* practice. In an episode remembered by Masamune, Tessai happened to spot a minuscule advertisement for a science book featuring photography of cloud formations, which he promptly decided to order because he believed it would help his depiction of clouds.³²

Tessai, a Man with a Strong Sense of Self

In their discussion of Tessai's modernity, *yōga* painters often wondered if Tessai had consciously learned and incorporated visual elements of Western-style painting. The only work that evidences Tessai's direct study of Western method is *Portrait of Hippocrates, Father of Western Medicine*, created in Tessai's fifties and based on a work by Ishikawa Tairō (1766–1817).³³ In this painting, Tessai follows Tairō's careful shading technique to depict three-dimensionality of the figure's head, neck, and hand, indicating his serious investigation of Western artistic conventions early in his career.

Although Tessai's life was firmly anchored in the East Asian cultural tradition, he did not live in a vacuum, isolated from current affairs and events. During the Meiji era, Tessai taught ethics and ancient texts at the Kyoto Municipal School of Arts and Crafts (Kyōto-shi bijutsu kōgei gakkō), which had originated in 1880 as the Kyoto Prefecture School of Painting (Kyōto-fu gagakkō) and touted the first modern art education in Japan.³⁴ Tutoring multiple levels of students at the school for a decade between 1894 and 1903, Tessai must have known about the effort of younger instructors such as Takeuchi Seihō (1864–1942), who had visited Europe in 1900–1901 and had guided students in their goal to create modern *nihonga* expressions. During the 1910s Seihō would emerge as a powerful representative of the Kyoto *gadan* (painting circle). Tessai may even have been aware of the activities of Asai Chū (1856–1907), the pioneering *yōga* painter who moved to Kyoto and opened a private school in 1903, to which young *nihonga* students flocked to study Western painting techniques.

Entering the Taishō era, Tessai clearly knew about the newest trends in European art. In 1915, when shown photos of works by van Gogh and Gauguin, he slapped his knee and shouted with delight, “Westerners do such stupendous things!” (*Seiyō-jin wa doerai koto o yariyoru!*).³⁵ Around the same time, Ogawa Sen'yō (1882–1971), a young *nihonga* painter, spotted the nearly eighty-year-old Tessai at an exhibition of French art organized by the Shirakaba group (White Birch Society), which actively promoted the ideas of Western literature and art. Leaning on his cane, Tessai carefully examined each piece on display, which included a sculpture by Auguste Rodin (1840–1917). The encounter reminded Sen'yō of one of Tessai's seals, “old yet still learning” 老而益學.³⁶ Tessai was also cognizant of the proliferation of bold, experimental approaches that characterized *nihonga* in the latter half of the Taishō era, most notably by the artists of the Association for the Creation of National Painting (Kokuga sōsaku kyōkai) in Kyoto.³⁷ In 1924 he told Masamune, “These days, young people pursue their own way without restraint, create shocking paintings, and attract a great deal of attention, but a painting must follow the principle of the ancients and reflect their spirit.”³⁸ Despite his claim of being a Sinophile and antiquarian, Tessai's voracious intellectual curiosity and enduring passion for learning kept his eyes and mind open for the newest stimuli and contemporary currents.

IN 1934 MASAMUNE CALLED Tessai “a man with a strong ego” (*jiga no tsuyoi hito*). His sentiment was echoed several years later by the young poet and preeminent scholar on Tessai, Miura Tsuneo (the pen name for Odakane Tarō, 1909–1996), who described Tessai as “a person who possessed a powerful sense of self, rare for a Japanese.”³⁹ Tessai's healthy self-esteem manifested itself early in the assertiveness of his signature in joint works with Ōtagaki Rengetsu (1791–1875) (Figures 22 and 23). That formidable sense of self remained undiminished in the subsequent decades, as revealed in Tessai's rare self-portrait (Figure 24). With his feet solidly planted on the ground and his arms raised high in a room full of his beloved *bunjin* accoutrements, Tessai gleefully looks up toward the image of the Sun Goddess. His inscription proclaims that the deity channels his creative energy through the rice gruel he eats every day. In the separate piece added in the center, Tessai assures the recipient of the painting, one



Figure 22. Calligraphy: Ōtagaki Rengetsu; Painting: Tomioka Tessai, *Fox Priest Hakuzōsu*, 1867. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2018.4.21a-e.



Figure 23. Calligraphy: Ōtagaki Rengetsu; Painting: Tomioka Tessai, *Manzai Performers*, 1869. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, 2021, 2021.398.5.



Figure 24. Tomioka Tessai, *Living by One's Brush: Self-Portrait*, 1921. Hanging scroll; ink and color on satin. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2019.3.35a-e.

Mr. Kaijima, that daily viewing of this piece would guarantee peace and security for his family. At the age of eighty-five, Tessai presents a supremely confident image of himself, full of physical and mental vigor.

It was this strong sense of self or self-conviction as a scholar-painter that nurtured and sustained Tessai throughout his life. Without dispute, China provided the most important foundation for Tessai's art. Yet Tessai was also a man of his time. Observing a multitude of changes and new influences that affected the Japanese art world, Tessai kept painting on his own terms and ultimately achieved his brilliantly innovative literati style. In Tessai, Masamune and *yōga* painters found the quintessence of modern individualism that they themselves strove to attain.

Notes

1. The term *yōga* derives from *Seiyōga* (literally, “Western-style painting”), which came into use during the Meiji era to distinguish Western-influenced art from the Japanese indigenous painting tradition known as *nihonga* (“Japanese-style painting”). *Yōga* artists adopted Western conventions and found inspiration in the important European art movements of the time. Most commonly, *yōga* refers to oil painting, but it can also be used as a broader term encompassing oil painting, watercolor, ink sketches, pastels, prints, and so on. For the origin of these terms and the historical background of the *yōga/nihonga* dichotomy, see Satō Dōshin, *Nihon bijutsu tanjō* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1996), 76–104.

2. For the account of his first visit, see Masamune Tokusaburō, “Tessai sensei,” in *Tomioka Tessai*, ed. Shichison Ujin (Iidamura, Nagano: Kōno Kuniharu Shuppan, 1926), 71–75. The painting Masamune took to Tessai as described in this account may be *Riding on a Raft in the Ocean*, which Masamune displayed in his house on New Year's Day, 1920. See Masamune Tokusaburō, “Shō shōgai (Nikki kara),” *Chūō bijutsu* (February 1920), quoted in Murayama Shizuo, *Shiryō: Gaka Masamune Tokusaburō no shōgai* (Bijutsu no Tosho Miyoshi Kikaku, 1996), 130.

3. Kyōto-shi Bijutsukan, ed., *Seitan 150 nen kinen: Tomioka Tessai ten* (Kyoto: Kyōto Shinbunsha, 1985), 206–207. *Mokutanshi* is paper with a rough surface texture particularly suitable for showing the effect of drawing with charcoal.

4. See Masamune Tokusaburō, *Tomioka Tessai* (Tokyo: Kinjōsha, 1942), 20. The *bi* 薇 character derives from an ancient term for Kibi, which itself was an old term for present-day Okayama. Among various theories as to the etymology of Kibi 吉備, one suggestion is 黄薇, which appears in *Kojiki*. See Marutani Kenji, “Kibikoku no gogen kō: Kiwarabi to Kibi setsu,” *Rekiken Okayama*, no. 17 (November 2016): 3. Tessai most likely was familiar with this information in *Kojiki*.

5. Umehara Ryūzaburō, like Masamune, accepted requests to validate Tessai's painting, as demonstrated by his bold box inscription for *Quietly Watching the Ever-Flowing Water* of 1919 (fig. 19) in the Cowles Collection. Besides Umehara, Nabei Katsuyuki (1888–1969), Nakagawa Kigen (1892–1972), Nakagawa Kazumasa (1893–1991), and Maeda Kanji (1896–1930) are also known to have admired Tessai. See Hyōgo Kenritsu Bijutsukan and Tessai Bijutsukan, eds., *Seitan 180 nen kinen Tomioka Tessai—Kindai e no kakehashi* (Tomioka Tessai Jikkō Iinkai, 2016), 179–184, 230–232.

6. See Masamune, *Tomioka Tessai*, 129. The seal is also discussed in Tsukamoto Maromitsu's essay in this volume.

7. For the list of the artists and titles of their works, see Takashimaya Bijutsubu Gojū-nenshi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Takashimaya Bijutsubu Gojū-nenshi* (Osaka: Takashimaya Honsha, 1960), 77–79. A small reproduction of Tessai's *Autumn Landscape* is shown on page 79.

The tradition of art exhibitions organized by modern department stores in Japan began with Mitsukoshi in 1908 and was followed by Takashimaya in 1909. See Hirota Takashi, “Meiji-jiki no hyakkaten shusai no bijutsu tenrankai ni tsuite—Mitsukoshi to Takashimaya o hikakushite,” *Dezain riron* 48 (2006): 47–60, accessed May 4, 2020, https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/repo/ouka/all/53207/jjsd48_047.pdf. For Tessai’s relationship with Takashimaya, see Kashiwagi Tomoko, “Tessai to Takashimaya Bijutsubu tenrankai,” in Hyōgo Kenritsu Bijutsukan and Tessai Bijutsukan, *Seitan 180 nen kinen Tomioka Tessai*, 192–195; and Takashimaya Bijutsubu Gojūnenshi Hensan Iinkai, *Takashimaya bijutsubu gojūnenshi*, 129–147, 319–322.

8. Yasuda Yukihiro, “Omoide,” in Takashimaya Bijutsubu Gojūnenshi Hensan Iinkai, *Takashimaya bijutsubu gojūnenshi*, 76. Yukihiro remained a major member of the Japan Art Institute throughout his career. He achieved national recognition for his paintings of historical subjects and was also known for his study of calligraphy by Ryōkan (1758–1831), a beloved Buddhist monk of the late Edo period. Imamura Shikō (1880–1916), mentioned by Yukihiro in his article, was also affiliated with the Japan Art Institute. He created bold *nihonga* expressions inspired by literati aesthetics, but his promising career was cut short by his early death.

9. Takashimaya Bijutsubu Gojūnenshi Hensan Iinkai, *Takashimaya Bijutsubu Gojūnenshi*, 320.

10. *Nanga*, generally interchangeable with *bunjinga* (literati painting), is an abbreviation of Nanshūga (“Southern School Painting”). It is the Japanese rendering of the Chinese term that referred to the self-consciously amateur style of painting produced by scholar-gentlemen. The term *shin nanga* may have made its first appearance in an article titled “Shin nanga no kiun ugoku,” *Chūō bijutsu* 3, no. 7 (July 1917): 2–3. For a discussion of the *shin nanga* movement, see Michiyo Morioka, “The Transformation of Japanese Literati Painting in the Twentieth Century,” in *Literati Modern: Bunjinga from Late Edo to Twentieth-Century Japan, The Terry Welch Collection at the Honolulu Academy of Arts* (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2008), 28–39.

11. Misawa Kyūkō, “Fukkatsu shita Tessaiō no seikatsu,” *Kaiga seidan* 3, no. 8 (August 1915): 34.

12. Conveyed by Yano Chidōjin (Kyōson), “Tessai no hyōka wa yōgaka ga,” a subentry in “Bijutsubu wo kataru,” in Takashimaya Bijutsubu Gojūnenshi Hensan Iinkai, *Takashimaya bijutsubu gojūnenshi*, 320–321. Yano Kyōson was one of the artists who founded the Japan Nanga Institute (Nihon Nangain) in 1921 to promote contemporary literati painting. Active in Osaka, he also made great contributions in art education as the principal of the Osaka Art School (Ōsaka bijutsu gakkō).

13. For Masamune’s memoir of his 1914–1916 sojourn in Europe, see Masamune Tokusaburō, *Gaka to Pari* (Tokyo: Nihon Bijutsu Gakuin, 1917).

14. Masamune Tokusaburō, “Seiyōgabū no omonaru sakuhin,” *Chūō bijutsu* (November 1917), quoted in Murayama, *Shiryō*, 120–121.

15. Yashiro Yukio, “Nika Inten yōgahyō,” *Yomiuri Shinbun* (September 26, 1917), quoted in Murayama, *Shiryō*, 111; and Saitō Yori, “Nikakai kaiin no shosaku,” *Chūō bijutsu* (October 1918), quoted in Murayama, *Shiryō*, 112.

16. See comments by Maruyama Banka in *Mizue: Nika Inten gō* (October 1919); and by Kume Masao, “Nikakai kanken,” *Yomiuri Shinbun* (September 11, 1919), quoted in Murayama, *Shiryō*, 114–116.

17. Masamune, “Shō shōgai,” quoted in Murayama, *Shiryō*, 129–130.

18. See Murayama, *Shiryō*, 133–134, for an essay by Masamune, “Jibun no sobyō,” published in *Mizue* (January 1921).

19. Masamune, *Tomioka Tessai*, 14. His comment on bird-and-flower painting is also found on the same page. Tessai’s remark about scholars implies a possible dilemma faced by three renowned Sinologists, Kano Kunzan (1868–1947), Naitō Konan (1866–1934), and Nagao Uzan (1864–1942), who were tasked to write a preface for *Sōshin zuga*. Even though the book

showcases Tessai's new paintings, the three Sinologists may have felt obliged not to emphasize Tessai's talent as painter in their writings as he insisted on identifying himself as a scholar.

20. Masamune, *Tomioka Tessai*, 20.

21. See illustrations in *Bijutsu gahō*, no. 559 (March 1925): 13.

22. Nikikai was founded in 1947 by nine artists, all of them former members of the Second Section Society (Nikakai). They named the new group the Second Era Society to indicate that it marked the reemergence or "second era" of the Nikakai in postwar Japan.

23. Original description by Moriguchi Tari (1892–1984), "Genzai yōgakai no shoryūha," *Waseda bungaku* (September 1919), quoted in Murayama, *Shiryō*, 113.

24. From a eulogy for Masamune Tokusaburō written by Nakagawa Kigen in *Tōkyō Shinbun* (evening edition), March 17, 1962. See Murayama Shizuo, "Masamune Tokusaburō no ayumi: Furansu kindai kaiga no sesshu to Nihon kaiki," in *Botsugo 40 nen shikisai no ongaku—Masamune Tokusaburō no sekai ten*, ed. Fuchū-shi Bijutsukan (Tokyo: Fuchū-shi Bijutsukan, 2002), 13. Nakagawa Kigen was an active participant in the annual Nikakai exhibition since 1915 and formally became a member in 1923. He joined Masamune and others in the founding of the Nikikai in 1947. Known for works influenced by Fauvism and experimental approaches in his early career, Nakagawa was increasingly drawn in his late years to *nanga* and its principle of amateurism.

25. Shiga Hidetaka, "Masamune Tokusaburō no kaiga rinen 'shikisai no ongaku' no tanjō," in Fuchū-shi Bijutsukan, ed., *Botsugo 40 nen shikisai no ongaku: Masamune Tokusaburō no sekai ten* (Fuchū: Fuchū-shi Bijutsukan, 2002), 119; and Hyōgo Kenritsu Bijutsukan and Tessai Bijutsukan, *Seitan 180 nen kinen Tomioka Tessai*, 231. For examples of Masamune's literati painting and his versions of Tessai's work, see Hyōgo Kenritsu Bijutsukan and Tessai Bijutsukan, *Seitan 180 nen kinen Tomioka Tessai*, plate 196; Fuchū-shi Bijutsukan, *Botsugo 40 nen shikisai no ongaku: Masamune Tokusaburō no sekai ten*, plates 89, 90, and 91; Iida-shi Bijutsu Hakubutsukan, ed., *Masamune Tokusaburō: Iida-shi Bijutsu Hakubutsukan shūzōhin zuroku* (Iida: Iida-shi Bijutsu Hakubutsukan, 2012), plates 52 and 53; and Fuchū-shi Bijutsukan, ed., *Seidō suru hissen no gaka: Masamune Tokusaburō gabunshū* (Tokyo: Fuchū-shi Bijutsukan, 2017), 172, 178–179, 182.

26. The term "literati oil painter" appears in Shiga Hidetaka, "Bunjin yusai gaka: Masamune Tokusaburō no 'seidō suru hissen,'" in Fuchū-shi Bijutsukan, *Seidō suru hissen no gaka*, 201.

27. Kojima Atsushi, "Masamune Tokusaburō no gagyō," in Iida-shi Bijutsu Hakubutsukan, *Masamune Tokusaburō*, 49.

28. Nabei Katsuyuki, "Tomioka Tessai," *Nanga kanshō*, no. 10 (October 1935): 18.

29. Umehara Ryūzaburō, "Tessai no shikikan," in *Tomioka Tessai*, ed. Kobayashi Hideo (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1966), 114.

30. For an in-depth discussion on Tessai's changing brushwork, see Tamaki Maeda, "Tomioka Tessai's Narrative Landscape: Rethinking Sino-Japanese Traditions" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2004), 144–159.

31. Masamune, *Tomioka Tessai*, 35.

32. Masamune, *Tomioka Tessai*, 143.

33. Ishikawa Tairō was a samurai in the direct service of the Tokugawa shogunate as *hatamoto*. Initially trained by a Kano-school painter, he became interested in copperplate prints imported from Europe and taught himself Western artistic conventions such as shading. Tessai's painting is published in Kyōto-shi Bijutsukan, *Seitan 150 nen kinen: Tomioka Tessai ten*, plate 55. For a detailed discussion of this painting and two other works of the same subject by Tessai, see Sen Gyōbai, "Kindai Nitchū no bunjin gaka to 'seiyō' (1): 'Saigo no kyo-shō' Tomioka Tessai," *Gengo bunka ronsō* 11 (2007): 103–129.

34. For example, a student enrolled in the painting division in 1899 was required to attend thirty-three hours of classes each week, which included not only courses in sketching

and painting but also mathematics, history, physics, plants and animals, reading/writing, ethics, and so forth. The curriculum also included two hours of physical exercise class each week. See Kyoto Shiritsu Geijutsu Daigaku Hyakuneshi Hensan Inkaei, *Hyakunenshi: Kyōto Shiritsu Geijutsu Daigaku* (Kyōto Shiritsu Geijutsu Daigaku, 1981), 144–146.

35. Misawa Kyūkō, “Fukkatsu shita Tessai-ō no seikatsu,” 34.

36. Ogawa Sen'yō, “Tessai sensei ni kakawaru zakkan,” *Atorie* 2, no. 2 (February 1925): 20–21. Ogawa Sen'yō started his career as an oil painter and gradually transitioned into *nihonga*. He is best known for his loosely brushed, brightly colored paintings based on his interpretations of literati styles.

37. For an in-depth discussion of this important Kyoto group's activities, see John D. Szostak, *Painting Circles: Tsuchida Bakusen and Nihonga Collectives in Early 20th-Century Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

38. Masamune, *Tomioka Tessai*, 21.

39. Former comment by Masamune Tokusaburō, “Tomioka Tessai sensei,” *Atorie* 11, no. 4 (April 1934): 26; and latter comment by Miura Tsuneo, “Shikisai no romantiku—Tomioka Tessa iron,” *Nanga kanshō* 6, no. 11 (November 1937): 11.

Along the Scholar's Path

A STUDY OF THE MOUNTING STYLES OF WORKS

BY TOMIOKA TESSAI AND ŌTAGAKI RENGETSU

IN THE MARY AND CHENEY COWLES COLLECTION

Introduction

There are a variety of formats for mounting hanging scrolls (*kakejiku*) in Japan today that can be broadly divided into two groups. In the first group, there are three formats, called *hyōho*, *dōho*, and *rinpo*. These are differentiated according to their level of formality: formal mounting styles (*shin*), semiformal mounting styles (*gyō*), and informal mounting styles (*sō*) (for example, see Figures 1–3). The second group contains hanging scrolls in Chinese style, which are generically referred to as literati-style mountings (*bunjin hyōgu*) (see Figure 4). The selection of a hanging scroll format is primarily made according to its relationship with the painting or calligraphy to be mounted, which can be of various kinds, from religious subjects such as mandala to the sacred names and images of Buddhas and Shintō deities (*kami*) as well as genre scenes, bird-and-flower subjects, poetry, and calligraphy, among others. Appropriate mountings are prepared to suit the scroll's function in adorning various locations: for worship, daily life, auspicious occasions, and so on. The selection of the mounting for a hanging scroll is therefore not only made according to the subject of the painting or the calligraphy but also influenced by the location and purpose for which the scroll will be displayed. Accordingly, there are many formats still extant in Japan today. The existence of a variety of rules for these formats is related to their long history within Japanese culture as a central component of interior decoration.

Hanging scrolls were imported to Japan along with the transmission of Buddhism in the mid-sixth century. Scrolls of this period, such as mandala or paintings of the Amida Buddha, were intended for display as images of worship. Even in subsequent centuries when other subjects began to appear, such as portraits of monks (*chinzō*) and calligraphic inscriptions of Buddha names, the purpose of the paintings essentially continued to be limited to acts of devotion. A number of variations to the form of a hanging scroll appeared from the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries.

For example, although the scrolls were intended for the same purposes of Buddhist devotions, their format was adjusted for use in everyday worship or for incantation ceremonies at temples, the court, and other locations. At this time, Japanese patrons also requested decorative Song (960–1279) and Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) hanging scrolls from China, including ink paintings of the White-Robed Kannon and ornamental plants. Imported continental objects (*karamono*) were considered superior, and these pictorial scrolls were treasured accordingly.

During this same period, the *shinden* style of domestic architecture, which is characterized by areas of open space, began to transition into the *shoin* style, which has smaller rooms containing various interior architectural elements, including staggered shelves (*chigai-dana*) and attached writing alcoves called *tsuke-shoin*. Within *shoin*-style buildings, an interior space, which was then known as the *oshiita*, was established for the display of the most prized hanging scrolls. A feature known as the *toko* also appeared in *shoin*-style buildings, which during this era, referred to a private seating area raised one level above the floor for sitting or resting. The *tokonoma* was a separate space with a dais used as a bedroom.¹ As the *tokonoma* became established for decoration within the room, a standardized format for hanging scrolls to be displayed there was also required. The *Catalog of the Shogunal Collection* (*Kundaikan sōchōki*), the standard text for the decoration of drawing rooms (*zashiki*), was completed in the mid-fifteenth century. This also established the format for hanging scrolls and defined the formal and semiformal mounting styles. Thereafter, official locations for ceremonies and annual events were decorated in accordance with this standard, and the hanging scrolls displayed were also tailored to an appropriate format. Furthermore, the *toko* was also used as a display area by the formalized *rikka* style of ikebana and was subsequently incorporated within the *wabi-cha* style of tea practice as a decorative alcove. Through the establishment of *wabi-cha*, the use of a *toko* also spread among affluent townspeople (*machishū*) at this time, and as informal mounting styles also began to appear, all three categories of mounting—formal, semiformal, and informal—were now present. With the rising popularity of haikai poetry in the Genroku era (1688–1704), a sensitivity to the seasons also emerged in daily life, including tea culture, and hanging scrolls were used as a decorative reflection of the current season.² The Ōbaku sect of Zen flourished in Japan with the arrival of the mid-seventeenth century Chinese émigré monk Ingen Ryūki (Yinyuan Longqi, 1592–1673) and with it the culture of the Chinese literati (Chinese: *wenren*; Japanese: *bunjin*). This was also the beginning of literati-style mounting in Japan. Such developments triggered an influx of culture and material artifacts from overseas, which were then incorporated into Japanese society. Over time the different mounting styles were developed and refined into the two groups of mounting formats that exist today.

Mounting Formats

The first group of mounting formats has three categories that are hierarchically ranked by their formality. These comprise the most formal mounting styles, known as the *shin* type; the semiformal mounting styles, known as the *gyō* type; and the informal mounting styles, known as the *sō* type. To differentiate these three types,

there are three possible border combinations that can be used in a mounting: the outer border, the middle border, and the inner border. The level of formality depends upon the number of borders used in the mounting and whether they surround the artwork completely. In mountings of the formal type, the fabric used for the outer border (*sōberi*) surrounds the middle border (*chūmarwashi*) and the artwork on all four sides. For the semiformal and informal types, the outer border is present only at the top and bottom of the mounting; it does not surround the middle border and artwork along the vertical sides. Furthermore, each of the three types is internally subcategorized according to the rubric of formal, semiformal, and informal, giving a more detailed categorization system of subdivisions: formal-formal, formal-semiformal, and formal-informal; semiformal-formal, semiformal-semiformal, and semiformal-informal; and informal-semiformal and informal-informal. Formal subdivisions are characterized by an inner border (*ichimonji*) that surrounds the artwork on all sides; semiformal subdivisions have an inner border only along the top and bottom; and informal subdivisions do not use inner borders at all. As informal style mountings are, by nature, of the informal type, they are informal in character and cannot have a corresponding formal subtype in which inner borders surround the painting. This gives a total of eight subcategories within the hierarchical system of formality (Figures 1–4).

The most formal category of mounting is mostly used for works intended for worship or religious ceremonies such as calligraphic inscriptions of the names or images of Buddhist divinities. Of a lower level of formality, the most common format for hanging scrolls are the semiformal types, which are used for a variety of subjects such as genre scenes or *waka* poems. In the present day, informal-type mountings are known from tea culture, where they are often used for hanging scrolls whose subjects include the calligraphy of Zen monks or tea masters. Although the informal types are ranked as the most unconstrained style of mounting, they are frequently used for works where the painting is of an elevated tone such as the calligraphy of Zen monks, as noted above. In contrast, although semiformal type mountings are technically more formal than those of the informal type, they are very often used for works where the subject of the artwork has a secular character. Therefore, the “formality” of these three mounting types is not a simple evaluation of high or low status but is a determination based on a variety of value judgments.

As the name suggests, the second group of mounting formats—which are generically referred to as literati-style mountings—is often used for the calligraphies and paintings by the people referred to as literati. From the perspective of a Japanese viewer, such mountings follow a Chinese style, although mountings of this type are not always used for works by painters of Chinese origin. Chinese literati culture was transmitted to Japan together with the introduction of the Ōbaku sect of Zen Buddhism in the mid-seventeenth century. Mountings in this manner became standardized as literati style with the spread of Chinese literati culture in Japan. One example of this type are the so-called Ming-style mountings that retain design elements from the mountings of Ming dynasty China (1368–1644)—the dynasty whose collapse triggered an exodus of Ōbaku monks to Japan. There is a great deal of variety within this category. Among these are single border surround mountings (*maru hyōgu*) and single

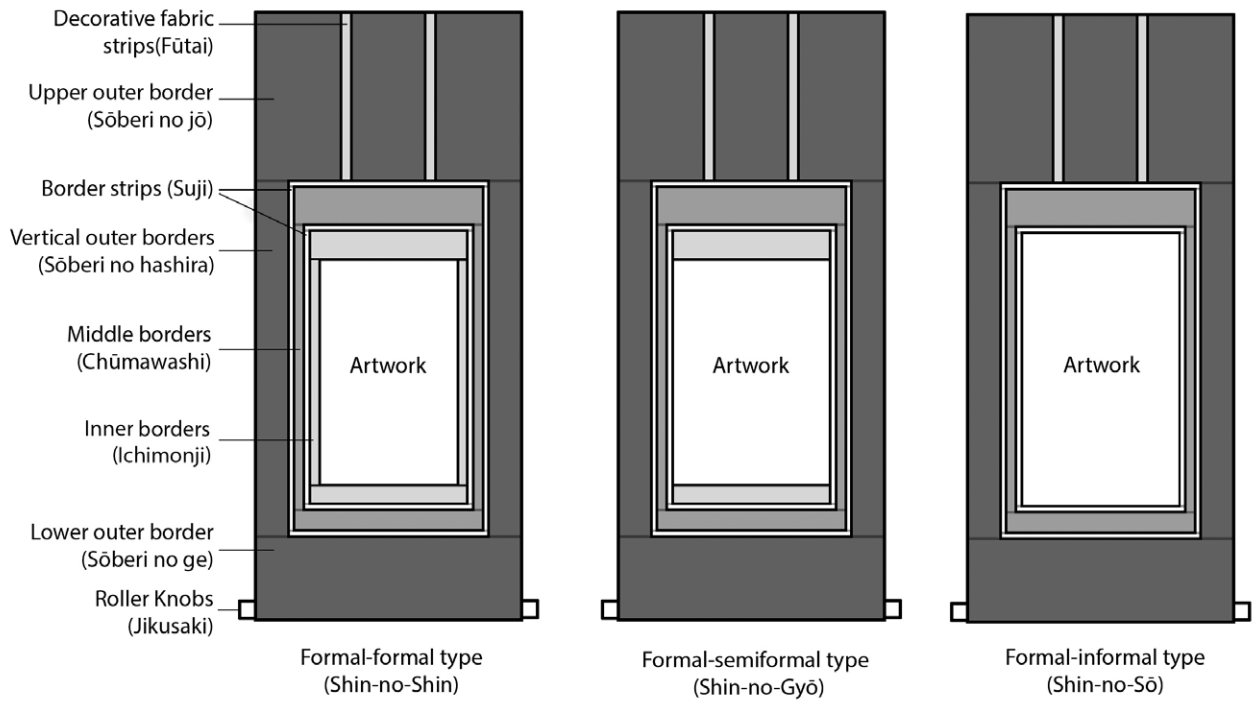


Figure 1. Formal mounting styles (*shin/hyōbo*).

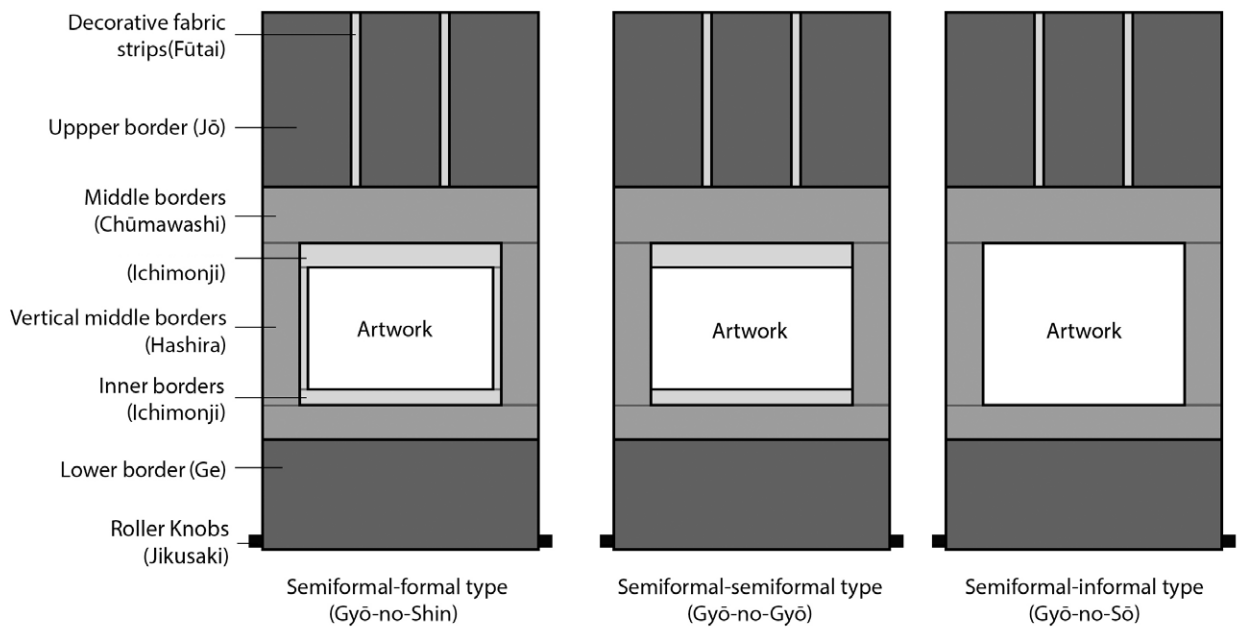


Figure 2. Semiformal mounting styles (*gyō/dōbo*).

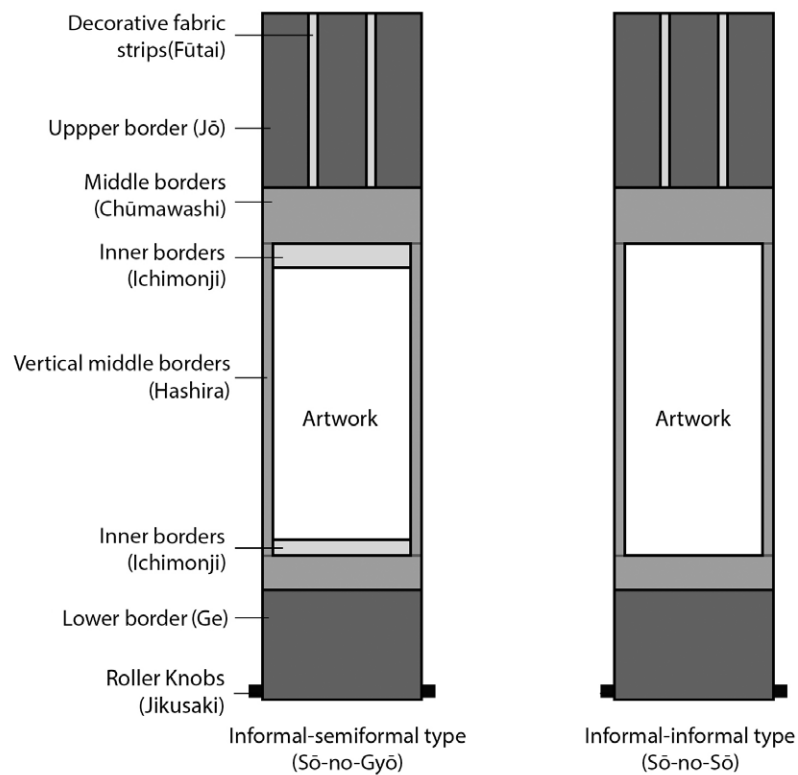


Figure 3. Informal mounting styles (*sō/rinpo*).

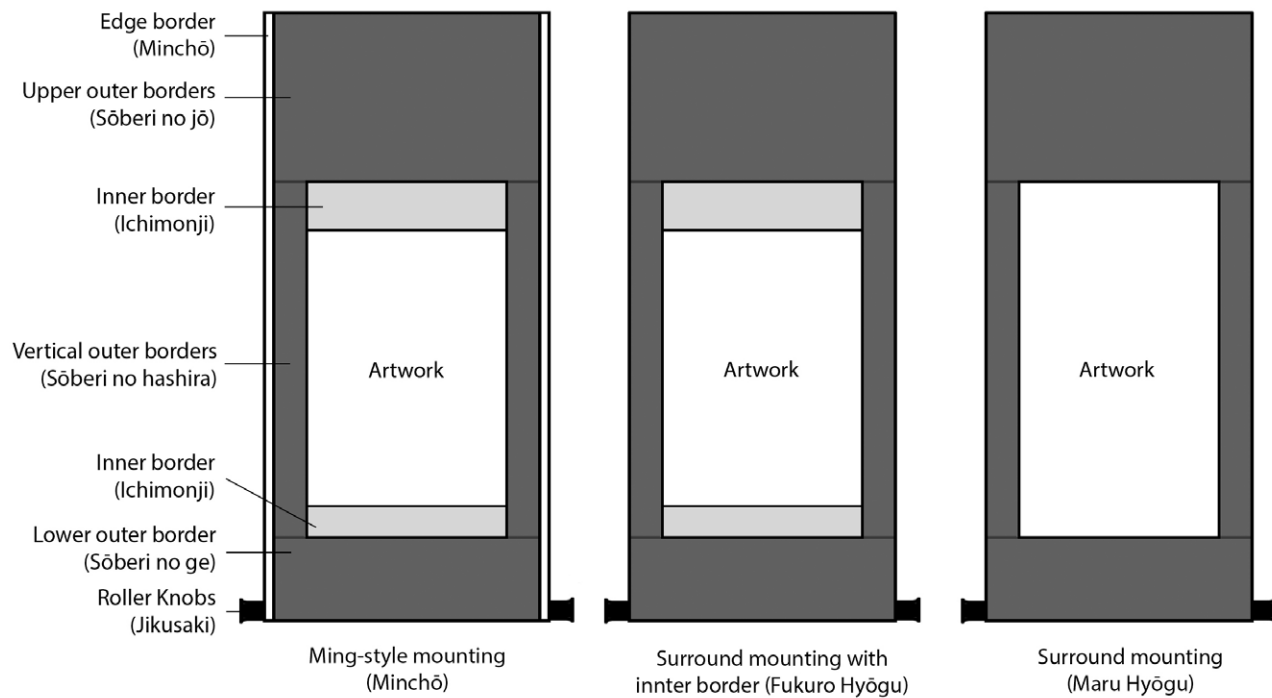


Figure 4. Literati mounting styles (*bunjin hyōgu*).

border surround mountings with an inner border (*fukuro hyōgu*), where the inner border and other surrounding fabrics include detailed designs. It is worth noting that this system of formal-semiformal-informal is not used for literati mountings—even those that have enclosing inner borders. Instead, the prefix “*hon-*” to convey the meaning of “proper” or “formal” is occasionally used.³

Although there are several types of literati mountings—Ming-style mountings and single border surround mountings with and without inner borders—mountings from this group are not internally subcategorized according to the three-tier system described above, as even the mountings preserve the untrammelled character of the literati. However, the mounting is selected according to a complex variety of factors, such as the feeling of lightness or heaviness inspired by the detailed designs, the artist, and the subject of the painting or calligraphy.

For the design of each type of literati mounting, the name Ming-style mounting is directly taken from the characteristic use of the Ming dynasty (Minchō) borders that run vertically down both outer edges of the mounting. *Fukuro* mountings are those that attach an inner border at the top and bottom of the painting, which is then surrounded with an outer border. *Maru* mountings have the same form as *fukuro* mountings but without an inner border. All literati-style mountings therefore have outer borders, but there are variations as to whether they include Ming-style vertical edges, inner borders, or other features. To create a simple finish, many literati mountings do not feature *fūtai*, the two fabric strips that often hang from the top of a hanging scroll mounting. There are also other features that resemble mountings made in China with wide inner borders and protruding roller knobs (*jikusaki*). However, these features are not rigidly adhered to, unlike the triple-formality type system.

Even today the painting or calligraphy is given the highest importance when deciding the type of mounting to be used when constructing a hanging scroll. Such emphasis is based on not only the subject of the painting or calligraphy but also a comprehensive consideration of the text’s author or, for an image, of the school of the painter. For example, formal-type mountings are generally used for Buddhist art, but if the deity is painted by a literati artist, a literati mounting would be used. If it is by a modern *nihonga* painter, a semiformal-type mounting may be selected. Although the fabrics used to construct the mounting are the same, a variety of different patterns can be assembled in different ways according to the content of the painting, the social status of the author, and other criteria. In European and American art, the frame of an artwork may be figuratively compared to a window. But in Japan, a hanging scroll is often compared to a kimono. By looking at a kimono (the mounting), it is possible to learn many things, from its content to its creator. On the other hand, it is very common that a mounting may be changed after the value of the artist’s work increases, using more expensive materials such as golden brocade and ivory knobs. The mounting style may stay the same although the formality sometimes increases, such as from semiformal-semiformal to semiformal-formal. Without exception, this happened with Tomioka Tessai’s (1836–1924) works since their value had risen so much by the late Meiji era, which is also true for Ōtagaki Rengetsu’s (1791–1875) work. This practice of remounting is still common in Japan depending on the values of the works, the tastes of the owners, and other factors.

Tessai Mountings

After having broadly explained the different varieties of mountings, this essay now turns to Tessai and begins with the mountings for his works, which are of a greater variety with more documentation and include many more original or older examples than the mountings now associated with Rengetsu. The majority of Tessai's mountings are in the literati style. Remaining records kept by mounters during the period when these works were painted (from the end of the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries) indicate a high volume of requests for literati-style mountings, particularly those in the Ming style.⁴ There was a sustained interest in literati pursuits at this time that continued from the previous era, through the enjoyment of paintings and calligraphy by literati artists and the popularity of displaying their works in the aesthetic environment of steeped tea (*sencha*) tea culture. Such a fertile ground for the appreciation of works by literati is the reason why so many literati-style mountings were produced at this time. Tessai works mounted in the literati style are in alignment with the trends of this era.

Although they can be described simply as literati-style mountings, no two are alike, for such mountings are composed of a variety of elements and vary according to features such as their dimensions, fabrics, and roller knobs. In the following sections, this essay analyzes several Tessai works within the Cowles Collection that have particularly notable, and likely original, mountings.

Format and Design

Among the literati-style mountings used for Tessai works, several have been constructed using Ming-style mountings such as *The Grand Kitano Tea Gathering* of 1888 and *Orchid Pavilion Gathering* of 1913 (Figures 5 and 6). Works like *Sage Relaxing* of 1881 and *Tea Hermit of Awata* of 1903 (Figures 7 and 8) are of a semiformal type, with the narrow fabric strips known as Ming-style borders running down both outer edges of the mounting. The adoption of this type of design, particularly for the works of literati artists like Tessai, demonstrates the literati aesthetic even in semiformal mountings.

Made in the late nineteenth century, the fabrics used for the Ming-style edges of *The Grand Kitano Tea Gathering* and *Sage Relaxing* appear to be a thick damask. In contrast, the textiles used for the Ming-style edges of the works made in the early twentieth century, *Orchid Pavilion Gathering* and *Tea Hermit of Awata*, are constructed from a thin fabric. Ming-style edges are usually very narrow, no wider than 0.6–0.7 cm. If a thick fabric is used, it will make the mounting susceptible to cockling over time since the thickness of the mounting is thinner and not balanced with the thickness of the border edges. For this reason, mounters today will almost always use thin fabrics for Ming-style edges. The difference between the fabrics used for Ming-style edges in the later nineteenth century and those in the twentieth century is probably one example of the huge shift occurring in the mounting industry at this time. The practice of weaving textiles specifically for use in mounting only developed in the Meiji era.⁵ Prior to this, mounters repurposed fabrics from monks' robes, other types of costumes, or imported Chinese textiles. Of course, these sources also



Figure 5. Ming-style mounting with “Korean cord” roller knobs (Chōsen himo). Tomioka Tessai, *Great Kitano Tea Gathering*, 1888. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.





Figure 6. Ming-style mounting with narrow border strips. Tomioka Tessai, *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, 1913. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Promised Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles.





Figure 7. Semiformal-informal mounting with Ming-style edge borders and long roller knobs (Nagazaiku). Tomioka Tessai, *Sage Relaxing*, 1881. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.





Figure 8. Semiformal-informal mounting with Ming-style edge borders. Tomioka Tessai, *Tea Hermit of Awata*, 1903. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2019.3.38a-e.



included thin fabrics, and not all Ming-style edges from this period were made from thick damask. However, as people started to weave new textiles that were suitable for use in mounting, it became standard to use those specifically produced for mountings. Further, it is thought that the fabric used for Ming-style edges also became standardized at this time. This change in the mounting industry is reflected in these four scrolls, and we can also see a change in awareness regarding the choice of fabrics used to complement Tessai's paintings.

As I mentioned earlier, because the value of Tessai's works increased, many are mounted with ivory knobs, which are generally attached to high-ranked artworks. Due to regulations in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, all ivory knobs were replaced with wooden knobs when part of the Cowles Collection entered the Freer Gallery of Art. However, these replacement knobs still reflect appropriate choices for his works. The roller knobs used for *The Grand Kitano Tea Gathering* are a type referred to as "Korean cord" (Chōsen himo), whereas *Sage Relaxing* uses long or protruding Chinese-style knobs (*nagazaiku*). Both these types of roller knobs are exclusively used for literati mountings and are unsuitable for the three categories of mounting—formal, semiformal, and informal—of the first group. There are many styles of roller knobs used in literati mountings and many of them imitate the characteristic appearance of those used in Chinese hanging scrolls, with a preference for imported woods such as rosewood (*shitan*) and ebony (*kokutan*). There are several variations for the type of roller knobs most commonly used in literati mounting—flared roller knobs (*bachi jiku*)—and a number of these are also frequently used in semiformal and informal type mountings.⁶

The final example of roller knobs to introduce are those from *Farewell Poem for a Friend Traveling to China* of 1897 (Figure 9). This is a standard type known as flat-cut roller knobs (*zungiri*), which is widely used for first group and literati-style mountings. Interestingly, the roller knobs for this work have been impressed with seals. Such roller knobs are an appropriate choice for Tessai, who maintained a large variety of seals.

Mounting Materials

The textiles used in the construction of the mounting are similarly selected according to the subject of the work. In the case of *Farewell Poem for a Friend Traveling to China*, a type of paper known as wax-rubbed Chinese paper (*rōsen tōshi*) has been used in place of fabric. Originally imported from China, it was appreciated in Japan from the eleventh century onward, where it was primarily used as a writing paper. It was also manufactured in Japan from the twelfth century. The elaborate wax-rubbed paper used for this work was made in China, where the work was mounted. It features a repeated design of intricate dragons, which is appropriate for decorating Tessai's farewell poem for Kuwana Tetsujō (1864–1938), who took the calligraphy with him to China. Paper mountings are common and often used for informal-type mountings, which is discussed later in this essay in the section relating to Ōtagaki Rengetsu. However, most papers used for informal-type mountings are a type of paper coated with a thick layer of pigment and crushed or creased to make a pattern (*momigami*), so it is worth noting that the paper mounting of this Tessai work uses wax-rubbed Chinese paper.

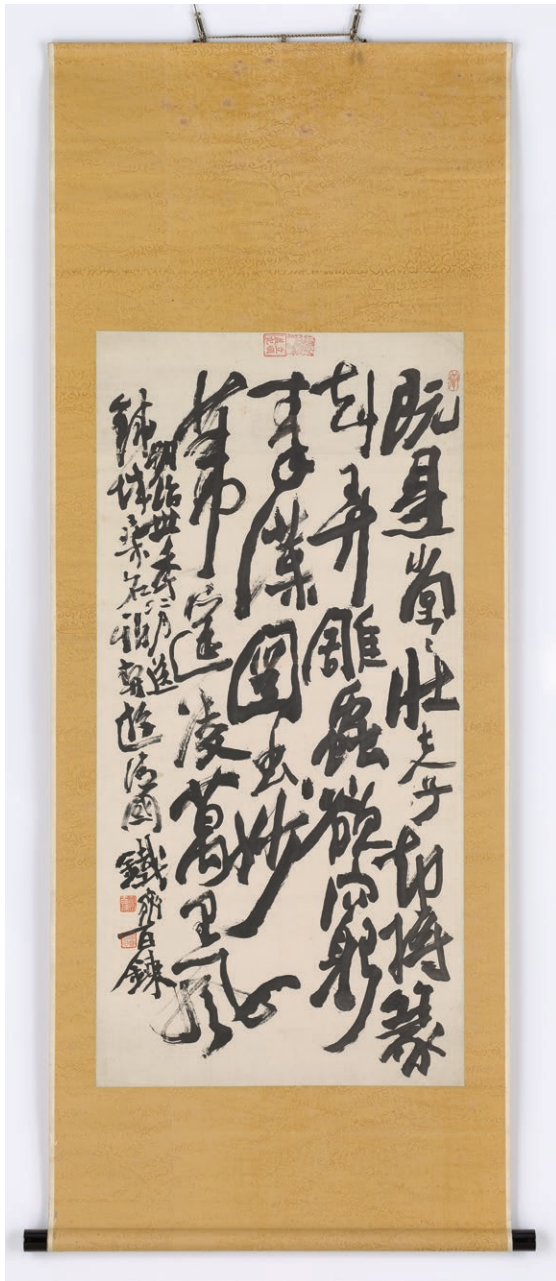
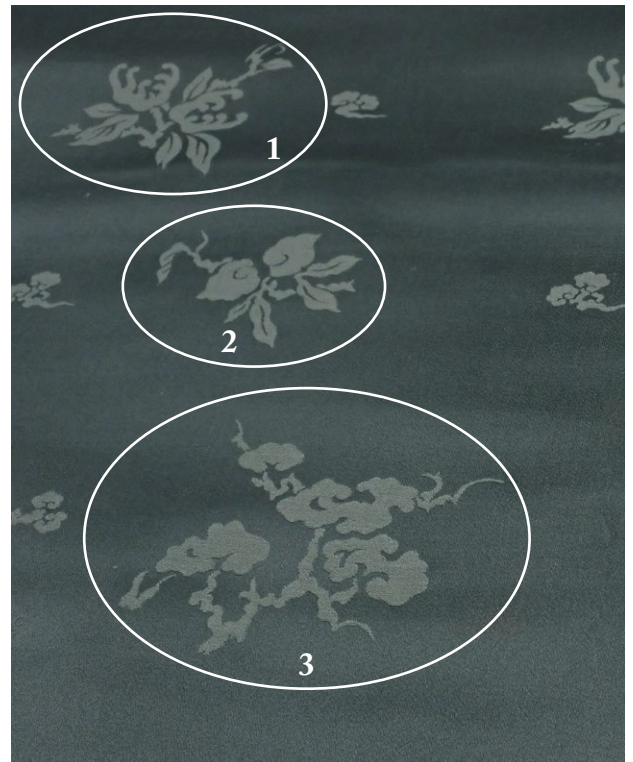


Figure 9. Ming-style Chinese paper mounting with flat-cut roller knobs (*zungiri*) impressed with seals. Tomioka Tessai, *Farewell Poem for a Friend Traveling to China*, 1897. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2018.4.28a-c.





Figure 10. Surround mounting with inner borders and narrow border strips. The outer border fabric has three motifs: Buddha's hand (1), peach (2), auspicious fungus (3). Tomioka Tessai, *Workers Traveling over the Mountain*, 1919. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2018.4.26a-f.



The outer border fabric of *Workers Traveling over the Mountain* of 1919 (Figure 10) is woven with a pattern of fruits, including Buddha's hand, peaches, and auspicious fungus. These motifs are often employed as the subjects of literati paintings as each has specific symbolic meanings. Such bountiful decorations of fruits and vegetables are frequently used in the practice of the *sencha* tea ceremony. This is a prime example of where a pattern of flowering plants, which was favored by literati, has been used to join elements of the mounting for a literati artist like Tessai. In addition, the fabric for the mounting of the 1916 *Gathering to Celebrate Old Age* (Figure 11) has a pattern of stylized tortoise shells that includes the character for “longevity” (*kotobuki*). The tortoise is a sacred animal that is believed to have a lifespan of ten thousand years and



Figure 11. Surround mounting with inner borders and narrow border strips. The outer border fabric has a tortoiseshell design overlaid with the character for longevity (*kotobuki*). Tomioka Tessai, *Gathering to Celebrate Old Age*, 1916. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, 2021, 2021.398.2.



so is often employed as a symbol of long life. The “*kotobuki*” character is a symbol of auspicious tidings, containing the meanings of “long life,” “living long,” or “elderly person,” and is used to convey congratulations to someone for reaching old age. In this work the subject of the painting is a celebration of old age, which is combined with a fabric pattern that symbolizes long life. Further, the inner borders contain a pattern of the auspicious fungus mentioned above. In Daoism, this auspicious mushroom is said to be a miracle elixir of immortality and perpetual youth and is still used today in Chinese herbal medicine. As a result, the fungus has become symbolic of longevity. In combination with the subject of the painting, fabrics were chosen for the inner and outer borders that have patterns suggesting blessings for a long life.

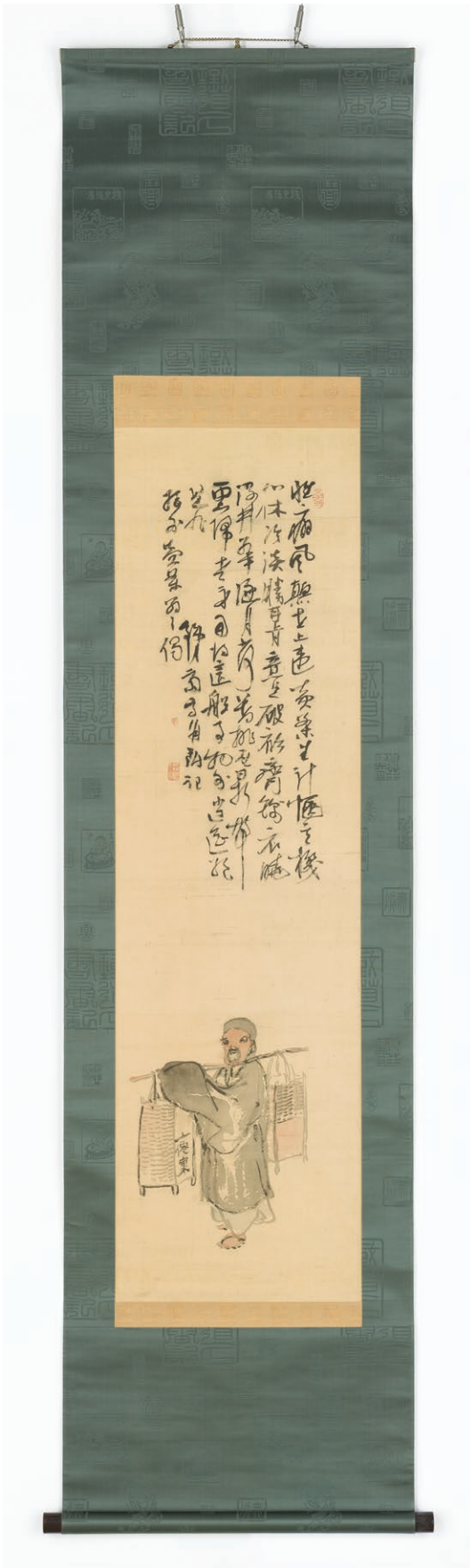
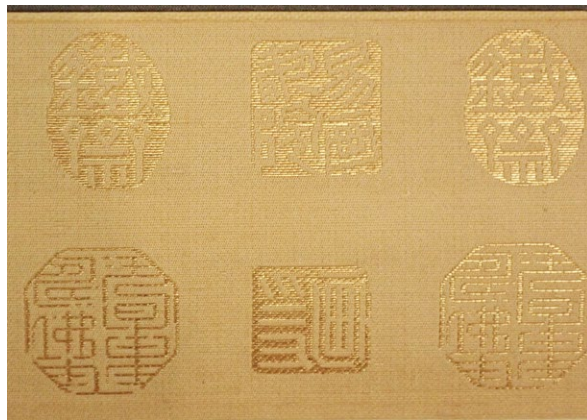


Figure 12. Surround mounting with inner borders and narrow border strips. Both fabrics are woven with patterns of Tessai's seals. Tomioka Tessai, *Baisaō*, ca. 1870. Hanging scroll; ink and light color on silk. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2020.5.47a-d.



Baisaō, ca. 1870 (Figure 12), is another example of a work where the combination of the painting and the fabrics creates a unique mounting. Here the textiles used for the inner and outer borders have woven designs of Tessai's seals. It is well known that Tessai had a tremendous interest in seals, and some of the seals used in the pattern of the fabric are those used on the painting itself.

In Chinese painting and calligraphy, examples where seals have been impressed many times onto the painting and its surrounding mounting are not uncommon. There are many varieties of such seals. They include not only those of the artist but those of the owners who collected the paintings or those showing appreciation of the emperor, and so on. One such example is in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art, the Ming dynasty work *Landscape: Mountain Peaks and Valley* (Figure 13), where many of the seals impressed onto the painting also extend onto the mounting.⁷ Perhaps in imitation of these Chinese mountings, the mounting on a work by the literati artist Hayashi Rōen (dates unknown), *Emerging from a Cave in the Spring Rain*, shows the repeated impressions of the seal from around the edges of the painting (Figure 14). This work is of a generation earlier than Tessai's *Baisaō*, demonstrating the domestic production of this kind of mounting within Japan during the latter half of the eighteenth century. From the Meiji era onward, fabrics were manufactured specifically for use in mounting, and it became popular to use textiles woven with designs of a particular artist's seal. Such fabrics can often be seen on the mountings of works by artists from around the beginning of the modern era, such as Suzuki Shōnen (1848–1918) and Noguchi Shōhin (1847–1917), as well as modern artists like Yokoyama Taikan (1868–1958) and Uemura Shōen (1875–1949). Another example, Noguchi Shōhin's *Bamboo and Roses* (Figure 15) uses a fabric that has four of the artist's seals woven into the pattern. This work was made around 1914, which is later than the production of *Baisaō*. However, since we can also see textiles in which the artist's seals feature as a pattern used in the mountings of other painters dating to around the same period in which this work was made—which is around forty years after the production of *Baisaō*—it is very possible that the current mounting of *Baisaō* also dates to around this time.⁸ Although it was popular to incorporate woven seal designs into fabrics in this way, this example of a Tessai mounting is rare as it includes seals of different sizes and shapes, which were more complicated to weave. Under normal circumstances, such a striking design would be avoided for a mounting so that the textile surround would not be a distraction from the painting. In this case, the use of Tessai's seals in the mounting fabric serves not only as an indication of the artist but also as a boast of his status as a literatus. Although the convention of impressing seals over the painting or calligraphy and onto the mounting began in China, such mountings were also produced in Japan. Woven “seal assortment mountings” can be thought of as a reemergence of this aesthetic. *Baisaō* thus has a place in the history of literati mountings.



Figure 13. Chinese painting and mounting impressed with many collectors' seals. Formerly attributed to Mi Fu, *Landscape: Mountain Peaks and Valley*, sixteenth–seventeenth centuries. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1916.408.



Figure 14. Japanese literati painting surrounded by impressed seals. Hayashi Rōen, *Emerging from a Cave in the Spring Rain*, eighteenth century. Hanging scroll; ink on silk.





Figure 15. Soberi fabric woven with patterns of the artist's seals. Noguchi Shōhin, *Bamboo and Roses*, 1914. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. Kosetsu Memorial Museum, Jissen Women's University.



Rengetsu Mountings

The *waka* poetry by Rengetsu in the Cowles Collection is inscribed on poetry paper (*kaishi*), square poem paper (*shikishi*), and vertical poem slips (*tanzaku*). In general, the most formal type of paper used for inscribing verses at poetry gatherings is *kai-shi*, and semiformal-type mountings are most often selected for its display. As square poem paper and vertical poem slips are less formal, there is a tendency to select informal mountings for such works. Allegedly, the first hanging scroll of *waka* poetry displayed in the history of the tea ceremony was on square poem paper.⁹ It is not only from this singular instance that square poem paper is considered informal. There are many historical records of its use in hanging scrolls displayed for the tea ceremony. Furthermore, many factors are taken into consideration when selecting a scroll format, such as the poet and calligraphy style, and the size and hue of the paper. Particularly for square poem paper and vertical poem slips, which have small dimensions, most are set into a paper or silk surround (*daishi*), increasing the size of the work to fit a larger, more standard-sized mounting.

There are several examples where Rengetsu's calligraphy is accompanied with an image by another artist such as Tessai. In most cases, the esteemed status of the calligrapher of the inscription is considered more important than the image. In such cases, the mounting format is selected to emphasize Rengetsu's calligraphy as a means to elevate her poetry. However, this is not to say that the artist behind the accompanying image is not taken into consideration at all when selecting the mounting.

Many of Rengetsu's works were mounted with paper mountings, and since these deteriorate easily, there are few hanging scrolls from that period that retain their original appearance. Accordingly, there are examples that have been remounted shortly before or after they were added to the Cowles Collection. However, in cases where such works have been remounted (for example, with Tessai's images), this has mostly been done with literati-type mountings. In Rengetsu's case, the mounting format and fabrics were selected to complement calligraphy by a female poet. This choice of fabrics reflects the impression of Rengetsu, the work held at that time by the patron who commissioned the mounting, and the mounter who received the commission. As is explained further below, slightly different aesthetics were employed for the mountings of Rengetsu's poetry and for works that combine her poetry with an image.

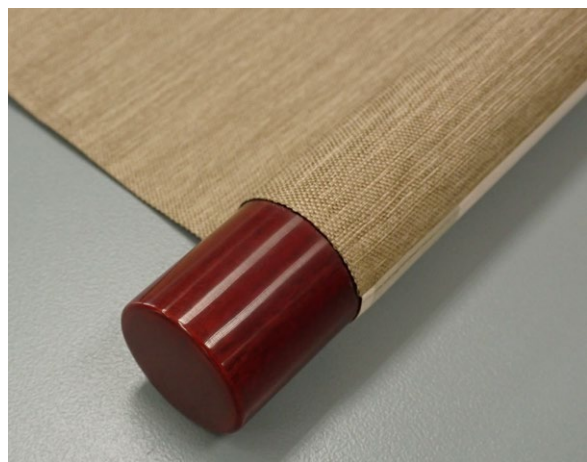
Mounting Waka

Three Waka Poems (1869; Figure 16), has been mounted with a semiformal mounting, which is appropriate for the poetry paper on which it was inscribed. The mounting for this work has not been altered since it entered the Cowles Collection. However, since it is common for Rengetsu's works to have paper mountings, which are more fragile than fabric ones, it is possible that the calligraphy was remounted by a previous owner. Overall, the combination of fabrics is of a gentle palette, and the textile used for the inner borders is a type known as Takeyamachi. This textile is manufactured in the Takeyamachi district of Kyoto and is characterized by patterns in gold

and colored threads embroidered onto a silk gauze ground. Although it is not universally the case, this fabric is often used for mounting genre paintings with a female subject and is also favored for works by female artists.¹⁰ This textile type has been used for the inner border on a vertical poem slip, the late-nineteenth-century *Waka Poem* (Figure 17), which has been remounted since it entered the Cowles Collection. The vertical poem slip *Waka Poem* has been set into a paper surround, according to the most informal type of informal style mounting that is familiar from its use in the practice of the *sencha* tea ceremony. The roller knobs are of a type that no longer has



Figure 16. Semiformal-semiformal mounting. Poems written on poetry paper (*waka kaishi*). Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Three Waka Poems*, 1869. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2021.2.2a-d.



a name, but their general shape resembles those often used in mounting works by tea practitioners, with the flared round shape known as “Sōtan-style.”¹¹ A circular band in imitation of a cord has been carved around the edge of the knobs. The example of Tessai’s “Korean cord” roller knobs, noted earlier, were originally of the “Korean-style” (*Chōsen bachi*) into which a cord has been carved. This technique was often employed for literati paintings. Since this type of roller knob was used for the informal format hanging scrolls used for the *sencha* tea ceremony, we can surmise that they were selected to incorporate Rengetsu’s literati side.

Figure 17. Informal-semiformal mounting with pasted-down paper decorative strips. Poem written on a vertical poem slip (*tanzaku*). Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Waka Poem*, late nineteenth century. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2019.3.27a-d.

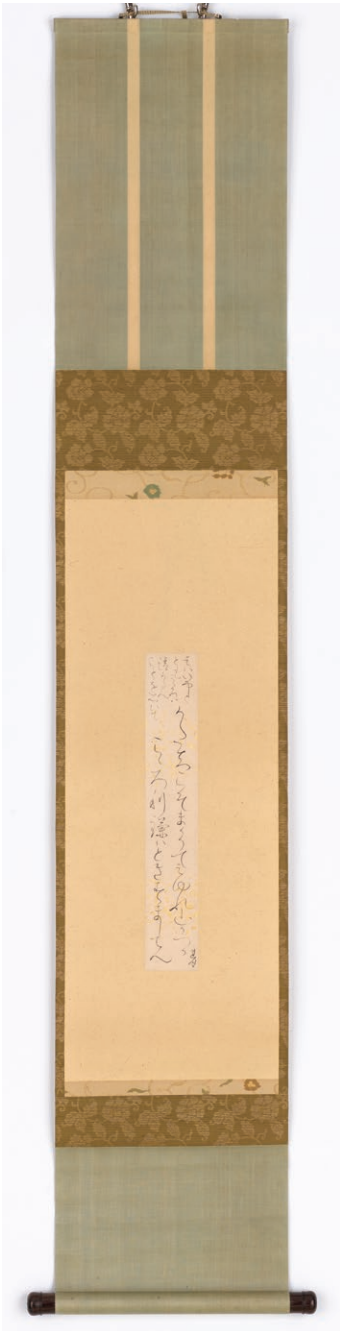




Figure 18. Informal-semiformal paper mounting with pasted-down paper decorative strips. Calligraphy: Ōtagaki Rengetsu; painting: Wada Gozan, *Waka Poem with Painting of Flowering Branch*, 1871. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2020.5.36a-c.



Mounting *Waka* and Images

A jointly produced work where Rengetsu's *waka* poetry is inscribed together with an image by Wada Gozan (1800–1870) is *Waka Poem with Painting of Flowering Branch* of 1871 (Figure 18). The paper mounting uses creased-coated paper above and below the inner and middle borders, which are made of fabric. As many of Rengetsu's works feature this kind of paper surround, there is a high likelihood that this style is contemporary with the original mounting. Due to the softness of creased-coated paper, it can be used to create a variety of effects. The tightly patterned effect achieved in this mounting is attributable to the use of *komomi* type, a coated paper crushed or kneaded to make a pattern of fine, interlocking creases. Informal-type mountings are particularly favored for use in the practice of *wabi-cha*, or rustic-style tea. The decorative strips (*fütai*) are also made of paper, which have been pasted to the top section of the outer border of the mounting and are known as *hari fütai*, or pasted-down decorative strips. Like *Waka Poem*, which also has pasted-down decorative strips, this type of construction is favored for hanging scrolls used in *wabi-cha*-style tea.

There are several works jointly produced by Rengetsu and Tessai, including *Fox-Priest Hakuzōsu* of 1867 (Figure 19), which employs a single border surround mounting with an inner border (*fukuro hyōgu*) of a literati-style mounting and features very



Figure 19. Surround mounting with inner borders. Calligraphy: Ōtagaki Rengetsu; painting: Tomioka Tessai, *Fox-Priest Hakuzōsu*, 1867. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2018.4.21a-e.



narrow vertical outer borders just like an informal type. There are semiformal type mountings among Tessai's works, including hanging scrolls featuring Ming-style edges, but this work has a literati-style mounting suited to Rengetsu's and Tessai's statuses as literates in an informal-type combination that is attuned to Rengetsu's poem as well as their teacher-pupil relationship.

Another jointly produced work by Rengetsu and Tessai with an impactful mounting is the 1873 *Cherry Blossoms* (Figure 20). The scroll entered the Cowles Collection with its present mounting, which has a single border surround, a commonly seen style used for Tessai works. The poem, "No place at the inn but I find consolation sleeping beneath / the hazy moon and the cherry blossoms" (Yado kasanu hito no tsurasa o nasake nite oborotsukiyo no hana no shitafushi), is a representative verse by Rengetsu, with the full moon as painted by Tessai floating over the branch of a cherry blossom tree. The combination of the night-cherry subject of the main image with the Takeyamachi fabric used for sections of the inner border and the damask of the outer border gives the work a subdued tonality. The blue-and-white ceramic roller knobs are painted with an intricate, interlocking Buddhist *wan* pattern at the side, and a man on horseback at the top, evoking the person in the poem. Furthermore, the knobs are the work of the Kyoto ceramicist Miura Chikusen (First Chikusen 1853–1915, Second 1882–1920). This illustrates the relationship between Rengetsu, Tessai, and Chikusen: there are a number of extant examples of ceramics by the first and second generation of the Chikusen name that have been illustrated with images by Tessai. Additionally, Rengetsu was close friends with the third-generation potter Takahashi Dōhachi (1811–1879), who was the teacher of the first-generation Chikusen, and also with the second-generation Dōhachi. There are also extant collaboratively produced works between Rengetsu and both Dōhachi generations. This scroll is therefore an extremely interesting work reflecting the personal relationships between its authors and offers a glimpse of how the students employed their skills in earnest for the sake of their teacher. The mounter was aware of the personal relationships between the creators of the central image and has combined each of their techniques to produce this scroll.

This work features the same inscribed poem as that found in *Waka Poem* (Figure 21), but here it is painted with a branch of cherry blossoms. However, the latter is mounted as a semiformal level of the informal style (*sō no gyō*). There is no moon in this image, and a bright, light-colored, creased-coated paper has been used for the middle and outer borders to evoke a sense of the budding springtime and give the overall impression of lightness. Although the middle border is made of *haibara-momi* type—a pigment-coated paper creased at close intervals to make a pattern of parallel lines—and the outer borders are of *komomi* type—finely crushed coated paper—the effect of the patterns is subtle as there is only a slight difference between the color of the base paper and that of the applied pigment. Even though the subjects of the central works are the same, each of them is unique. Each of the components selected, such as the mounting format and the materials, are different in both works.

MULTIPLE FORMATS for Japanese mountings have emerged from an array of histories and transitions, and even today each of these is matched with a variety of different

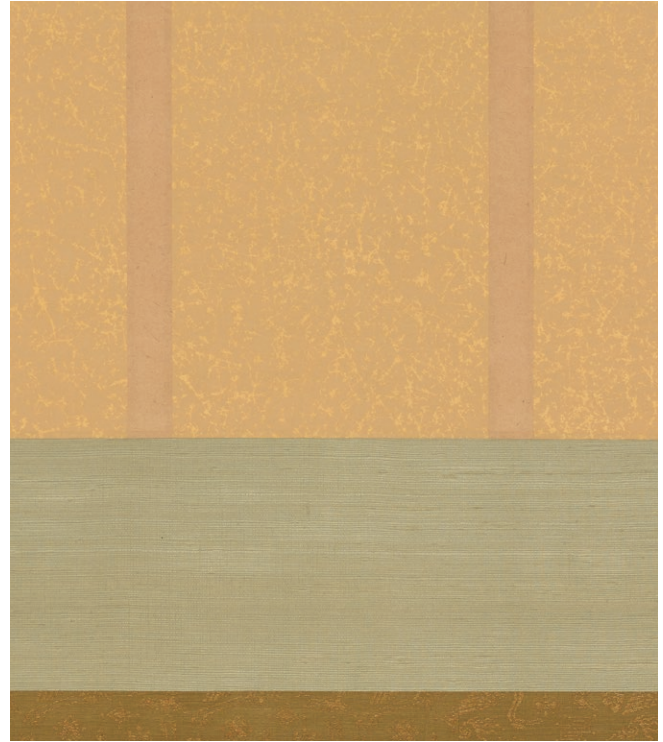


Figure 20. Surround mounting with inner borders, ceramic roller knobs by Miura Chikusen. Calligraphy: Ōtagaki Rengetsu; painting: Tomioka Tessai, *"No place at the inn" Waka and Painting of Cherry Blossoms*, 1873. Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper. The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection.





Figure 21. Informal-semiformal mounting with pasted-down paper decorative strips. Same waka poem as Figure 20. Ōtagaki Rengetsu, *Cherry Blossoms* / “No place at the inn,” nineteenth century. Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles, F2019.3.26a-d.



paintings and calligraphies. Because Tessai was a literati artist, most of his works are mounted with literati-type mountings, whereas Rengetsu’s status as a poet means her works are mounted in semiformal and informal types—although a portion are also mounted with literati-style mountings. Even if the mounting format is the same, the differences between Tessai and Rengetsu are explored through different components and decisions. Even when the content of the main work is the same, the mounting is selected to match the particularities of each work.

As was referenced at the outset, a Japanese hanging scroll can be likened to a kimono. Just as for the wearer of the kimono, a great deal of information can be conveyed about the author of the central work of a hanging scroll. However, it is the skill and aesthetic sense of a few individuals—the craftspeople who created the fabrics and

decorated papers and roller knobs used in the construction of the scrolls; the mounter who combined these materials; the patron who commissioned them; and, occasionally, the artist themselves—that bring such information forward. Additionally, the fashions of the era in which the mounting was done add another twist. When we look at a hanging scroll, of course the artwork plays the main role. However, the message of the artist is not limited to the painting. What appears to the viewer extends through the ideas and skills of a variety of people behind the production of a hanging scroll.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful for the advice I received from Paul Berry regarding matters such as the states of repair of the Tessai and Rengetsu works in the Cowles Collection during the preparation of this manuscript. I am also grateful for all the support seamlessly provided by Takako Sarai in securing image permissions for the reproduction of the illustrations and many other matters.

Notes

1. Nakamura Toshinori, *Machiya no chashitsu* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1981), 122.
2. On haikai poetry, see Kumakura Isao, *Haikai to chanoyu* (Itami: Kakimori Bunko, 2017); and Miyajima Yukiko, “Chakai no okeru kisetsukan no tanjō,” *Bijgaku geijutsugaku* 18 (2002): 59–77.
3. As an example, it is called “*honminchō* mounting.”
4. Okamoto, *Hyōso bikō* (Tokyo: Wafūdō), 34.
5. Watanabe Akiyoshi, Oka Kōzō, and Ishikawa Toshio, *Sōkōshi* (Kyoto: Kokuhō Shūri Sōkōshi Renmei, 2011), 144–145.
6. There are several semiformal and informal mountings with flared roller knobs in the Cowles Collection although there are minor differences in their form. For instance, we can see the roller knobs on *Ox Festival* (1905) by Tessai in semiformal mounting type, and “*Determined*” *Waka on Painting of Samurai Footman* (1808–1875) by Rengetsu produced jointly with Shiokawa Bunrin in informal mounting type.
7. Formerly attributed to Mi Fu (1051–1107), *Landscape: Mountain Peaks and Valley*, Ming dynasty (sixteenth–seventeenth centuries).
8. For instance, fabric woven with a pattern of the artist’s seal is used for the inner borders on the eight-scroll set of Yokoyama Taikan’s *Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers* (1913–1914) in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, Ibaraki.
9. According to excerpts from the 300 *Points of Sekishu Tea* (Sekishu 300 kajō), a hanging scroll inscribed with a *waka* poem was first displayed at a tea gathering by the tea master Takeno Jōō (1502–1555), who displayed a poem by Fujiwara Teika (1162–1241) on squared poem paper.
10. Takeyamachi fabrics are favored for the mountings of works by the modern-era female *nihonga* artist Uemura Shōen (1875–1949). Examples of her works mounted with Takeyamachi fabrics include *Firefly* (1929) and *Evening* (1935) in the collection of the Yamatane Museum of Art, and *Waiting for Moonrise* (1942) at the Adachi Museum of Art.
11. We can see “Sōtan-style” roller knobs on “*Cranes/Baby cranes*” *Waka Poem* (1867) in the Cowles Collection.

Appendix

TABLE OF NAMES AND TERMS

The table below correlates Romanized names and terms from the essays in this volume with their Japanese or Chinese characters. The living or active dates represent the life dates or times of activity known for each individual. Japanese and Chinese terms are listed as they appear in the volume's text. Abbreviations: act., active; b., born; ca., circa; d., died; r., reigned; fl., flourished.

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Abe Fusajirō		阿部房次郎	1868–1937
Akita		秋田	
Akutagawa Ryūnosuke		芥川龍之介	1892–1927
Ama no karumo		海人の刈藻	
Anlewo		安樂窩	
Ansei no taigoku		安政の大獄	
<i>Anwantie</i>		安晚帖	
Aoki Masaru		青木正児	1887–1964
Aoki Mokubei		青木木米	1767–1833
Aoki Shukuya		青木夙夜	1737–1802
<i>Asahi Shimbun</i>		朝日新聞	
Asahitei		旭亭	
Asai Chū		浅井忠	1856–1907
Asaka Gonsai		安積良斎	1791–1861
Ashikaga Tadayoshi		足利直義	1306–1352
<i>asobi</i>		遊び	
Asuka		飛鳥	
Asukai Masahisa		飛鳥井雅久	1800–1857

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Awata		粟田	
<i>azana</i>		字	
<i>bachi jiku</i>		撥軸	
Bada Shanren		八大山人	1626–1705
<i>bafen</i> (Chinese)	<i>happun</i> (Japanese)	八分	
Baisaō		売茶翁	1675
<i>baiwen</i> (Chinese)	<i>hakubun</i> (Japanese)	白文	
Ban Kōkei		伴蒿蹊	1733–1806
<i>bashō</i>		芭蕉	
Beijing		北京	
Beiju bokugi		米寿墨戲	
<i>beixuepai</i> (Chinese)	<i>bigakuba</i> (Japanese)	碑學派	
Bi Yuan		畢沅	1730–1797
<i>bieye tu</i>		別号図	
<i>bijutsu</i>		美術	
<i>Bijutsu gabō</i>		美術画報	
<i>Bijutsu shashin garoku</i>		美術写真画録	
Bishū		薇洲	
<i>bonnō-soku-bodai</i>		煩惱即菩提	
Boshin		戊辰	
<i>bunga</i>		文画	
<i>bunjin</i> (Japanese)	<i>wenren</i> (Chinese)	文人	
<i>bunjin hyōgu</i>		文人表具	
<i>bunjin yusai gaka</i>		文人油彩画家	
<i>bunjinga</i> (Japanese)	<i>wenrenhua</i> (Chinese)	文人画	
<i>bunmei kaika</i>		文明開化	
Bunten	abbreviation of 文部省美術展覧会	文展	
<i>bushidō</i>		武士道	
<i>chamijin</i>		茶微塵	
<i>chanoyu</i>		茶の湯	
Chen Hongshou		陳洪綬	1598–1652
Cheng Qi		程琦	1911–1988
<i>Chibifu</i>		赤壁賦	
<i>chigai-dana</i>		違棚	
Chigusa Ariaki		千種有顕	1829–1846

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Chigusa Arifumi		千種有文	1815–1869
Chigusa Arikoto		千種有功	1797–1854
<i>chinzō</i>		頂相	
Chion'in		知恩院	
<i>chō</i> (Japanese)	<i>diao</i> (Chinese)	雕	
Chō Kōran		張紅蘭	1804–1879
Chō Sanshū		長三洲	1833–1895
Chōgetsu		澄月	1714–1798
<i>chōka</i>		長歌	
<i>chōkoku</i>		彫刻	
Chōrakuji		長樂寺	
<i>Chōsen bachi</i>		朝鮮撥	
<i>Chōsen himo</i>		朝鮮紐	
<i>chōshi</i>		トーン/ 調子	
<i>Chōshō yokyō</i>		徴祥餘興	
<i>chūmawashi</i>		中廻し	
<i>Chūō bijutsu</i>		中央美術	
Daikō Sōgen		大綱宗彦	1772–1860
Dai-Nihon Kōryōzan		大日本光良山	
<i>daishi</i>		台紙	
Dai-Tōa kyōeiken		大東亜共栄圏	
Daitokuji		大徳寺	
Daitomo		大友	
Dejima		出島	
<i>diao</i> (Chinese)	<i>chō</i> (Japanese)	雕	
<i>dobin</i>		土瓶	
<i>dōho</i>		幢補	
<i>dōjō</i>		同情	
<i>dōka</i>		道歌	
Dong Qichang	Xiangguang	董其昌 香光	1555–1636
Dongpo pi (Chinese)	Tōba heki (Japanese)	東坡癖	
<i>Dongpo shixu shiyi</i>		東坡時序図冊	
Dongpo tongrisheng (Chinese)	Tōba dōjitsusei (Japanese)	東坡同日生	
<i>dōshin</i>		同心	
Duanfang		端方	1861–1911

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Dunhuang		敦煌	
Ebisu		恵比寿	
Edo		江戸	
Eguchi		江口	
Ehime		愛媛	
Eishū Shōnin		瀛洲上人	
Eitaiji		永代寺	
Enma		閻魔	
Entsū daishi	Jakushō	円通大師 寂照	962–1034
Ershui	Zhang Ruitsu	二水 張瑞図	1570–1640
Fu Bi		富弼	1004–1083
<i>fudai bōkan</i>		普代坊官	
Fūgai Honkō		風外本高	1779–1847
Fugao (Chinese)	Fukkō (Japanese)	腹稿	
Fugen		普賢	
Fujian		福建	
Fujisan		富士山	
Fujita		藤田	
Fujita Tsuguharu		藤田嗣治	1886–1968
Fujiwara Chikamori		藤原親盛	dates unknown, ca. 1200
Fujiwara Michinaga		藤原道長	966–1028
Fujiwara Shunzei		藤原俊成	1114–1204
Fujiwara Teika		藤原定家	1162–1241
Fujiwara Yukinari		藤原行成	972–1027
Fukkō (Japanese)	Fugao (Chinese)	腹稿	
<i>fukoku kyōhei</i>		富国強兵	
Fukui		福井	
Fukuoka		福岡	
<i>fukuro hyōgu</i>		袋表具	
Fukuzawa Yukichi		福沢諭吉	1835–1901
<i>furoshiki</i>		風呂敷	
<i>fūtai</i>		風帶	
Fuyuno	Tomioka Fuyuno	富岡冬野	1904–1940
<i>ga</i>		雅	
<i>gadan</i>		画壇	
Gashindō		画神堂	

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Gekijō zu		撃壤図	
<i>Gendai meika hyakufuku gakai</i>		現代名家百幅画会	
Genroku		元禄	
<i>getsu</i>		月	
Gion		祇園	
Giryō	Taigadō Giryō	大雅堂義亮	1800–1865
<i>go</i>		碁	
<i>gō</i>		号	
Gojōsaka		五条坂	
Gozan bungaku		五山文學	
Gu Congde		顧從德	1519–?
Guanxiu	Chanyue	貫休 禪月	832–912
Guanyin (Chinese)	Kannon (Japanese)	觀音	
<i>Guanzhong shengji tu zhi</i>		關中勝蹟図志	
Gunshiba in		軍司馬印	
<i>guqin</i> (Chinese)	<i>kokin, kûkin</i> (Japanese)	古琴	
<i>guxiumorun</i>		骨秀墨潤	
<i>gyō</i>		行	
Gyōundō		暎雲堂	
<i>haibara-momi</i>		榛原揉み	
<i>haiga</i>		俳画	
<i>haikai</i>		俳諧	
Hainan		海南	
Hakubakai		白馬会	
<i>hakubun</i> (Japanese)	<i>baiwen</i> (Chinese)	白文	
Hakuzōsu		白蔵主	
<i>hana no koro ni</i>		花の頃に	
<i>hana no koro tabi ni arite</i>		花の頃 旅にありて	
Hangzhou		杭州	
Hanshan (Chinese)	Kanzan (Japanese)	寒山	
<i>happun</i> (Japanese)	<i>bafen</i> (Chinese)	八分	
Hara Tanzan		原坦山	1819–1892
Harada Iseki		原田移石	dates unknown
<i>hari fūtai</i>		貼風帶	
Haruko	Tomioka Haruko	富岡春子	1847–1940
Hashimoto Dokuzan		橋本独山	1869–1938

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Hashimoto Kansetsu		橋本関雪	1883–1945
<i>Hatō</i>		波濤	
Hayashi Fukusai		林復斎	1800–1859
Hayashi Rōen		林園苑	dates unknown
<i>he</i> (Chinese)	<i>wa</i> (Japanese)	和	
Heian		平安	
<i>Heian jinbutsu shi</i>		平安人物誌	
Heian waka shitennō		平安和歌四天王	
Heisei		平成	
Hidaka Tetsuō		日高鉄翁	1791–1871
Higashiyama		東山	
<i>bikkoshi</i>		引越	
Hikone		彦根	
Himiko		卑弥呼	ca. 170–248
Hirata Atsutane		平田篤胤	1776–1843
Hitomi Shōka		人見少華	1887–1968
Hoida Tadatomo		穂井田忠友	1792–1847
Hōjō Gen	Hyōsai	北条鉉 氷斎	1765–1838
Hokkaidō		北海道	
<i>hon-</i>		本	
Honda Shigeyuki		本田成之	1882–1945
Honganji		本願寺	
<i>honka</i>		本歌	
Hu Gongshou		胡公壽	1823–1886
Hua Yan		華岳	1682–1756
Huaisu		懷素	725–785
Huang Daozhou		黃道周	1585–1646
Huang Gongwang		黃公望	1269–1354
<i>Huangshan basheng</i>		黃山八勝図冊	
<i>Huangzhao Leiyuan</i>		皇朝類苑	
<i>huifeng hechang ri</i> (Chinese)	<i>keifū wayō</i> (Japanese)	惠風龠暢日	
Huizong		徽宗	1082–1135
Hunan		湖南	
Hyōgo		兵庫	
<i>hyōho</i>		裱補	
Ichikawa Beian		市河米庵	1779–1858

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
<i>ichimonji</i>		一文字	
Ichinoi Shizuko		一井倭文子	1785–1851
<i>iemoto</i>		家元	
Iga-Ueno		伊賀上野	
Iida Shinshichi		飯田新七	1859–1944
Ike Taiga		池大雅	1723–1776
<i>Ike Taiga gafu</i>		池大雅画譜	
<i>ikebana</i>		生け花	
Imaizumi Yūsaku		今泉雄作	1850–1931
Imamura Shikō		今村紫江	1880–1916
Ingen Ryūki	Yinyuan Longqi	隱元隆起	1592–1673
Inoue Enryō		井上円了	1858–1919
Inukai Tsuyoshi		犬養毅	1855–1932
Ise		伊勢	
Ishii Rinkyō		石井林響	1884–1930
Ishikawa Jūjirō	Ōtagaki Hisatoshi	石川重次郎	d. 1823
Ishikawa Tairō		石川大浪	1766–1817
<i>isho</i>		異所	
<i>Ishō bokugi gachō</i>		胎笑墨戲画帖	
Isoda Taka		磯田多佳	1879–1945
Itō Chūta		伊東忠太	1867–1954
Iwasaki		岩崎	
Jakushō	Entsū daishi	寂照 円通大師	962–1034
Ji Kang		嵇康	223–263
jia		犢	
Jiang Chenying		姜宸英	1628–1699
Jiang Jiapu		江稼圃	act. early nineteenth century
Jiang Shaoyu		江少虞	fl. 1131
Jien		慈延	1748–1805
<i>jiga no tsuyoi hito</i>		自我の強い人	
<i>Jigu yinpu</i>		集古印譜	
<i>Jiji shinpō</i>		時事新報	
<i>jikusaki</i>		軸先	
Jin Chushi		金處士	act. late twelfth century
Jin Nong		金農	1687–1763

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Jinkōin		神光院	
<i>jinsbixu</i> (Chinese)	<i>kinsekigaku</i> (Japanese)	金石学	
<i>jittoku</i>		十徳	
Jittoku (Japanese)	Shide (Chinese)	拾得	
Jōdo		浄土	
Jōdo Shinshū		浄土真宗	
Jōryō	Rokumyō	定亮 六明	1839–1910
<i>jōryū</i>		上流	
<i>juan</i> (Chinese)	<i>ken</i> (Japanese)	倦	
Ju-Sokai (Chinese)	Shou-Suhui (Japanese)	壽蘇會	
Kagawa Kageki	also known as Tōutei	香川景樹 東塙亭	1768–1843
<i>kagi</i>		歌妓	
Kaguragaoka		神楽岡	
Kaifeng		開封	
<i>kaiga</i>		絵画	
Kaijima		貝嶋	
<i>kaishi</i>		懷紙	
<i>kaisho</i> (Japanese)	<i>kaishu</i> (Chinese)	楷書	
<i>kaizuka</i>		貝塚	
<i>kakejiku</i>		掛軸	
Kamakura		鎌倉	
Kameyama		龜山	
<i>kami</i>		神	
<i>kami no ku</i>		上句	
Kamigamo Jinja		上賀茂神社	
<i>kana</i>		仮名	
<i>kana hōgo</i>		仮名法語	
kanbun		漢文	
Kannon (Japanese)	Guanyin (Chinese)	觀音	
Kano Naoki	Kunzan	狩野君山 直喜	1868–1947
Kansai		関西	
<i>kanshi</i>		漢詩	
Kantō		関東	
<i>kantō</i>		觀濤	
Kanzan (Japanese)	Hanshan (Chinese)	寒山	
<i>kappitsu</i>		渴筆	

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
<i>karamono</i>		唐物	
Karasuma		烏丸	
Karasuma Mitsuhiro		烏丸光廣	1579–1638
<i>kari no yado</i>		仮の宿	
<i>katakana</i>		片仮名	
<i>kashizara</i>		菓子皿	
Katō Chikage		加藤千蔭	1735–1808
Katsukawa Shunshō		勝川春章	1726–1792
Kawai Senro		河合荃廬	1871–1945
Keien		桂園	
<i>keifū wayō</i> (Japanese)	<i>huifeng hechang</i> (Chinese)	惠風齋暢	
<i>ken</i> (Japanese)	<i>juan</i> (Chinese)	倦	
<i>ken</i>		間	
<i>kensui</i>		建水	
Kenzō	Tomioka Kenzō	謙藏	1873–1918
Ki no Tsurayuki		紀貫之	872–945
Kibi		吉備	
<i>kibisho</i>		きびしょ (急須のこと)	
<i>kichijō ran</i>		吉祥蘭	
kimono		着物	
<i>Kinko karwa</i>		今古歌話	
Kinkōzan Sōbei		錦光山宗兵衛	1823–1884
<i>Kinsei kijin den</i>		近世畸人伝	
<i>kinsekigaku</i> (Japanese)	<i>jinsixue</i> (Chinese)	金石學	
<i>kiri</i>		桐	
Kishi Chikudō		岸竹堂	1826–1897
Kishū		紀州	
Kiyomizu		清水	
Kiyomizu Rokubei		清水六兵衛	1822–1883
Kiyoshikōjin Seichōji		清荒神清澄寺	
Kō Fuyō		高芙蓉	1722–1784
Kōdaiji		高台寺	
<i>kōgei</i>		工芸	
<i>kōgō</i>		香合	
Kōhansha		考槃社	
<i>kobitsu</i>		古筆	

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Kojima Sōshin		小島宗真	1580–ca. 1656
<i>Kokin wakashū</i>		古今和歌集	
Kokuga sōsaku kyōkai		国画創作協会	
<i>kokugaku</i>		国学	
<i>kokutan</i>		黒檀	
Komatsu Shigemi		小松茂美	1925–2010
<i>komomi</i>		小揉み	
Komuro Suiun		小室翠雲	1874–1945
Kondō Buntarō		近藤文太郎	1839–1918
Kondō Kōichirō		近藤浩一路	1884–1962
Kondō Yoshiki		近藤芳樹	1801–1880
<i>Kong shi zhong tie</i>		孔氏中帖	
Konoe Iehiro		近衛家熙	1667–1736
Koōgimi	Kodai no Kimi	小大君	late tenth–early eleventh centuries
Koromodana		衣棚	
Kōryōzan		光良山	
Kose Shōseki		巨勢小石	1843–1919
<i>Kōto shoga jinmei roku</i>		皇都書画人名録	
<i>kotobuki</i>		寿	
Kottō		骨董	
<i>kowatari</i>		古渡	
Kozone Kendō		小曾根乾堂	1828–1885
Kuaiji		會稽	
<i>kuge</i>		公家	
Kumano		熊野	
<i>Kundaikan sōchōki</i>		君台觀左右帳記	
<i>kura yashiki</i>		蔵屋敷	
Kuroda Kōryō		黒田光良	1822–1894
Kuroda Seiki		黒田清輝	1866–1924
Kusakabe		日下部	
Kusakabe Meikaku		日下部鳴鶴	1838–1922
Kyūshū		九州	
Kuwana Tetsujō		桑名鉄城	1864–1938
Kyoto		京都	
Kyōto-fu gagakkō		京都府画学校	

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Kyōto-shi bijutsu kōgei gakkō		京都市美術工芸学校	
<i>Kyūka insbitsu kanzō garoku</i>		九華印室館藏画録	
Lanting		蘭亭	
Lantingxu		蘭亭叙	
Lian Quan		廉泉	1863–1932
Liang Qichao		梁啟超	1873–1929
Liaoyang		遼陽	
<i>linsu</i>		林紓	1853–1924
<i>liufenban</i>		六分半	
Longyou	Yang Wencong	楊文聰 龍友	1596–1646
Longxing		龍興	
Luo Ping		羅聘	1733–1799
Luo Zhenyu		羅振玉	1866–1940
Luoyang		洛陽	
<i>Luyuan conghua</i>		履園叢話	
Ma Yuan		馬遠	act. ca. 1190–1225
<i>machishū</i>		町衆	
Maeda Ikutokukai		前田育徳会	
Maeda Kanji		前田 寛治	1896–1930
Makuzuan		真葛庵	
Makuzubara		真葛原	
Manchu		満州	
Manchu Qing		満州清	
<i>Mandara kutsu</i>		曼陀羅窟	
<i>maru hyōgu</i>		丸表具	
Maruyama		円山	
Maruyama Taiu		円山大迂	1838–1916
Masaki Naohiko		正木直彦	1862–1940
Masamune Atsuo		正宗敦夫	1881–1958
Masamune Genkei		正宗嚴敬	1899–1993
Masamune Hakuchō		正宗白鳥	1879–1962
Masamune Tokusaburō		正宗得三郎	1883–1962
Masutarō	Tomioka Masutarō	富岡益太郎	1907–1991
Matsuda Naoe		松田直兄	1783–1854
Matsumoto Kōzan		松本公山	1784–1866
Matsumura Keibun		松村景文	1779–1843

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Matsuo Bashō		松尾芭蕉	1644–1694
Meiji		明治	
<i>Meiji Taishō tanka shi gaikan</i>		明治大正短歌史概観	
Mi Fu		米芾	1051–1107
<i>midori no taiyō</i>		緑の太陽	
Mikawa		三河	
Minchō		明朝	
<i>mitate</i>		見立	
Miura Chikusen I		三浦竹泉 初代	1853–1915
Miura Chikusen II		三浦竹泉 二代	1882–1920
Miura Tsuneo	the pen name for Odakane Tarō	三浦常夫、小高根太郎	1909–1996
Miwa Teishin		三輪貞信	1809–1902
<i>miyabi</i>		雅	
<i>Miyako genzon wakasha ryū</i> <i>Umesakura sanjūrokkasen</i>		宮古現存和歌者流 梅桜 三十六歌仙	
Mizoguchi Kenji		溝口健二	1898–1956
<i>Mizue</i>		みずゑ	
<i>mizusashi</i>		水指	
Mizuta Chikuho		水田竹圃	1883–1958
Mochizuki Gyokusen		望月玉川	1794–1852
<i>mokutanshi</i>		木炭紙	
<i>momigami</i>		揉紙	
Momoyama		桃山	
<i>mono no aware</i>		物の哀れ	
Mori Kansai		森寛斎	1814–1894
Mōsen no shobōgen		輞川の正法眼	
Motoori Norinaga		本居宣長	1730–1801
<i>Muchū mondōshū</i>		夢中間答集	
<i>mujō</i>		無常	
<i>muken</i> (Japanese)	<i>wujuan</i> (Chinese)	無倦	
<i>muken shi</i> (Japanese)	<i>wujuan shi</i> (Chinese)	無倦氏	
Muqi		牧谿	d. 1269
Muryōju butsudō		無量寿仏堂	
<i>Muryōju butsudō inpu</i>		無量壽佛堂印譜	
Murakami Tadamasa		村上忠順	1812–1884
Muromachi		室町	

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Musō Soseki		夢窓疎石	1275–1351
Mutobe Yoshika		六人部是香	1798–1864
Myōshinji		妙心寺	
Nabei Katsuyuki		鍋井克之	1888–1969
Nagao Uzan		長尾雨山	1864–1942
Nagasaki		長崎	
Nagasawa Tomo'o		長沢伴雄	1808–1859
<i>nagazaiku</i>		長細工	
<i>naginata</i>		薙刀	
Naitō Konan	Torajirō	内藤湖南 虎次郎	1866–1934
Nakabayashi Chikutō		中林竹洞	1776–1853
Nakabayashi Gochiku		中林梧竹	1827–1913
Nakagawa Kazumasa		中川一政	1893–1991
Nakagawa Kigen		中川紀元	1892–1972
Nakajima Kayō		中島華陽	1813–1877
Nakajima Sōin		中島棕隱	1779–1855
Nakamura Fusetsu		中村不折	1866–1934
Nakamura Yoshinobu		中村良信	d. 1850
Nakanojima		中之島	
<i>nakawatari</i>		中渡	
<i>nanban</i>		南蛮	
<i>nanga</i>		南画	
<i>Nanga shinryō</i>		南画津梁	
Nanzenji		南禅寺	
Nara		奈良	
<i>nasake</i>		情	
<i>nasake nite</i>		情けにて	
Natsue	Tomioka Natsue	富岡夏枝	
Natsume Sōseki		夏目漱石	1867–1916
Nawa		縄	
Ni Yuanlu		倪元璐	1593–1644
Nihon bijutsuin		日本美術院	
Nihon nanga kyōkai		日本南画協会	
<i>nihonga</i>		日本画	
Nikakai		二科会	
Nikikai		二紀会	

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Ningbo		寧波	
Nishikawa Shundō		西川春洞	1847–1915
Nitobe Inazō		新渡戸稲造	1862–1933
Nobu	Ōtagaki Rengetsu	誠 大田垣蓮月	1791–1875
Noguchi Shōhin		野口小蘋	1847–1917
Nomura Motosuke	Soken	野村素介 素軒	1842–1927
Nukina Kaioku		貫名海屋	1778–1863
Numazu		沼津	
Nyakuōji		若王子	
Ōbaku		黄檗	
<i>oborozuki</i>		朧月	
Oda Kaisen		小田海仙	1785–1862
Ōe Sadamoto	Entsū daishi, Jakushō	大江定基 円通大師 寂照	962–1034
Ogata Kōrin		尾形光琳	1658–1716
Ogawa Sen'yō		小川千甕	1882–1971
Ogawa Takuji	Joshū	小川琢治 如舟	1870–1941
Ōhashi Nagahiro		大橋長広	1788–1851
Okada Beisanjin		岡田米山人	1744–1820
Oie		御家	
Okakura Kakuzō		岡倉角蔵、覚三	1863–1913
Okamoto Sukehiko		岡本亮彦	1823–1883
Okayama		岡山	
Okazaki		岡崎	
Okuhara Seiko		奥原晴湖	1837–1913
Ono Chikkyō		小野竹喬	1889–1979
Ono Harumichi		小野晴通	act. 1924–1957
Osaka		大坂 (現: 大阪)	
Ōsaka Higashimachi bugyō yoriki		大坂東町奉行組与力	
<i>oshiita</i>		押板	
Ōshima Raikin		大島来禽	dates unknown
Ōshio Heihachirō		大塩平八郎	1793–1837
Ōtagaki Banzaemon Teruhisa	Yamazaki Tsunemon Yoshitora, Saishin	太田垣伴左衛門光古 (山崎常右衛門由虎) 西心	
Ōtagaki Hisatoshi	Ishikawa Jūjirō	太田垣古肥 石川重次郎	d. 1823
Ōtagaki Katahisa	Ōtagaki Sennosuke	太田垣賢古	1783–1803

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Ōtagaki Mitsukage		太田垣光景	r. 1443–1465
Ōtagaki Mochihisa	Tenzō	天造	b. ca. 1781
Ōtagaki Rengetsu	Ōtagaki Rengetsu (later in life)	太田垣蓮月 (大田垣蓮月)	1791–1875
Ōtagaki Sennosuke	Ōtagaki Katahisa	太田垣仙之助	1783–1803
Otokome		おとこ女	
<i>otokoyaku</i>		男役	
Ouyang Xun		歐陽詢	557–641
Ozawa Roan		小沢蘆庵	1723–1801
Pan Cun		潘存	1818–1893
<i>Pao weng jiacang ji</i>		匏翁家藏集	
Qian Shoutie		錢瘦鉄	1897–1967
Qian Yong		錢泳	1759–1844
Qing		清	
Qiuri jian ju		秋日閒居	
Rai San'yō		頼山陽	1781–1832
Raiha		来葉	1810–1902
Rakkei Jihon		羅溪慈本	1795–1868
Rakutō Rengetsu		洛東蓮月	
<i>Rantei inpu</i>		蘭亭印譜	
Reiwa		令和	
Reizei Tamechika		冷泉為恭	1823–1864
Reizei Tamemura		冷泉為村	1712–1774
<i>ren</i>		蓮	
<i>renga</i>		連歌	
<i>Rengetsu yaki</i>		蓮月焼	
<i>Rengetsu-ni</i>		蓮月尼	
Renna		蓮阿	1797–1870
<i>rikka</i>		立花	
<i>rinpo</i>		輪補	
rōsen tōshi		蠟箋唐紙	
<i>ryōchi</i>		良知	
Ryōkan		良寛	1758–1831
Saigyō		西行	1118–1190
<i>Saigyō monogatari</i>		西行物語	
Saiji	Tayuinoshō Senri	田結莊斎治 千里	1815–1896

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Saisho Atsuko		税所敦子	1825–1900
Saitō Mokichi		斎藤茂吉	1882–1953
Saitō Setsudō		斎藤拙堂	1797–1865
Saizenji		西善寺	
<i>sake</i>		酒	
Sakuragi		桜木	mid nineteenth–early twentieth century
Sanbongi		三本木	
Sanjō		三条	
<i>sanjue</i> (Chinese)	<i>sanzetsu</i> (Japanese)	三絶	
sanjūrokkasen		三十六歌仙	
Seiryō	Taigadō Seiryō	大雅堂清亮	1807–1869
<i>Seishō rōjin kokyō</i>		清湘老人故居	
<i>sanzetsu</i> (Japanese)	<i>sanjue</i> (Chinese)	三絶	
Sasaki Haruko	Tomioka Haruko	佐々木春子	1846–1940
Sasaki Haruo		佐々木春夫	1818–1888
Sen'oku hakukokan		泉屋博古館	
<i>sencha</i>		煎茶	
Senri	Saiji	田結莊千里 斎治	1815–1896
Sesson Shūkei		雪村周繼	ca. 1492–ca. 1572
<i>setsurwa</i>		説話	
<i>shakkyō</i>		釈教	
Shang		商	
Shanghai		上海	
Shangwu Yinshuguan		商務印書館	
Shao Yong		邵雍	1012–1077
Shaolinsi		少林寺	
<i>shasei</i>		写生	
Shen Nanpin	Shen Quan	沈南蘋	1682–1760
Shen Quan	Shen Nanpin	沈南蘋	ca. 1682–1760
Shen Zhou		沈周	1427–1509
<i>shi</i> (Japanese)	<i>shi</i> (Chinese)	氏	
Shide (Chinese)	Jittoku (Japanese)	拾得	
Shifū Shorō		賜楓書樓	
Shiga		滋賀	
Shigaraki		信楽	

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
<i>Shigu</i>		石鼓	
Shijō		四条	
<i>shikishi</i>		色紙	
Shikoku		四国	
Shimabara		島原	
<i>shimo no ku</i>		下の句	
<i>shin</i>	<i>qin</i> (Chinese)	真	
<i>shin nanga</i>		新南画	
<i>Shina kaigashi</i>		支那絵画史	
Shingon		真言	
<i>shinjō</i>		新情	
<i>shinjutsu</i>		神術	
Shiomi Yōko		汐見洋子	act. 1926–1943
Shinozaki Shōchiku		篠崎小竹	1781–1851
Shinshōji		心性寺	
<i>shintō</i>		神道	
<i>shinwatari</i>		新渡	
Shiokawa Bunrin		塩川文麟	1808–1877
<i>Shiqitie</i>		十七帖	
Shirakawa		白川	
<i>shitan</i>		紫檀	
Shitao		石濤	1642–1707
<i>shizenkan</i>		自然感	
Shōgoin		聖護院	
Shōkū Shōnin		性空上人	ca. 907–ca. 1007
Shōkokuji		相国寺	
Shoushan		壽山	
Shoushanshi		壽山石	
Shou-Suhui (Chinese)	Ju-Sokai (Japanese)	壽蘇會	
Shōwa		昭和	
<i>Shōyōren</i>		蕉葉聯	
<i>shubun</i> (Japanese)	<i>zhuwen</i> (Chinese)	朱文	
<i>sijue</i> (Chinese)	<i>shizetsu</i> (Japanese)	四絶	
Sima Guang		司馬光	1019–1086
<i>sō</i>		草	
<i>sō no gyō</i>		草の行	

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
<i>sōberi</i>		総縁	
Song		宋	
Songshan		嵩山	
<i>Sōshin zuga</i>		掃心圖畫	
Sōtan		宗丹	
Sōtō		曹洞	
Su Dongpo	Su Shi	蘇東坡 蘇軾	1037–1101
<i>Subaru</i>		スバル	
Sun Kehong		孫克弘	ca. 1533–1611
Suzhou		蘇州	
Suzuki Daisetsu		鈴木大拙	1870–1966
Suzuki Shōnen		鈴木松年	1848–1918
<i>tachibana</i>		立ち雛	
Tachibana Akemi		橘曙覧	1812–1868
<i>tadagoto uta</i>		ただ事歌	
Tae		妙	
Taigadō		大雅堂	
Taigadō Giryō		大雅堂義亮	1800–1865
Taigadō Jōryō	Rokumyō	大雅堂定亮 六明	1839–1910
Taigadō Seiryō		大雅堂清亮	1807–1869
Taihoku (Japanese)	Taipei (Chinese)	台北	
Taipei (Chinese)	Taihoku (Japanese)	台北	
Taishō		大正	
Taizan Yohei VII		帶山与兵衛 七代	d. 1861
Taizan Yohei VIII		帶山与兵衛 八代	d. 1878
Tajima		但馬	
Takabatake Shikibu		高島式部	1785–1881
Takahashi Dōhachi		高橋道八 三代	1811–1879
Takamura Kōtarō		高村光太郎	1883–1956
Takarazuka		宝塚	
Takashimaya bijutsubu		高島屋美術部	
Takashimaya gofukuten		高島屋呉服店	
Takashimaya no Tessai		高島屋の鉄斎	
Takeda		竹田	
Takeno Jōō		武野紹鷗	1502–1555
Takeuchi Seihō		竹内栖鳳	1864–1942

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Takeyamachi		竹屋町	
Tamaki Ryōsai		玉木良斉	d. 1856
Tanba		丹波	
Tanba Kameyama		丹波亀山	
Tang		唐	
<i>Tang caizi zhuan</i>		唐才子伝	
Tang Di		唐棣	d. 1364
Tang Taizong		太宗	598–649, r. 626–649
Tani Tetsuomi		谷鐵臣	1822–1905
Taniguchi Aizan		谷口藹山	1816–1899
Tanii Rijūrō		谷井利十郎	1806–1891
Tanii Naokata		谷井直方	
Tanizaki Jun'ichirō		谷崎潤一郎	1886–1965
Tanomura Chikuden		田能村竹田	1777–1835
Tanomura Chokugai		田能村直外	1903–1997
Tanomura Chokunyū		田能村直入	1814–1907
<i>tanzaku</i>		短冊	
Tarumi Ayako		垂水文子	nineteenth century
Tatsuuma Etsuzō		辰馬悦蔵	1835–1920
Tawaraya Sōtatsu		俵屋宗達	d. ca. 1643
<i>tayū</i>		太夫	
Tayuinoshō Gin'uemon		田結莊銀右衛門	
Tayuinoshō Senri	Saiji	田結莊千里 斎治	
Teikoku gekijō		帝国劇場	
Teikoku hakubutsukan		帝国博物館	
<i>tenbyō</i>		点描	
Tendai		天台	
Tenju'an		天授庵	
Tenmei		天明	
Tenmin	Ōtagaki Mochihisa	天民 太田垣望古	1779–1867
Tennōji		天王寺	
Tenpō		天保	
Tenpō no daikikin		天保の大飢饉	
<i>tenshin</i>		天神	
Tenzō	Ōtagaki Mochihisa	天造	b. ca. 1781
<i>teppitsu</i> (Japanese)	<i>tiebi</i> (Chinese)	鉄筆	

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
Terasaki Kōgyō		寺崎広業	1866–1919
Tessai gaishi		鐵齋外史	
<i>tianxia</i>		天下	
<i>tiebi</i> (Chinese)	<i>teppitsu</i> (Japanese)	鉄筆	
Tientai		天台	
Tōba dōjitsusei (Japanese)	Dongpo tongrisheng (Chinese)	東坡同日生	
Toba-Fushimi		鳥羽伏見	
Tōba heki (Japanese)	Dongpo pi (Chinese)	東坡癖	
Tōdō Shinshichirō Yoshikiyo		藤堂新七郎良聖	1767–1798
Tōfukuji		東福寺	
<i>tokkuri</i>		徳利	
<i>tokitsukaze</i>		時津風	
<i>toko</i>		床	
<i>tokonoma</i>		床の間	
Tōkōzan		東光山	
Tokugawa		徳川	
Tokuyama Gyokuran Ike Gyokuran		池玉瀾 徳山玉瀾	1727–1784
Tokyo		東京	
Tōkyō bijutsu gakkō		東洋美術学校	
Tomioka Fuyuno		富岡冬野	1904–1940
Tomioka Haruko		富岡春子	1846–1940
Tomioka Kenzō		富岡謙蔵	1873–1918
Tomioka Korenobu		富岡維叙	1804–1856
Tomioka Masutarō		富岡益太郎	1907–1991
Tomioka Natsue		富岡夏枝	
Tomioka Tessai		富岡鉄斎	1836–1924
<i>Tomioka Tessai Nanshū seika ten</i>		富岡鉄斎南宋精華展	
Tomioka Toshiko		富岡壽子	
Tomioka Yanoi		富岡弥生	
Tomita Yasukuni		富田泰州	1792–1840
<i>tōn</i>		トーン/ 調子	
<i>tosho</i> (Japanese)	<i>tushu</i> (Chinese)	図書	
Tottori		鳥取	
<i>Tōtei tsukinami kendai waka</i>		東塙亭月並兼題和歌	

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
<i>tōyō kaiko</i>		東洋回顧	
Tsubaki Chinzan		椿椿山	1801–1854
<i>tsuke-shoin</i>		付書院	
<i>tsurasa</i>		辛さ	
<i>tsurasa mo wasurekeri</i>		辛さも忘れけり	
Ueda Akinari		上田秋成	1734–1809
Ueda Chikajo	Ueda Chikako	上田重女 重子	1824–1894
Uematsu Masataka		植松雅恭	1815–1855
Uemura Shōen		上村松園	1875–1949
Ueno		上野	
Ueno Riichi	Yūchiku, Yūchikusai	上野理一 有竹斎	1848–1919
Uji		宇治	
Ukita Ikkei		浮田 (宇喜多) 一恵	1795–1859
Umeda Unpin		梅田雲濱	1815–1859
Umehara Ryūzaburō		梅原龍三郎	1888–1986
Unsōdō		芸艸堂	
<i>wa</i> (Japanese)	<i>he</i> (Chinese)	和	
<i>wabi-cha</i>		侘茶	
Wachigaiya		輪違屋	
Wada Gozan	Gesshin	和田呉山 月心	1800–1870
<i>waka</i>		和歌	
<i>waka-e</i>		和歌絵	
<i>wakon yōsai</i>		和魂洋才	
Wang Anshi		王安石	1021–1086
Wang Bo		王勃	647–676
Wang Guowei		王國維	1877–1927
Wang Hui		王翬	1632–1717
Wang Shimin		王時敏	1592–1680
Wang Tao	Wang Wenke	王陶 王文恪	1020–1080
Wang Wei		王維	699–759
Wang Xianzhi		王獻之	344–386
Wang Xizhi		王羲之	303–361
Wang Yangming		王陽明	1472–1529
Wang Zhen	Wang Yiting	王震 王一亭	1867–1938
Wangchuan		輞川	
Wangchuan tu juan		輞川図巻	

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
<i>wenren</i> (Chinese)	<i>bunjin</i> (Japanese)	文人	
Wu Changshi	Wu Changshuo	吳昌碩	1844–1927
Wu Changshuo	Wu Changshi	吳昌碩	1844–1927
Wu Kuan	Pao An	吳寬 匏庵	1435–1504
<i>wujuan</i> (Chinese)	<i>muken</i> (Japanese)	無倦	
Wujuan shi (Chinese)	Muken shi (Japanese)	無倦氏	
Xiangguang		香光	
Xie Shichen		謝時臣	1487–1557
Xiling Yinshe		西泠印社	
Xin Wenfang		辛文房	late thirteenth–early fourteenth centuries
Xinzhieriyi bigengersh		心織而衣、筆耕而食	
Xu Sangeng		徐三庚	1826–1890
<i>yado</i>		宿	
<i>yado kasanu hito</i>		宿貸さぬ人	
<i>yakko</i>		奴	
Yamagata Aritomo		山形有朋	1838–1922
Yamamoto Teijirō		山本悌二郎	1870–1937
Yamana		山名	
Yamashita Shintarō		山下新太郎	1881–1966
<i>yamato-e</i>		大和絵	
Yanagawa Seigan		梁川星巖	1789–1858
Yang Shoujing		楊守敬	1839–1915
Yang Wencong	Longyou	楊文聰 龍友	1596–1646
<i>Yang Wengong tanyuan</i>		楊文公談苑	
Yanagisawa Kien		柳沢 淇園	1703–1758
Yangzhou		揚州	
Yangzi		揚子	
Yano Kyōson		矢野橋村	1890–1965
Yashiro Yukio		矢代幸雄	1890–1975
Yasu		安	
Yasuda Rōzan		安田老山	1830–1883
Yasuda Yukihiko		安田靱彦	1884–1978
Yayoi	Tomioka Yayoi	富岡弥生	
<i>Yi Ying bei</i>		乙瑛碑	
Yishan Yining		一山一寧	1247–1317

Romanization	Name or term in alternate language and other notes	Japanese/Chinese	Living or Active Dates
<i>yōga</i>		洋画	
<i>yobaku</i>		余白	
<i>yoriki</i>		与力	
Yokoyama Kazan		横山 華山	1781–1837
Yokoyama Taikan		横山大観	1868–1958
Yongzhou		永州	
Yosano Reigon		与謝野礼厳	1823–1898
Yosano Tekkan		与謝野鉄幹	1873–1935
Yosano Akiko		与謝野晶子	1878–1942
Yoshida Enzan		吉田援山	act. 1840s
Yoshida Junshō		吉田順祥	1789–1873
Yoshida Yasu		吉田安	
Yoshidayama		吉田山	
Yoshii Isamu		吉井勇	1886–1960
Yoshino		吉野	
<i>yūjo</i>		遊女	
<i>zashiki</i>		座敷	
<i>zatishu</i> (Chinese)	<i>zattaisho</i> (Japanese)	雜體書	
<i>zattaisho</i> (Japanese)	<i>zatishu</i> (Chinese)	雜體書	
Zeami Motokiyo		世阿弥元清	1363–1443
<i>zen</i> (Japanese)	<i>chan</i> (Chinese)	禪	
Zhang Jizhi		張即之	1186–1263
Zhang Qiugu		張秋谷 (穀)	act. 1780–1790s
Zhang Ruitsu	Ershui	張瑞図 二水	1570–1640
Zhao Zhiqian		趙之謙	1829–1884
Zhejiang		浙江	
Zhen Wu		吳鎮	1280–1354
Zheng Xie	Zheng Banqiao	鄭燮、鄭板橋	1693–1766
Zhu Guozhen		朱國禎	1557–1632
zhixing heyi (Chinese)	chikō gōitsu (Japanese)	知行合一	
Zhu Xi		朱熹	1130–1200
<i>zhuwen</i> (Chinese)	<i>shubun</i> (Japanese)	朱文	
<i>zoku</i>		俗	
<i>zungiri</i>		頭切	

About the Contributors

PAUL BERRY is an independent scholar of Japanese art history and cinema. He has taught at the University of Michigan, the University of Washington, and Kansai Gaidai University, Osaka. His publications include catalogs and articles on Japanese painting and prints, including *Unexplored Avenues of Japanese Painting* (University of Washington Press); *Modern Masters of Kyoto: The Transformation of Japanese Painting Tradition* (Seattle Art Museum); and *Literati Modern: Bunjinga from Late Edo to Twentieth-Century Japan* (Honolulu Academy of Arts). He received his doctorate from the University of Michigan with a dissertation on Tanomura Chikuden.

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MICHIYO MORIOKA is an independent scholar with expertise in *nihonga*. She holds a PhD in art history from the University of Washington. Among her major publications are *Modern Masters of Kyoto: The Transformation of Japanese Painting Traditions, Nihonga from the Griffith and Patricia Way Collection* (1999), *American Artist in Tokyo: Frances Blakemore, 1906–1997* (2007), and *Literati Modern: Bunjinga from Late Edo to Twentieth-Century Japan, Terry Welch Collection at the Honolulu Academy of Arts* (2008). She is also coeditor/author for *Poetic Imagination in Japanese Art: Selections from the Collection of Mary and Cheney Cowles* (2020).

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After Commodore Matthew Perry's U.S. Navy ships arrived on its shores in the 1850s, Japan entered an age of rapid modernization and soon became the first Asian nation with a military and industry on par with Western imperialist countries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While grappling with the effects of rapid Western-inspired modernization, the Japanese searched for their cultural identity, increasingly turning to their past as well as to China for inspiration.

This book's essays, by scholars from the United States, Japan, and Europe, look beyond Western industrialization to examine China's role in forming Japan's modern identity. The volume follows a retrospective of the Japanese nun, calligrapher, potter, and political activist Ōtagaki Rengetsu (1791–1875) and the modern Japanese painter Tomioka Tessai (1836–1924) on view in late 2022 at the Freer Gallery of Art of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art in Washington, D.C.

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