

CHANOYU Quarterly

TEA AND THE ARTS OF JAPAN

No. 84

CONTENTS

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Autobiographical Essay 14 —
The Special Attack Unit | <i>Sen Sōshitsu XV</i> |
| The Stewards of Art in Muromachi Japan:
Nōami, Geiami, and Sōami | <i>Shimao Arata</i> |
| The Evolution of Tea Brand Names | <i>Wakahara Eiichi</i> |
| The Arts in Japanese Fiction: Tachihara's
<i>Wind and Stone</i> | <i>Patricia L. Parker</i> |
| <i>Temae</i> — Tea Procedure: Yojōhan Furo Nagashidate | |
| Book Review | |

Recent Issues of *Chanoyu Quarterly*

Issue no. 82

- Autobiographical Essay 12 — *Sen Sōshitsu XV*
Tsuchiura Naval Air Corps
Color Plates — Ash in Chanoyu
Ash Forms: Their History *Tsutsui Hiroichi*
and Development
Urasenke Ash Forms
Shaping the *Nimonji Oshikiri* Ash Form
Ash Types Used in Chanoyu
Ii Naosuke's *Hai no Sho* — Writings About Ash
Gengensai-period Ash Form Models
Temae — Tea Procedure: *Tsutsu-jawan Shibori-jakin*

Issue no. 83

- Autobiographical Essay 13 — *Sen Sōshitsu XV*
Active Duty Drawing Near
Chanoyu Gathering of the Hōkikai Club
Uta-mei: The Poetic Names of *Yagi Ichio*
Tea Utensils
Japanese Gardens: The Art of *Saitō Yuriko*
Improving Nature
Temae — Tea Procedure: *Yojōhan Ro Nagashidate*

The embossing on the cover is adapted from a gold embroidered fabric called *Hōun kinran*, favored by Sen Sōshitsu XV, fifteenth generation grand master of the Urasenke tradition of chanoyu. The motif is composed of a phoenix (*hō*) amid clouds (*un*), and is the graphic representation of his Buddhist name, Hōunsai.

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<i>Sen Sōshitsu XV</i>	Autobiographical Essay 14 — The Special Attack Unit	5
<i>Shimao Arata</i>	The Stewards of Art in Muromachi Japan: Nōami, Geiami, and Sōami	7
<i>Wakahara Eiichi</i>	The Evolution of Tea Brand Names	37
<i>Patricia L. Parker</i>	The Arts in Japanese Fiction: Tachihara's <i>Wind and Stone</i>	52
	<i>Temae</i> — Tea Procedure: <i>Yojōhan Furo Nagashidate</i>	57
	Book Review	72
	Chart of Japanese Historical Periods	79

The names of Japanese and Chinese persons are written surname first, in accordance with the customary practice in these countries.

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Chanoyu is a synthesis of arts that gives expression to many aspects of Japanese culture. From its beginnings in the fifteenth century down to the present, it has been both catalyst and medium in the development of distinctive art forms. Under the guidance of Grand Master Sen Sōshitsu XV, the Urasenke Foundation seeks to encourage the further development of these arts and to promote a worldwide understanding of the spirit of chanoyu.

The Special Attack Unit

Sen Sōshitsu XV

It was on the 2nd of April, 1945, that the order came down for the first group of men in the Tokushima Naval Air Corps special attack unit to execute their strike. Among the members, there was Nishimura Kō — the one who had said to me, "Let's all die together." But my name was not on the list. Nishimura, who was married and was a father, started grumbling, "I don't like this. You're a liar." When I questioned him, "What lie did I tell?" his response was, "You said to me, 'let's die together.' It's not fair for only me to die. You were cleverly skipped over."

"That's not so," I retorted.

"Well then, you go apply, too. I definitely don't want to die by myself," he persisted.

"Alright," I said, and I went to see Captain Tanaka, our division commander, to request to be included in the first group. Being born under the astrological sign "five, yellow" (*go-ō*), and being a wild boar (according to the twelve horary signs), I charge straight forward when I get something into my head. I went several times to plead to the captain, but he wouldn't concede, telling me, "Why are you in such a rush to die? Wait until another order comes down."

I was in a state of mental agony about Nishimura when, ten days later, orders suddenly came down for me to be transferred to the division in Matsuyama. I thought, 'They've pulled one over on me,' but there was no alternative; only *I* had to go to Matsuyama. There, as assistant divisional officer, I was given the duty of educating seventeen- and eighteen-year-old trainees. Some went to the front as Special Attack Force fliers, never to return. Others, though they were fliers, were assigned as marine Special Attack Force personnel, and manned human torpedos. Although I never knew when I, myself, would be ordered to the front, it was heart-wrenching to sit in a circle with them and make tea, and then send them off.

In May, the Matsuyama base was bombed, and so we were forced to live temporarily at the local elementary school. Looking up at the Grumman fighter-plane formations that frequently loomed overhead, I constantly

* Translated from the serial "Watakushi no Rirekisho" [My Personal History], Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 1986-87.

wished I would soon receive my order to see active duty. When I did receive the 'stand-by' order, I performed a rehearsal sortie. However, the opportunity to actually strike never came my way, and, while thus poised on stand-by, around came August 15, the day of Japan's surrender. I had escaped death by a dangerous hair's breadth.

After our parting in Tokushima, I next saw Nishimura on May 1 of the following year, 1946, in front of the Ministry of Education building in Tokyo. From the May Day parade line, I heard a voice call out, "Sen." Looking around to see who could possibly be calling out my name at a place like this, I saw Nishimura waving his hand from among the group of marchers representing the actors' union. I barged into the line, we hugged, and I continued walking in the parade with Nishimura as far as Shimbashi. Apparently, he had taken off on his Special Attack mission, but had made a forced landing and was able to return safely. The others in our circle, who had turned toward their hometowns and called out "Mother!" died in action on their 'special' missions. In later years, a monument was erected at Mount Kōya, and a memorial service was held. At the service, where portraits of the deceased were displayed, I spoke to my comrades in spirit: "I imagine you cried out 'Mother!' as you soared into the target, too."

My life in the navy lasted only less than two years. Even so, it was such a distressing experience — one that could not have been more trying. Today, I still remember the faces of my comrades-in-arms who executed their suicide missions out there over some part of the Pacific Ocean. I wish to keep that experience of my youth nobly stored within my heart.

How to possibly make amends to my comrades who lost their lives. . . . Those of us who were left were spared in order to make sure that war would never again happen. This is what I honestly feel.

The Stewards of Art in Muromachi Japan: Nōami, Geiami, and Sōami

Shimao Arata

During the Muromachi period (1336–1568), there was a group of individuals whose names ended in “ami.” Among them, a considerable number played important roles in the culture of the day. First among those whose names readily come to mind is Zeami, who elevated *noh* drama to the level of a classic theatrical art. There is also Ritsunami, known for his skill in flower arrangement, and Zen’ami, the famous garden designer. This paper, however, will deal primarily with Nōami (1397–1471), Geiami (1431–85), and Sōami (? –1525), the three generations of men who together are often referred to as the *san ami*, the “Three Amis.”

世阿弥
立阿弥
善阿弥
能阿弥
芸阿弥 相阿弥
三阿弥

These men served the Ashikaga Shōgunate over the course of their three generations, and exerted great influence in the world of art surrounding the Shōgunate. During the Muromachi period, the most highly valued art objects were the so-called *karamono* [lit., Tang-dynasty item] paintings and decorative art objects imported from China. The Shōgunate had an enormous collection of these, and the Three Amis carried out various duties related to this collection.

唐物

Firstly, they acted as intermediaries between the Shōgun and military families, the aristocracy, and the Buddhist clergy. They also determined what works would be sought for purchase in China, appraised works, as well as restored and remounted paintings. Furthermore, they were involved in discussions concerning the themes and styles of the paintings to be commissioned by the Shōgunate, and were responsible for decorating, with Chinese art objects, the rooms to be used for special ceremonies. The Three Amis were also talented painters unto themselves, and Geiami, for example, trained other artists in certain painting techniques.

In other words, the Three Amis were the individuals responsible for administering the Shōgunate’s collection. They were appraisers, in-

Translated and adapted, by permission, from the introduction and the chapter “*San Ami no Nichijō Gyōmu*” in *Nihon no Bijutsu* no. 338 (July, 1994; Shibundō Publishing Co., Tokyo).



Shōgun's Pilgrimage to Rokujō Hachimangū Shrine
(*Rokujō Hachimangū Shōgun Sankei Emaki*). Early Muromachi period. Depicts a pilgrimage made to the shrine by the fourth Ashikaga shōgun, Yoshimochi, on the 29th day

terior designers, painters, art instructors, and painting consultants. Indeed, they were connected with nearly every aspect of the creation and enjoyment of art. Even beyond the realm of the fine arts, the Three Amis engaged in composing linked verse (*renga*), and they also played important roles within the spheres of tea and flower arrangement. In modern terms, it might be said that these three men were creators and directors of 'multi-media' art.

Unfortunately, we are still lacking the necessary research to form a complete picture of the Three Amis as they figured within their era. The words "*ami*" and "*dōbō*" — which I shall explain later — indicate the milieu to which they belonged. However, neither of these two terms provides an exacting indication of the activities of the people so classified. As Imaizumi Yoshio succinctly explains,¹ the "ambiguous" nature of their being was precisely what the system desired of them.

¹ Imaizumi Yoshio, "*Shun'ami: Ami Saiken Danshō*" [*Shun'ami: A Statement in Reconsideration of the Amis*], *Nihon no Bijutsu* no. 338: 85–91.



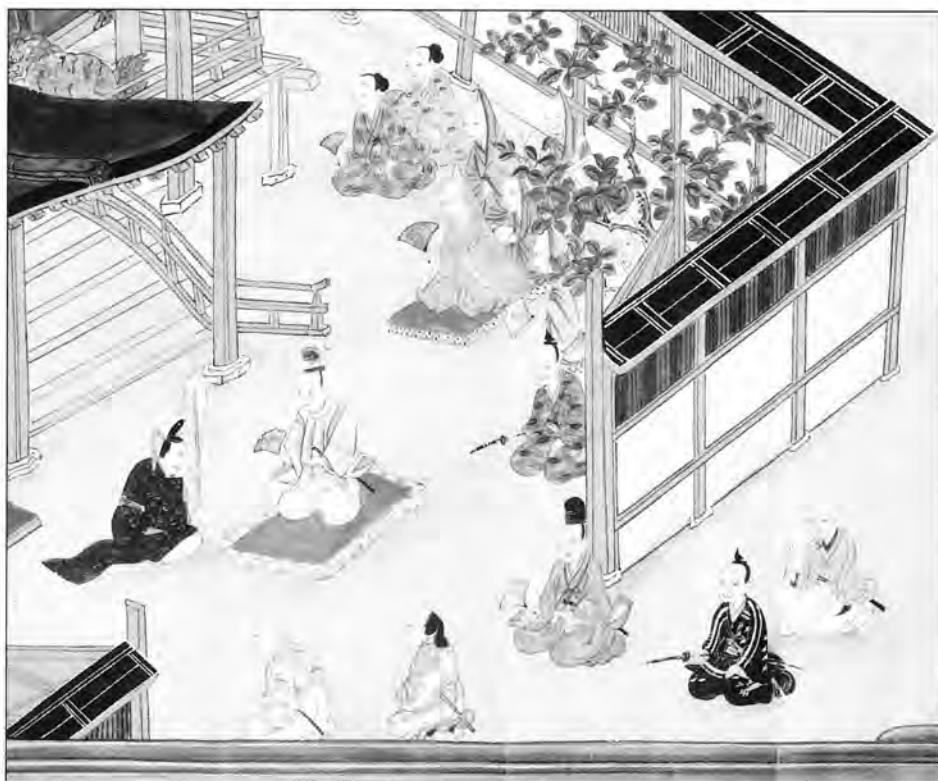
of the 2nd month, 1426. In this portion of the scroll, the shōgun is seen seated in front of the shrine building, and two *dōbō* are seated just outside the gate (see detail, p. 10). This anonymous picture-scroll is believed to be the work of a *dōbō*. Property of Wakamiya Hachimangū Shrine (formerly called Rokujō Hachimangū), Kyoto.

For a more detailed treatment of the ‘function’ of the men classified as “*ami*” or “*dōbō*,” I hope that readers will turn to the works of Imaizumi Yoshio, Kōzai Tsutomu, and Murai Yasuhiko.² Before beginning the main section of this study, however, let us briefly look at the circumstances surrounding the designations “*ami*” and “*dōbō*.”

Ami and Dōbō

It is often easier to understand a person if we know what that person’s occupation is. For example, if someone is a banker or a dentist, we can generally imagine that person’s position within society, the content of

² Imaizumi Yoshio, “*Ami-tachi no Sekai*” [The World of the Amis] in *Nihon Suiboku Meihin Zufu*, vol. 3 (Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1992); Kōzai Tsutomu, *Zeami Shinkō* [A Reconsideration of Zeami] (Wan’ya Shoten, 1962); Murai Yasuhiko, *Buke Bunka to Dōbōshū* [Warrior Culture and the Dōbōshū] (San Ichi Shobō, 1991).



Detail of pp. 8-9 photo. The *dōbō* — one seen left of center at the bottom, and the other at the far right — have shaved heads, in the manner of Buddhist clergy, and yet, like samurai, they are carrying swords.

the person's work, and so on. What, then, were the occupations of the Three Amis? As I have already noted, this question is not simple, for they were active in many fields.

Names ending with "ami" were originally used by priests of the Jishū sect of Buddhism. However, during the time of the Three Amis, quite a number of people unrelated to this sect had "-ami" names. Furthermore, there is no conclusive evidence that the Three Amis were followers of the Jishū sect. Each of the three also had a *gō*, or sobriquet, of the type used by Zen monks — Shūhō Shinnō, Gakusō Shingei, and Kangaku Shinsō, respectively. Among the men who bore "-ami" names, many were 'Men of the Way' (*michi no mono*)³ who possessed

³ This phrase describes individuals dedicated to seeking the essence of, or plumbing the philosophical depths of an art or Way, or, more broadly, of Art itself.—E

exceptional skills in a particular art. For instance, Zeami was particularly accomplished in noh drama; Ritsunami and Bun'ami, in flower arrangement; and Zen'ami, in garden design. This does not mean that everyone with such a name possessed skills in some special art; there were also those who were simply engaged in miscellaneous tasks. What all these men had in common was their position as recluses (*tonseisha*) — in other words, the fact that they stood outside the bounds of ordinary society's class structure and system. However, they did not exist outside of the establishment. The Three Amis were among the special individuals called *dōbō* who were in service to the Ashikaga shōguns Yoshinori (1394–1441), Yoshimasa (1436–90), and so forth.⁴

文阿弥

According to the *Dictionary of Japanese History*, *dōbō* were “individuals of ecclesiastic standing who took charge of a variety of arts and carried out miscellaneous jobs in the mansions of the Ashikaga shōguns.” In an illustrated scroll from the 15th century, the *Rokujō Hachimangū Shōgun Sankei Emaki* [Shōgun's Pilgrimage to Rokujō Hachimangū Shrine] (photo pp. 8–9, 10), these men are seen with their heads shaved in the manner of Buddhist clergy, and yet, like samurai, they are carrying swords. They appear as if they are at once half-cleric/half-layman, non-cleric/non-layman. As a group, these men were known as *dōbōshū*, and therefore tend to be viewed in the same light as the *goshōbanshū* and *otomoshū* of the Ashikaga shōgunal establishment,⁵ but the nature and activities of the *dōbō* were diverse, and it is hard to place them in any clear-cut fashion within the establishment.

六条八幡宮
將軍參詣繪卷

同朋衆
御相伴衆 御供衆

If a statement such as “He is a shōgun” could be called a ‘positive’ definition of a person, then ‘negative’ definitions — “He is *not* a . . .” — applied to these *ami* [and *dōbō*]. “*Ami*” and “*dōbō*” are not designations which refer to a social class or occupation in the way that we in modern times expect, and it is futile to try to pigeon-hole the character of the men so designated. On the contrary, one might say that it is precisely their multi-faceted nature which makes them fascinating. The fact that they were not a part of the ordinary social system allowed them an amount of freedom from conventional patterns of behavior. This environment fostered their development as ‘Men of the Way,’ and, even considered within the scope of the fine arts alone, no other individuals pursued as diverse a range of activities as did the Three Amis.

⁴ Note that while the Three Amis did have “-ami” names, it does not follow that all those with such names were *dōbō*.

⁵ *Goshōbanshū* was the official designation, initiated by the Shōgunate in 1421, for the group of special individuals who accompanied the Shōgun at receptions and events held at the Shōgun's own mansion, or when he attended such affairs given by others. Likewise, *otomoshū* was the job title for the group of special individuals who served as the Shōgun's close companions. (cf. *Kōjien*, entries for “*shōban*” and “*otomo*”)—E.

A View of the Three Amis

The main focus of this paper will be limited, to the greatest degree possible, to the Three Amis in the realm of painting — in other words, the Three Amis as seen within the history of Muromachi painting. However, even viewed within this narrow perspective, they are nonetheless fascinating.

Within the world of painting during the Muromachi period, fine paintings imported from China had the highest value. They were the bench marks which set the standards for the ink painters of the day, and naturally, as the very finest examples were in the collection of the Shōgunate, this collection stood at the hub of the painting world in Japan. Thus the Three Amis, who were in a position to control this collection, were also in a position to hold great sway over the structuring of the value system in the world of painting during this time.

Nōami's name first appears in historical records in Eikyō 3 (1431), and Sōami's death occurs in Daiei 5 (1525). Between these two dates, the huge historical dividing line known as the Ōnin War cuts a swath across the history of Japan, and the three generations of Amis — Nōami, Geiami, and Sōami — can be said to have lived, respectively, in the era preceding, during, and following this war. Basically, they inherited and exercised the same duties down through their generations. Any change which occurred in their respective situations was, therefore, mainly a reflection of 'the times.' Hence, a chronological consideration of the careers of the Three Amis should reveal the conditions, as they changed over time, in the world of painting surrounding the Ashikaga Shōgunate. Stated more broadly, these changes paralleled the movements occurring within the world of ink painting in Kyoto, the cultural and political center of Japan.

The body of extant material which we can look to regarding the Three Amis is not large. The number of paintings that have been confirmed to be works by one of the Three Amis is around ten, and even if we include works considered highly likely to have been executed by one of them, the total is only about twenty. Furthermore, there is very little historical data concerning the activities of these men in the field of painting, and the Three Amis are enmeshed in the 'Higashiyama Culture Legend,' as it were. As Kōzai Tsutomu has indicated, attempts to lump the wide-ranging *dōbō* together under the blanket term *dōbōshū* is related to the manner in which we tend to approach history — people's predilection, in this case, to bundle up the culture surrounding the Ashikaga Shōgunate into one neat package.⁶ In particular, the

⁶ Kōzai, *Zami Shinkō*.

Three Amis were the *dōbō* in Yoshimasa's inner circle, and they have carried a tenacious image as the embodiment of Higashiyama culture. Such being the case, in studying these men we should be cautious of the process by which they have been mythicized within the history of painting.

The Typical Duties of the Three Amis

Let us now consider the typical duties of the Three Amis. The Ashikaga Shōgunate's collection of fine Chinese art is known by the name "Higashiyama Gyobutsu (also read Gomotsu)." Assembled within this collection were the choicest *karamono* existing at that time in Japan — items which even today constitute an important part of Japan's collection of Chinese art. The Three Amis handled various tasks concerning this collection.

東山御物

In order to understand the typical duties of the Three Amis, it might be expedient to call to mind the job of a modern-day museum curator. The selection of works to be purchased, the evaluation of works received as gifts, the management of stored art works, the display of works for exhibitions. . . . All these curatorial activities were performed by the Three Amis. Of course, being the Muromachi period, the system was not the same as that of today. Nonetheless, circumstances which can be understood to a certain degree through an analogy with today's art world had come into existence by this time.

The fundamental 'functions' of today's collections lie in the activities of *amassing* and *displaying* works of art. Such enterprises require, as their incentive, a universal belief that there is high value in art. The amassing of a collection is the result of either receiving or buying (or plundering, we might add) objects, and in the case of the Ashikagas' collection as well, it was composed of gifts received from daimyō and objects sought out for purchase in either China or within Japan. Since ancient times there had been a system of tributes whereby the donation of a rare or precious gift earned the bearer favor or protection from the recipient, the lord. In addition to this, a framework for trade in fine arts was beginning to take shape in this period. Chinese art objects were imported via trade between Japan and the Chinese Ming dynasty, and were also bought and sold within Japan. In order to supplement state coffers, the Shōgunate would sometimes pawn such Chinese art objects which had been received as gifts, or would sell them outright; in other words, the system of tributes existed integrally with an open-market system. The Three Amis acted as intermediaries when

gifts were presented to the Shōgun, and were also involved in the selection of objects for purchase.

The enterprise of amassing works of art is not necessarily linked to the enterprise of displaying them. Indeed, the Shōsōin Imperial Repository in Nara housed a collection of hidden treasures, and so it was kept tightly sealed. By contrast, the imported Chinese art objects of the Muromachi period were available for viewing on certain occasions. *Karamono shōgon*, or the sumptuous decoration of reception rooms with Chinese art objects, was the great fashion of the day. On occasions such as an Imperial visit to the residence of the Shōgun, or a visit by the Shōgun to the residence of a daimyō, the host would expend every effort to decorate the reception rooms in this manner, and would present the honored guest with expensive gifts. The *karamono shōgon* decoration of the reception rooms at the Shōgun's residence was among the responsibilities of the Three Amis.

唐物莊嚴

By way of such occasions, the manner in which the Chinese art objects were displayed gradually became formalized. From this formalization rose an order of value as to what constituted a fine work of art, and the subsequent adoption of these standards. Such occasions, hence, served as sites for publicly illustrating a system of values for the Chinese art objects on display, and for spreading this value system. The forming of criteria for evaluating works of art comes hand in hand with the enterprises of judgment and appraisal. Since the fundamental requirement for these activities is the accumulation of knowledge concerning art works and artists, the Three Amis also functioned in a similar way to today's art historians and art critics.

Now let us look at each one of these aspects of the daily work of the Three Amis. Because this daily work was inherited and continued across three generations, I will ignore the slight changes that occurred across the generations and discuss as a whole the extant historical materials relating to the three generations.

Management of the Collection

It seems that the gifts presented by daimyō and other donors passed through the hands of these men. For example, a passage in a diary from 1478 states: "Various items sent by Lord Ōuchi, arriving in Kyoto from Jakushū Ōbama. . . . Received at the mansion by Geiami and submitted [to the Shōgun]." ⁷ In this instance, it is Geiami who is conveying gifts

⁷ Ninagawa Chikamoto *Nikki*, entry for the 25th day of the 7th month, Bummei 10 (1478).



Reproduction of typical Muromachi-period alcove display. The alcove here is that at Kangakuin, a subtemple of Onjōji temple (also called Miidera) in Shiga Prefecture. The guest hall at Kangakuin, built around 1601, is a representative example of the elegant “warrior-class style” shoin architecture of the period. It has fusuma panels decorated with sumptuous paintings by Kanō Mitsunobu (1565?–1608). The *mitsugusoku* (three-piece set composed of incense burner, candle holder, and flower container) in this photograph is a National Treasure in the collection of Shōjūraikōji temple, Shiga Prefecture. Photo courtesy of Shibundō Publication Co., Tokyo.

from Lord Ōuchi to the Shōgun. Not limited to such activities, however, the Three Amis mediated for the Shōgun in interactions with samurai, the aristocracy, and Buddhist clergy in a multitude of other capacities which sprang up in regard to the collection.

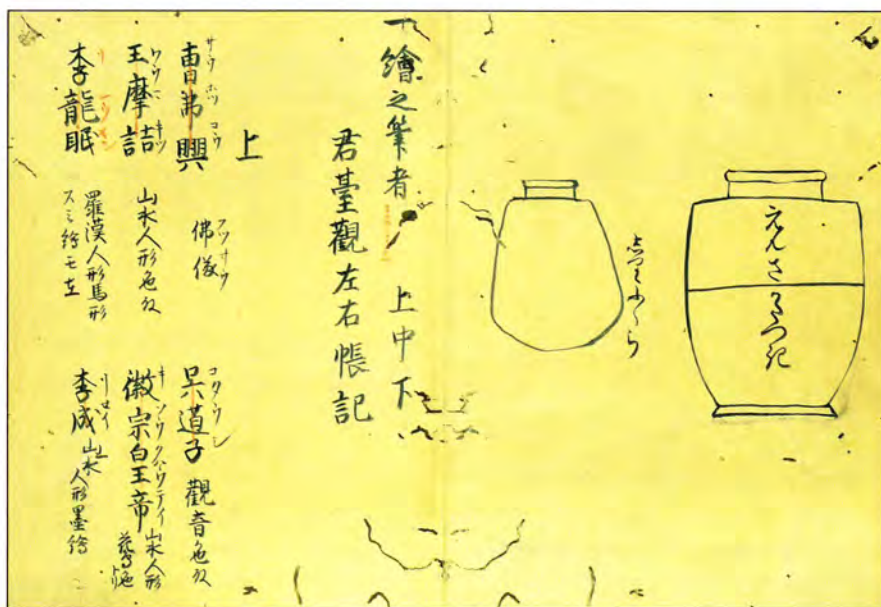
For various formal events, Chinese art works from the Shōgunate’s collection were lent out, and it was the job of the Three Amis to remove the works from the storehouses and replace them afterwards. Records regarding the Three Amis are mostly fragmentary, so let us consider a fuller account related to Ritsuami, who held the same responsibilities as Nōami, though somewhat earlier. On the 17th day of the 3rd month of Eikyō 2 (1430), Shōgun Ashikaga Yoshinori went to view the cherry

blossoms at Daigoji temple. The decorations used for the reception rooms on that occasion were some of the Chinese art works in the Shōgun's collection. On the day before the visit, Ritsuami had these objects delivered to the temple. They included seven hanging scrolls and a bronze *mitsugusoku* set — the traditional three-piece set of utensils consisting of an incense burner, candle holder, and flower container. Ritsuami was also in charge of the actual decoration of the rooms, and received a sizeable honorarium of 2,000 *hiki*⁸ for his services.

As the number of Chinese art works in storage at the Higashiyama estate of the Ashikaga shōgun increased, it became necessary to devise a comprehensive means for keeping track of these works. Nōami catalogued the paintings in the Shōgunate's collection, and there is a handcopied version of this catalogue, referred to as the *Gyobutsu Gyōga Mokuroku* [Inventory of Paintings in the Shōgunal Collection], preserved at the Tokyo National Museum (photo on facing page). It shows that Nōami divided the paintings into the following eight categories: Works on Paper, Large Works, Four-scroll Sets, Horizontal Works on Paper, Two-scroll Sets, Individual Scrolls, Small Two-scroll Sets, and [Small] Four-scroll Sets. Under these headings Nōami listed 90 entries for a total of 279 Chinese paintings, each noting the work's title and artist. The first portion is missing a category title, but because the next major category is entitled "Works on Paper," it might be surmised that the missing title is "Works on Silk." The category without a title contains three-scroll sets — an indication that such triptychs were the standard format of the time. The category entitled "Large Works" lists large triptychs, and the category entitled "Horizontal Works on Paper" includes works such as the "Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers."

The manner in which this catalogue is arranged, with basic divisions made according to the type of format of the work, its size, and its layout, bespeaks the fact that it was devised by a person responsible for the decoration of reception rooms. When determining what type of painting will be hung where, the format of the painting is a fundamental consideration. This type of catalogue would also be invaluable for the large-scale decoration of reception rooms with Chinese art objects. The types and numbers of paintings included in this catalogue lead one to believe that it is not a complete listing of the collection's holdings. Those paintings chosen for this catalogue were probably the finest works in the collection, and what we have here is the principle of a selection process which was based on a certain sense of values. The

⁸ A *hiki* was a certain type of coin. Though it is known that this coin, characterized by a hole in the center, was worth 10 *mon*, the actual value that this amount of currency had at the time is extremely difficult for us to determine. —E



Kundaikan; detail of one of set of five volumes. 17th c. According to the endnote, the first three volumes are handcopied versions of a work handed down in 1523 from Sōami to Murata Shukō, from whom it then passed to Takeno Jōō. The first and second volumes are entitled *Sōami Chanoyu no Sho* [Sōami's Writings on Chanoyu]; the first portion of the third volume is entitled *Chagu Bitō Shū* [Survey of Chanoyu Utensils and Accoutrements], while the latter portion contains information on the decoration of sitting rooms. The latter portion of the fifth volume is a handcopied version of the book of 'secret transmissions' on interior decorating, the *Kundaikan Sauchō Ki* [Register of the Shōgun's Residence, Left and Right Volumes], thought to have been compiled by Sōami. Former collection of Tokugawa Munetaka. Property of the Tokyo National Museum.

ity of the fine paintings in China have been bought up by the envoys from Japan and Korea." Lists of works which were to be purchased would be entrusted to the envoys. In Ōnin 2 (1468), the fourth of the Japanese missions to the Ming dynasty left from Kyūshū. It carried illustrations of the designs of various Chinese implements (*Daitō no Shoki no Moyō*), prepared by Nōami and Sen'ami. These illustrations would enable the envoy to have a clearer mental image of the types of objects they should procure. The *Inryōken* (also read *Onryōken*) *Nichiroku*¹⁰ entry for the 19th day of the 7th month, Kanshō 5 (1464), reveals

大唐の諸器の
模様

蔭涼軒日録

¹⁰ The *Inryōken* (*Onryōken*) *Nichiroku* was the daily record kept by the resident monk at the *Inryōken* (*Onryōken*), the study within Ashikaga Yoshimitsu's Zen practice hall, the Rokuon'in, at Shōkokuji temple. The record was begun in 1435 and kept until 1466 by the then resident monk, Kikei Shinzui. The other keeper of this record, whose entries date from 1484 to 1493, was the resident monk Kisen Shūsho. (cf. *Kōjien* entries for *Inryōken* *Nichiroku* and Rokuon'in)—E



Lotus (Hasu Zu). Painting and calligraphy by Nōami. Executed in 1471, just prior to his death. Signed "Old Nō, age 75." Ink on paper. Work proper: height, 24.6 cm; width, 31.5 cm. Property of the Masaki Museum, Osaka.

Waterfall (Kambaku Zu).
 Painting by Geiami; inscriptions by Getsuō Shūkyō, Ramba Keishi, and Ōsen Keisan. Ink and light colors on paper. Painting proper: height, 105.7 cm; width, 30.3 cm. Dated Bummei 12 (1480). According to Ōsen Keisan's inscription, Geiami made this painting as a 'certificate of graduation' which he presented to his painting pupil, Shōkei (renowned mid-Muromachi painter-monk known commonly as Kei shoki [record-keeper Kei]). Those who added the laudatory inscriptions were friends and supporters of Shōkei. Important Cultural Property. Collection of the Nezu Institute of Fine Arts, Tokyo.





Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers (*Shōshō Hakkei Zu*); one scene. By Sōami. Originally on the fusuma at Daisen'in, a subtemple of Daitokuji temple, Kyoto. The main hall at Daisen'in, which contained this painting, was built in 1510. Important Cultural Property. Preserved at the Kyoto National Museum.

Kannon, Monkey, and Crane (Kannon-En-Kaku Zu) triptych by Muxi (Jp., Mokkei; fl. 13th c.). Property of Daitokuji temple, Kyoto.

that these sketches were entrusted to the vice-envoy upon the party's departure from Kyoto. There exists evidence that Nōami personally drew illustrations of cup stands and other objects,¹¹ so we can surmise that the illustrations mentioned above were also done in his own hand. Together with him, Sen'ami — the other ami involved in producing the illustrations — was another of the shōgun's *dōbō* who we know dealt with Chinese arts objects.

While a bit of a digression, it might be noted that the painter Sesshū (1420–1506) was also on this ship bound for China, and, according to an extant document, the *Rinkōchōsho*, the Zen priest Shōsetsu Zenhō was on this same ship, carrying with him a set of paintings of the "Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers" which had been presented to him by Nōami. If this is true, then it is possible that Sesshū encountered a painting by Nōami on an envoy ship to Ming-dynasty China.

Sōami also participated in discussions regarding what objects to seek in China. According to the *Inryōken Nichiroku* entry for the 8th day of the 5th month, Chōkyō 2 (1488), on that day Kisen Shūshō [resident monk at the Inryōken], Shingetsu Bonsho, Sōami, and the painter Kanō Masanobu gathered at the Inryōken inside Shōkokuji temple for discussions concerning what objects to order from China. Five different types of illustrations depicting gold brocade (*kinran*) decorated with patterns of paulownia or *shishi* lions had already been prepared. Here again, the instructions regarding the patterns were indicated using graphic sketches. Furthermore, the group also discussed the need to find 'main images' (the central scroll in a triptych) to hang with



雪舟

隣交微書
松雪全呆

龜泉集証
心月梵初
狩野正信 相国寺

¹¹ Ninagawa Chikamoto Nikki, entry for the 2nd day of the 6th month, Kanshō 6 (1465).



Gekkei's pair of court lady paintings and Muxi's pair of rooster paintings (one red, one white). Deliberations were also made concerning four scrolls to accompany Muxi's ink painting of Kannon. While not expressly mentioned in the record, the two painting specialists in the group, Sōami and Kanō Masanobu, were probably included in the meeting to facilitate a detailed discussion of what types of paintings would be suitable to complete the triptych or polyptych. By determining suitable groupings of works in this way, Sōami was involved in the formulation of artistic tastes. 月溪

Displaying — Decoration of the Shōgun's Receptions Rooms

An imperial visit to the Shōgun's residence would elicit the most formal, splendid setting for viewing the Chinese works of art in the Shō-

後花園
足利義教
室町殿

gunate's collection. In Eikyō 9 (1437), Emperor Gohanazono (r. 1429–64) visited Ashikaga Yoshinori's residence, the Muromachi-dono. From the Emperor's arrival on the 21st day of the 10th month through the date of his departure on the 26th, a succession of sumptuous events, including dance performances, *waka* poetry gatherings, *kemari* kickball matches, and boating parties were held at the villa. This event was second only, in terms of grandness, to Shōgun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu's grand welcoming of Emperor Gokomatsu (r. 1392–1412) to the Kitayama-dono villa (present-day Rokuonji temple, commonly known as Kinkakuji, the Temple of the Golden Pavilion).

足利義満
後小松
北山殿

寢殿 常御所
会所

The Muromachi-dono included a main, formal residential building (*shinden*), the Shōgun's everyday living quarters (*tsune-no-gosho*), and three buildings for entertaining guests (*kaisho*). The reception rooms in these latter three buildings were decorated with the finest works in the Shōgunate's collection, and the person in charge of these elaborate *karamono* displays was Nōami. From Nōami's own record of the interior decorations for this imperial visit by Emperor Gohanazono, the *Muromachi-dono Miyuki Okazari-ki*, we know down to the most minute detail how the rooms, numbering as many as twenty-one, were decorated.

室町殿行幸
御飾記

小鳥之御床間
新造会所

Let us focus on the 'Small Bird Alcove' (*kotori no ontokonoma*) in the building referred to as the "newly-constructed meeting place" (*shinzō kaisho*), where the scroll painting "Shakyamuni Leaving the Mountain" by Liangkai, flanked by pair of "Snowy Landscape" scroll paintings, were hung. In front of this triptych was placed a table finished in carved red lacquer (*tsuishu*), on which was arranged the conventional three-piece set of implements (*mitsugusoku*), in this case described as having a *ningyō-dai* (literally, "human figure base"). These were flanked by two vases made of *kodō*, a type of bronze. The built-in three-tiered staggered shelves (*chigaidana*) featured a cup having a painted design of human figures, a 'Chinese god of wealth and longevity' (*fukurokuju*) food box, and other objects, which were arranged on such things as carved red lacquer trays with designs of hawks and herons. On the built-in desk (*tsukeshoin*), there was a carved red lacquer box containing an inkstone, a brush rack with a dragon pattern, a painting of cranes by Kisō, and a number of other items. In this room alone, close to forty Chinese art objects were displayed, including four scroll paintings.

徽宗

建盞

A quick calculation of the contents of the twenty-one rooms gives us an idea of just how enormous the number of Chinese art objects on display was. Some of these objects were not merely viewed by the Emperor, but also presented to him. During this imperial visit, a large number of the displayed objects, including a set of four scroll paintings of cranes by Muxi, and Jian-ware bowls (*kensan*), were offered up



Muromachi-style display of artful objects on *shoin* shelf. The built-in *shoin* desk seen here is that in the room for high-ranking guests in the Shiro Shoin building at Nishi Honganji temple in Kyoto. All the displayed objects are from the collection of the Tokugawa Art Museum, Nagoya. Except for an Edo-period dagger in gold *makie* case resting on the dragon-shaped brush rack, all are Ming-dynasty *karamono*. Photo from the Tokugawa Reimeikai Foundation, Tokyo.



Carved red lacquer tray. Yuan-Ming Dynasty, 14th c. Height, 1.5 cm; diameter, 22.7 cm. Collection of the Tokyo National Museum.

to the Emperor as gifts. The imperial visit afforded the Ashikaga Shōgun an opportunity to demonstrate that his own wealth and power held sway over the realm of culture too, and to forge a link with the Emperor by means of the system of tributes. For the *dōbō* Nōami, it must have been a very glorious undertaking.

Besides being decorated for such grand, formal events as described above, the meeting rooms, used when the Shōgun met with military leaders, the aristocracy, and Buddhist clergy, regularly featured displays of art objects. In that the reception rooms at the shōgunal villa functioned as a venue for the viewing of Chinese art objects, the display there became more or less constant, much like what today is called a "permanent exhibition." When the former head priest of Daigoji temple, Mansai, as well as Imperial Prince Fushimi-no-miya Sadafusa visited the reception rooms of Yoshinori's Muromachi-dono villa, they

醍醐寺
満濟 伏見宮貞成



Jian-ware temmoku type bowl with *yuteki* (silvery spots) glaze. Southern Song Dynasty, 12th–13th c. Height, 6.7 cm; diameter of mouth, 12.2 cm; diameter of foot, 3.9 cm. Designated an Important Art Object. Collection of the Nezu Institute of Fine Arts, Tokyo.

were dazzled by the splendor of the extravagant display of Chinese art works. Mansai writes to this effect in his diary: “There are no words to describe the splendor of the Chinese art display in the various reception rooms. Not even paradise could be so gorgeous.” So impressive were the decorated reception rooms that Imperial Prince Sadafusa, after touring them once, went around to view them again. The task of arranging these semi-constant displays of art works was also the responsibility of the Three Amis.

Additionally, the work of decorating the room interiors involved a range of tangential responsibilities. Whenever even the smallest need arose, it seems that the Three Amis were called upon for assistance. For example, in the 4th month of Eikyō 12 (1440), Nōami selected the fabric to be used for the curtain which was to be hung in front of a portrait of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. The selection of the curtain fabric was related to the preparations being made for the Buddhist service that would be held for Yoshimitsu’s memorial service on the 6th day of the 5th month.



Tōgudō pavilion. Located at Jishōji temple (Ginkakuji, the Temple of the Silver Pavilion), Kyoto. The Tōgudō pavilion served as Ashikaga Yoshimasa's private Buddhist altar hall for daily religious practice at his retreat at the foot of the Higashiyama mountains, the Higashiyama-dono, which was completed in 1483. Upon Yoshimasa's death in 1490, the lovely retreat was converted into a temple. The temple name was taken from Yoshimasa's posthumous religious title, Jishōin. Together with the Kannon Hall that is referred to as the Silver Pavilion, the Tōgudō is one of the only two extant structures at Jishōji from Yoshimasa's era. Photo by Mizuno Katsuhiko.

Commissioning Paintings — The Fusuma Paintings of the Tōgudō

When the Shōgun commissioned the creation of paintings, the Three Amis were responsible for the removal and replacement of model paintings kept in the storehouses, and for participation in the discussions regarding the themes and formats of the works to be commissioned.

The *Inryōken Nichiroku* provides a detailed account of the process by which Kanō Masanobu created the fusuma paintings for the Tōgudō pavilion at Ashikaga Yoshimasa's Higashiyama-dono villa (present-day Jishōji temple, commonly known as Ginkakuji, the Temple of the Silver Pavilion). The Tōgudō pavilion originally served as Yoshimasa's Buddhist altar hall for daily religious practice (*jibutsudō*). What Kanō Masanobu was commissioned to do was to create the ten fusuma paintings which would surround the altar room's central image, Amida Nyorai. In order to examine the actual conditions of the creation of paintings during this era, let us consider a few aspects of this project.

The project began with the selection of the theme for the paintings. Given that there were ten panels to be done, the "Ten Ox-herding Pictures" seems to have been among the choices discussed. However, Yoshimasa was intent on having "something related to the central image, Amida, while also related to the number ten." It required Zen priests well versed in the Chinese classics and Buddhist scriptures to create a suitable proposal. The task of making the selection was placed upon Kisen and Ōsen Keisan.

On the 29th day of the 10th month, 1485, Ōsen, having searched through the *Kankyō Shūki* [Collection on Shandao's 'Meditation Sutra' (*Guanjing*)], which tells of how it is possible to see Amida Buddha sitting beneath a Treasure Tree surrounded by ten monks if one reads the *Amida Sutra* and recites the name of Amida Buddha, proposed the theme of "The Ten Monks." Yoshimasa liked this idea, and so the theme was decided.

Next was the matter of deciding upon the style of the paintings. Yoshimasa instructed Kisen to first have Masanobu try his hand at producing a sample painting, no matter what style, whether it be "in the brush style of Xiagui, Mayuan, or any other brush style." So Kisen immediately summoned Masanobu and consulted with him. Masanobu at first commented that it might be good to do them either using the brush style of Mayuan or of Li Longmian, but then, because another building at the Higashiyama-dono villa, the Seishian Shoin, had fusuma panels done using the brush style of Mayuan, he said he

東求堂
足利義政 東山殿
慈照寺 銀閣寺

持仏堂

阿弥陀如来

觀經集記

西指庵書院

thought it might be better to use Li Longmian's style. Mentioning that he wanted to look at the *Kuhon Mandala* for reference,¹² he said he would go ahead and paint a sample and have the Shōgun look at it.

The fact that once the painting theme was decided, the discussion should immediately turn to such questions as whether it should be done using the brush style of Mayuan or that of Li Longmian is characteristic of the approach toward painting production during this period — an approach sometimes referred to as “brush style production” (*hitsuyō seisaku*). The two most popular Chinese painters at this time were Mayuan and Li Longmian. The phrase “using the brush style of Mayuan” (*Baen-yō*) could be expressed simply, “in the Mayuan style” (*Baen-fū*). The commissioner of a painting would communicate his stylistic preference by instructing the artist to paint it “in the so-and-so style,” filling in the name of the preferred Chinese painter. For the Tōgudō project, Yoshimasa did not specify a particular painting style.

On the 2nd day of the 11th month, Kisen took two samples made by Masanobu to show to Yoshimasa. The fact that there were two was probably because Masanobu had created samples in Mayuan's as well as in Li Longmian's style. As he was capable of creating these samples in only two or three days, the artist must have already possessed a basic knowledge of the styles of both Mayuan and Li Longmian.

In his discussion with the Shōgun, Kisen conveyed Masanobu's opinions about the fusuma paintings and the artist's request regarding the paintings he would like to use as models. For reference, Masanobu desired to have a look at the Li Longmian and Mayuan paintings in the Shōgun's collection, and he wanted the *Kuhon Mandala* made available to him from the Jōdo-sect temple, as he wanted to use it as a model for the design of the paintings. Yoshimasa responded that he would have Sōami bring the model paintings out from the storehouse once Sōami returned to work after the mourning period for Geiami, Sōami's father, had ended, and that he would have Chōami make the arrangements for borrowing the mandala. On the 24th day of the 11th month, a triptych consisting of a scroll painting of Monju and Yuima (Sk., Manjusri and Vimalakirti) by Li Longmian and a pair of ox paintings by Li Ti (Jp., Li Teki; Southern Song dynasty painter, fl. late 12th c.) was brought out from the storehouse. Kisen took these away with him and, on the 28th, had them delivered to Masanobu. Apparently, the mandala had already been sent to Masanobu.

The “Li Longmian style” ultimately selected for the Tōgudō fusuma paintings was thus shown to the painter in the form of an actual

¹² “*Kuhon*” refers to the “nine grades” of aspirants to Amida's Pure Land, expounded in *The Meditation Sutra*. A mandala is a diagrammatic picture representing the cosmic nature of the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other divine beings.—E

The Sixteen Arhats (*Jūroku Rakan Zu*), by Li Longmian (Jp., Ri Ryūmin; [ca. 1049–1106]). One of a set of sixteen scrolls. Height, 99.8 cm; width, 40.5 cm. Li Longmian, an artist of the Northern Song Dynasty whose painting style influenced Japanese artists of the Muromachi period, also had the name Ri Gonglin (Jp., Ri Kōrin). Property of Kōmyōji temple in Nagaokakyō, Kyoto Prefecture.



painting sample. In the same way that the men responsible for ordering art works from China utilized visual samples and illustrations to assist in the selection of the objects, here too these men conveyed their wishes for the painting through the form of a visual image. The Li Longmian taken from the shōgun's storehouse was a painting of Monju and Yuima, an iconography completely unrelated to that of the chosen subject, "The Ten Monks." The painting sample, then, was clearly meant as a basic brush-style sample. And it was at this juncture that Sōami made his appearance. This was his first job after succeeding to his father Geiami's position. It was his role to remove the sample painting from the storehouses. Since this meant the selection of one painting from among several possibilities, no doubt Yoshimasa and Sōami's will and discretion came into play here.

Then on the 6th day of the 12th month, after Kisen discussed with Sōami about the iconography for the paintings, Yoshimasa commanded a viewing of the drafts. On the 18th, Kisen invited Ōsen, Sōami, and Masanobu to a conference. These men held another meeting on the 24th, for a full day, where they came to an initial decision on the painting style to be used. Masanobu was to create the drafts, which would be submitted for Yoshimasa's consideration.

On the 28th day of the 12th month, Masanobu's drafts were presented to Yoshimasa. The Shōgun gave his opinions, remarking, for example, that he thought the variation in size among the figures was quite nice, but it would be better if the railings were all rendered in a uniform manner. Yoshimasa then said, "We have a painting of 'Laotzu Crossing the Barrier' by Li Longmian. Have Sōami show it to you." In other words, he specified a new painting model.

This was followed by considerable discussion back and forth between Kisen and Masanobu on questions regarding the iconography, visits to view the Tōgudō then under construction, and a great deal of debate ensuing from Yoshimasa's change of heart regarding the painting theme. (Yoshimasa expressed that he thought "the ten pleasures" described in the *Ōjō Yōshū* [The Essential Collection Concerning Birth in Amida's Pure Land] was better, since the imagery in that had more diversity than that of "the ten monks.") At any rate, on the 24th day of the 3rd month of the following year, Bummei 18 (1486), Masanobu's completed set of paintings of "The Ten Monks" received Yoshimasa's approval, and on the 28th day of the 5th month, Masanobu received an official certificate promising payment to him of 1,000 *hiki*.

Thus the production of the fusuma paintings, a project which took almost seven months, had Kisen in the role of "producer," Masanobu as painter, and Ōsen and Sōami acting as consultants. Sōami's role — as a participant in the discussions on painting style and the person responsible for the removal and replacement of the sample paintings

kept in the storehouse — was related directly to the paintings. This role of his was one which deeply affected even the content of the paintings.

Prior to this commission to produce the fusuma paintings for the Tōgudō, Masanobu had executed paintings of the “Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers” on the fusuma in the building at the Higashiyama-dono which housed the Shōgun’s living quarters (*tsune-no-gosho*). This was done during Geiami’s lifetime, and it is thought that the elderly Geiami played a role in that commission similar to that played by Sōami in the Tōgudō commission.

Research and Appraisal

The knowledge accumulated through handling great numbers of Chinese art objects was also helpful in the appraisal of art objects. A considerable number of entries regarding the appraisal of paintings can be found in Muromachi period diaries. The *Noritoki-kyō Ki* [Record of Lord Noritoki] entry for the 5th day of the 8th month, Ōei 13 (1406), is a relatively early example. It records Kin’ami’s reply, “[It is] a painting produced recently in Japan,” to Yamashina Noritoki’s request for information on a “sage painting.”

教言卿記

金阿弥

To request an appraisal of a painting is to want knowledge about the painting, and also to want to know the market value of the work. In the Muromachi period as well, these two purposes lay behind the appraisal of Chinese art objects, for these objects not only served as extravagant gift items but were also bought and sold. The Chinese art objects and other kinds of goods which were presented to the shōgun’s house were “priced” to determine what value they would have in the marketplace. For example, the *Inryōken Nichiroku* entry for the 25th day of the 4th month, Chōroku 4 (1460), states:

[Presents] coming from Fuekeshin’in [temple] of Saga:
Three silk robes (*kosode*) worth 7 *kan* 500 *mon*, one roll of
silk damask (*donsu*) worth 3 *kan* 500 *mon*, one tray worth
10 *kan* *mon*, ‘*takadanshi*’ paper worth 1 *kan* 500 *mon*, and
‘*sugihara*’ paper worth 500 *mon*, for a total of 23 *kan* *mon*.

A comparison between the three robes worth 7 *kan* 500 *mon* and the one tray evaluated at 10 *kan* *mon* indicates that the single Chinese tray was worth a considerable amount of money.

The Three Amis carried out this kind of appraisal work. The entry for the 3rd day of the 8th month, Kakitsu 3 (1443), in the *Kammon Gyōki*

看聞御記

[Record of Things Seen and Heard], the diary of Imperial Prince Fushimi-no-miya Sadafusa, records a remark made by Nōami when he was shown a “hawk painting” owned by the imperial prince: “Of course it is a *karamono* (Chinese painting), but the painter’s identity is unknown.” Further, the *Inryōken Nichiroku* entry for the 17th day of the 7th month, Chōroku 2 (1458), mentions a consultation with Nōami on a painting of “The Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety.” While we do not know the details of the discussion, it is apparent that Nōami was regarded as someone to rely on when there was need for advice regarding a painting.

The *Inryōken Nichiroku* contains a detailed account of the appraisal of a triptych consisting of a central image of Hotei flanked by a pair of scrolls of long-armed monkeys, by Muxi, that Ashikaga Yoshimochi had presented to Shōkokuji temple. Yoshimasa was interested in finding out whether the central image, the painting of Hotei, was in fact the work of Muxi. We might recreate the discussion between Yoshimasa and Kisen as follows:

Yoshimasa: “Who painted the Hotei?”

Kisen: “Like the two flanking paintings, it was painted by Muxi.”

Yoshimasa: “That isn’t true. When I asked some Zen elders, they all
 妙喜庵 said it was painted by Muxi, but, according to the head of Myōkian temple, the exterior title says ‘Hotei’ but doesn’t note the name of the painter.”

Kisen: “But, everyone has always said that this is by Muxi.”

Yoshimasa laughs and rebuffs, “‘Everyone has always said ...’ does not get us anywhere.” Then, five days later the same topic comes up, and Yoshimasa informs Kisen, “I had Sōami confirm the exterior title, and he says that it states ‘painted by Muxi.’”

Kisen: “I inquired to the abbot of Shōkokuji, and, since apparently the exterior title says only ‘Hotei,’ I related this. When I later tried reconfirming this, I was informed that there were the characters ‘Muxi.’”

Yoshimasa: “Who wrote the inscription?”

約翁 Kisen: “It says ‘Yakuō,’ but I do not know who this person was.”

Kisen was a man with an opinion of his own about paintings, and so he could not let it end there. He had to present an accurate report to Yoshimasa. In order to do so, he went to the trouble to send for the actual painting and examine it. He confirmed the external label, read the inscription, and checked the seals of the painter. As a result, he noted that the left scroll of the pair of monkey paintings bore a signature giving the date 1269 and the artist’s name, “Muxi,” while the laudatory inscription on the Hotei painting was by Yüeweng Zongjiu (Jp., Yakuō Sōkyū) and was dated “1230, finished on a summer day.”

This assembled data was communicated to Yoshimasa in writing on the 3rd day of the 2nd month. Regarding the authenticity of the

Hotei painting, Kisen, based on his discovery that there was a gap of almost forty years between the date on the artist's signature on the monkey paintings and that in the inscription on the Hotei painting, concluded that the Hotei painting was not by the hand of Muxi.

While Kisen fastidiously carried out the fundamental task of researching the inscriptions and artists' seals, judgments based on the paintings themselves were the realm of the Three Amis. Kisen was asked by a certain Minister Awaya Saemon about the authenticity of a painting of the "Seven Wise Men Crossing the Barrier" by Qian Shun-ju (Jp., Sen Shunkyo). There was an inscription at the top of the painting, but close examination revealed that the paper of the painting and that under the inscription differed. Kisen thought this was strange, and relegated the evaluation of the painting itself to Sōami. (*Inryōken Nichiroku*, entry for the 24th day of the 9th month, Entoku 2 [1490]).

Restoration and Mounting

The mounting of paintings was also handled by the three Amis. Nōami participated in refurbishing the "Painting of the Six Realms of Rebirth" (*Rokudō-e*) now in the collection of Shōjūraikōji temple, and he was ordered to attach the paper squares of poetry by the elders of the Gozan temples to the fusuma paintings of the "Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers" in Ashikaga Yoshinori's reception room. (*Inryōken Nichiroku*, entry for the 2nd day of the 11th month, Eikyō 8 [1436]). These types of jobs continued unchanged during Sōami's tenure. The Shaka triad of Shōkokuji's Rokuon'in temple was lost in the Ōnin War, and after the end of the conflict, a new Shaka triad by Zhang Sigong (Jp., Chō Shikyō) was purchased. Sōami was ordered to see to its mounting. Another similar task undertaken by Sōami was the repair of a pair of paintings of "The Sixteen Arhats" by Ming Zhao (Jp., Minchō), which was kept at Saihōji temple but had become heavily damaged. A number of entries in the *Inryōken Nichiroku* during the year 1487 mention these projects. They reveal that the Shaka triad was too big to fit on any available repair boards, and that a number of other problems also arose, but that Sōami successfully completed both the Shaka and the Arhats projects. The two works had been delivered to Sōami on the 16th and the 22nd days of the 6th month, respectively. Having completed the work, he delivered them to Kisen on the 21st day of the 10th month. This means that it took him nearly four months to complete the two projects, working on them simultaneously.

六道絵
聖衆來迎寺

張思恭

明兆
西芳寺

Conclusion

This has been a brief look at the work of the Three Amis. Of course, these three men were not the only individuals engaged in this kind of work. There were other men of -ami status in the inner circle of the Shōgun or in service to the various daimyō, such as Ritsuami and 千阿弥 Sen'ami, whose names we came across, and on occasion some Zen priests who carried out similar duties. But undoubtedly, it was always one of the Three Amis who, existing within the Shōgun's immediate circle, played the central role in these endeavors. Considered from the perspective of art history, the importance of the Three Amis casts all others in shade. As touched upon in this paper, these men, by way of their everyday work, were closely involved in the formation of the value system that took shape in the World of Art in the Muromachi period. ㇿ

The Evolution of Tea Brand Names

Wakahara Eiichi

The vast downland of Uji in southern Kyoto extends southwest from the Uji Bridge, and in the center stands the mountain Oriiyama, where the Edo [Tokugawa] shōgunate at one time had pine trees planted to supply lumber for construction work on the Kyoto Imperial Palace and other projects. It was the rain water that filtered down through these slopes that nurtured the tea industry in the town of Uji.

宇治
折居山

Uji tea won its reputation as the finest in Japan during the Muromachi period (1336–1568), and, until it was swept by a wave of commercial development recently, the appearance of the town remained unchanged. The famous tea fields surrounding the town have continued to flourish, nourished by the plentiful water flowing underground from the hills.

A poem still recited today lists the names of the “seven finest tea plantations of Uji,” which are said to have been established in the latter part of the fourteenth century by order of the third Muromachi shōgun, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (r. 1369–95). This poem lists the names of those preeminent tea plantations as follows:

Mori, Iwai,
Umonji, Kawashimo,
Okunoyama,
Asahi,
and Biwa.

森 祝
字文字 川下
奥ノ山
朝日
枇杷

Readers have probably heard chanoyu people frequently mention names such as Mori, Iwai, and Umonji (also pronounced Umoji) when referring to tea names (*chamei, go-meī*) — that is, to the names of particular brands of powdered tea (*matcha*). Indeed, in the early Edo period it became the practice at chanoyu gatherings for the host to introduce the

茶銘 御銘
抹茶

Translated and adapted, by permission, from the article “*Chamei no Ayumi*” appearing in the May, 1990 issue of *Tankō* (Tankōsha Publishing Co., Kyoto). Translation assistance, Donna Tamaki. Footnotes are by the editor.

name of the tea to the guests. The names that were used were generally those of the plantations where the leaves were picked, and even today, names of this derivation continue to be used.

茶師 This, however, is not to say that names began to be given to teas for the purpose of this practice at chanoyu gatherings. For the master tea producers (*chashi*) of Uji, it was necessary to identify the plantations where the various teas had been picked, and for this simple reason, the leaves were tagged with the plantation name during the entire process of picking, steaming, drying, and so on. The names thus served a practical function for the tea producers. In the seventeenth century, however, these names captured the fancy of chanoyu practitioners, and there arose the practice at chanoyu gatherings of introducing them along with the names of the producers of the teas. This marked the beginning of their distinct history as proper names.

The first step in this history, however, did not owe merely to the pleasantly poetic nature of the names. The relationship between chanoyu practitioners and the town of Uji was growing increasingly intimate, and as those who drank powdered tea developed an increasing affection for the beverage, they began to expect subtle differences in the taste. No doubt these developments provided a great deal of impetus in launching the history of tea names. And we can well imagine that behind these developments lay the energetic endeavors of the master tea producers, striving to refine their products.

Tea Blends and Tea Names

地赤い It is extremely difficult to fulfill the three *sine qua non* for high quality powdered tea: good color, aroma, and taste. Even with Uji tea, some is grown in tuff loam (red clay), others in clay, while that of the lowland tea fields on the flood plain of the Uji River is grown in sandy soil. Although the appearance of the tea leaves is the same, there is a subtle difference in color, aroma, and flavor due to the nature of the soil. The tea grown in tuff loam is called red soil tea (*jiakai*) and is faintly red, while the tea grown in clay has a superior aroma. Tea grown in sandy soil is lustrous-looking when processed, but lacks a full-bodied flavor. Furthermore, tea grown in tuff loam or clay soil mellows if kept in a sealed container, but tea grown in sandy soil does not keep well. Because of such pros and cons depending upon various conditions, it is difficult to produce a superior powdered tea which meets the three requirements mentioned above. But by blending teas grown in different locations, the tea producers achieve a balanced product.

The history of blending tea is quite old, and the techniques developed by the various *chashi* families of Uji for producing their particular blends of tea are still the most well-protected secrets of each respective family. Of course, the main ingredient in each blend consists of the leaves of the plants carefully cultivated on the famous tea plantations. An exact combination of tea leaves from other areas is added to this. For practical purposes, the master tea producers must therefore give some identifying name to each variety of tea they use. But normally the name given to the final product is that of the plantation where the main tea was grown.

In the Edo period, the master tea producers actually owned the plantations where the predominant tea of their blends was grown, and such plantations were referred to as "the special plantation of tea-producer so-and-so." The family of Kambayashi Hōjun (d. 1656), the chief magistrate of the Uji district, owned as many as eight "special plantations." These included five of "the seven finest tea plantations in Uji" — Asahi, Umonji, Mori, Iwai, and Biwa — in addition to Aya-no-mori, Yuzuriha, and Urokogata. In general, the major tea producers owned a number of "special plantations," which explains why most of the tea names used during the Edo period were taken from the names of the plantations owned by a limited circle of *chashi* families.

上林峯順

綾ノ森

ゆづり葉 うろこ形

Origin of Special Proper Names for Tea

Evidence found in the *Genroku Oboegaki* [Memoranda from the Genroku Period (1688–1704)], compiled by the Kyoto Magistrate's office in the early eighteenth century, reveals that the tea ordered from the master tea producers of Uji each year by the shōgunal family in Edo was sampled and selected in the presence of the Kyoto Shoshidai (the representative of the shōgun in Kyoto) and the chief magistrates of the city's east and west districts. In the early days of the Edo shōgunate, the role of "official tea selector" (*oncha gimmi yaku*) for the shōgunal family was successively carried out by the chanoyu masters Furuta Oribe (1544–1615), Kobori Enshū (1579–1647), and Nagai Naomasa (1587–1668), lord of Yodo Castle. By the Genroku period, however, this role had been taken over by the Kyoto Shoshidai and other government officials of Kyoto. The *Kyoto Oyakusho-muke Daigai Oboegaki* [General Memoranda for the Kyoto Administrative Offices] states that the master tea producers would personally deliver samples of the tea to be submitted for selection to the residence of the Shoshidai, where the sampling was carried out. Most likely a relatively large number of varieties were submitted, from which several were selected.

元禄覚書

御茶吟味役

古田織部

小堀遠州 永井尚政

京都御役所向大藏
覚書

Facing page: *Uji Seicha Zu* [Tea Manufacture at Uji], detail. By Tsuruzawa Tansaku. Edo period, 18th c. Pair of six-fold standing screens. Property of Daitokuji temple, Kyoto.

花
竹 梅 いノ鷹
一ノ白 いの昔
松の白

The process of tasting and selection would not be manageable if the samples did not have names or symbols to distinguish them from each other. There are teas today having simple names such as "*Hana*" (flower), "*Take*" (bamboo), "*Ume*" (plum), "*I-no-taka*" ([category] A, hawk), "*Ichino-shiro*" (1, white), "*I-no-mukashi*" ([category] A, antiquity), and "*Matsu-no-shiro*" (pine, white) — names which do not derive from tea plantations,¹ and which seem uninspired. These are names which were originally applied for practical reasons, such as mentioned above, and which then took hold.

鷹爪 初鷹
折鷹

There are many tea names which include the term *taka*, "hawk" — for example, "*Taka-no-tsume*" (hawk's talon), "*Hatsu-taka*" (first hawk), and "*Ori-taka*" (bent hawk). This is generally believed to be because the new leaves on a tea plant resemble hawk talons. Again, the popularity of the term *matsu*, "pine," was probably due to the simple fact that the kanji for this was familiar and easy. Glancing through the Edo-period price lists and records of business conducted between the tea producers of Uji and the Shōgunate, one also finds plain names such as "*Yanagi*" (willow) and "*Sakura*" (cherry) for even the finest teas meant for preparation as *koicha* (thick mixture of powdered tea and hot water).

やなぎ さくら
濃茶

Once it became the custom at chanoyu gatherings to introduce the name of the tea that was being used, names more suitable to the tasteful chanoyu setting were called for. And so the tea producers would petition their important clients — the clan heads, court nobles, and other such people whose tea they supplied — to bestow the tea with a pleasing name. Because of the close relationship the tea producers enjoyed with chanoyu masters, sometimes they asked these men to select names for their teas. Soon priests, the head masters of chanoyu lineages, and other well-known individuals also became involved, and eventually the present trend evolved, wherein the teas are generally named by the head masters of chanoyu lineages.

Some explanation should be added here about the difference between the terms "*chamei*" (sometimes used with the standard honorific

¹ Conceivably, the "*taka*" (hawk) in the name "*I-no-taka*" comes from Takatobi in Uji, the site of a tea plantation, and the tea having the name "*Matsu-no-shiro*" may have come from a plantation named Komatsu.



鶴澤法華堂

prefix, *o-*) and “*go-mei*,” both of which are used when speaking of tea names. The first refers to names (*mei*) given to tea (*cha*) by the tea producers themselves, while the latter indicates that the name was given by someone of the warrior class, an individual versed in the art of *chanoyu*, or some other person not actually involved in the production of the tea. These warriors, *chanoyu* people, and others were the tea producers’ esteemed clients and superiors according to the social order of the day, and so the tea producers were obliged to use the extremely honorific prefix *go-* on the word, to indicate their respect.

The Names “*Hatsu-mukashi*” and “*Nochi-mukashi*”

初昔 後昔 The names “*Hatsu-mukashi*” (first antiquity) and “*Nochi-mukashi*” (later antiquity) were given to teas purveyed especially to the shōgunal family. Kobori Enshū is credited with having selected these names, and, gathering from all the reference works available to me, it appears that these represent the earliest tea names to have been selected by a *chanoyu* master. According to the *Kakumei Ki*, the diary of Hōrin Shōshō,² the tea having the name “*Nochi-mukashi*,” manufactured by the Uji tea producer Kambayashi Hōjun Katsumori (d. 1658), was used at a *chanoyu* gathering held at the Sentō Palace in 1642. Thus, it is clear that the history of this name and that of its mate, “*Hatsu-mukashi*,” dates back to at least this time. The first year that any sort of tea name appears in the diary is 1638, so it is improbable that their history goes back much further than this.

上林家前代記録 In the *Kambayashi-ke Zendai Kiroku* [Kambayashi Family Record of the Previous Generation], written sometime between 1716 and 1736, there is this informative passage:

Hatsu-mukashi and *nochi-mukashi* are the teas favored by the Edo Shōgunate and are generic names for the highest grades of tea. All of the master tea producers regard them as their finest teas. Each tea producer family creates their own names for the other grades.

In other words, the designations “*hatsu-mukashi*” and “*nochi-mukashi*” were given to the finest grades of *koicha*-use tea favored by the shōgunal family.

² Hōrin Shōshō (1592–1668) was resident priest of Rokuonji temple (the Temple of the Golden Pavilion).

The factor which sets the two teas apart is the difference in their production process. The traditional explanation is that the Chinese character *mukashi* (antiquity 昔) was selected because it is an aggregate of the characters for "twenty-one" (廿一) and "days" (日), representing the duration between the harvesting of the two teas, and the terms *hatsu* (first) and *nochi* (later) indicate which was harvested first and which, second. But certain records state that these two varieties of tea were picked on the same day, proving that this explanation is incorrect.

Another noteworthy passage in the *Kambayashi-ke Zendai Kiroku* states:

Kobori, the lord of Tōtōmi, was ordered to take on the duties of tea taster for Shōgun Hidetada in 1615, upon the death of [Furuta] Oribe. It is said that he favored 'white' teas, and so the traditional-style 'white' tea leaves were packed in the bags for the highest grade of tea.³ This explains the present reference to this as the favored white [tea] of the Kambayashi family, and the use of the greener tea leaves as filler.

In ancient times, the so-called 'white' tea leaves were the only kind of tea leaves used for producing *matcha*, but then there was a period when green tea leaves became popular, and after this, the 'white' tea leaves regained favor. "*Hatsu-mukashi*" refers to the tea of the earliest period, and "*Nochi-mukashi*" refers to the tea of the later period. In other words, the names "*Hatsu-mukashi*" and "*Nochi-mukashi*" were used to distinguish the white and green varieties of powdered tea which resulted from different production methods. The term "*mukashi*" or "antiquity" is used here to mean powdered tea "made according to ancient, traditional methods."

³ In the earlier days of the history of tea production in Japan, the tender young tea leaves picked around the latter part of April, called "*mirume*" buds, were used to produce tea for drinking as *matcha*. Powdered tea processed by steaming, drying, and pulverizing these delicate leaves is a whitish color. Around the early 17th century, tea produced this way came to be known as "white tea." The use of the term "white" in many tea names is connected with this. The tea producers managed to achieve a bright green tea probably toward the end of the 16th century. The technique involved boiling the leaves in alkaline "ash juice" (*aku*). This achievement may have been soon after the time of Sen Rikyū, meaning that Rikyū may never have drunk bright green-colored *matcha*. In 1885, a government restriction prohibiting additives to tea caused the termination of the "ash juice" technique, and so all *matcha* today is of the steamed type which would be referred to as "white tea." However, because older, darker green leaves are used nowadays instead of *mirume*, the finished tea is actually a beautiful green. (cf. Wakahara Eiichi, "*Matcha Zatsudan: Hakucha to Seicha*" [Miscellany on Powdered Tea: White Tea and Green Tea], in the May 1987 issue of *Tankō*.)



Handwritten Japanese text on a page, including the characters "一推杯" (Ishi-hai) and "金" (gold).

Handwritten Japanese text on a page, including the characters "新編" (Shinpen) and "上巻" (Shōmaki).



Old documents preserved by the Kambayashi family.
Photo by Moriwaki Masahiko.

In the *Ochamei narabini Atai no Ki* [Record of Tea Names and Prices] and other Edo period documents, special reference is made to these teas as "shōgun's leftover tea" (*omeshi onokori*). These were the most expensive among the varieties of tea listed for powdered-tea use. All of the master tea producers of Uji who served as purveyors to the shōgunal family in Edo referred to them as "the shōgun's leftover tea," denoting that this same tea was available for purchase by other customers. It would not, however, have been allowable for other varieties of tea to surpass these in either quality or price.

Early Examples of Proper Tea Names

In the case of the Kambayashi family, a tea named "*Baba-mukashi*" (matriarch, antiquity) appears in the records on par with "*Hatsu-mukashi*" and "*Nochi-mukashi*." This name was created in honor of the mother of Kambayashi Kamonnojō Hisamochi, who established the family's fame during the Azuchi-Momoyama period. The tale is that the first Tokugawa shōgun, Ieyasu (1542–1616), praised her tea-making skills and presented her with the Wakamori tea fields, 7 *se* 25 *bu*⁴ from the famous Mori plantation, and this name commemorates that legendary event. For the Kambayashi family, this tea name is a remembrance of the achievements of their illustrious female ancestor. "*Baba-mukashi*" tea ranks just below "*Hatsu-mukashi*" and "*Nochi-mukashi*," and was the name given to the *matcha*-use tea which came from the Wakamori tea fields, and which was purveyed to the successive heads of the Edo shōgunate.

In brand and price listings from the late Edo period preserved by the various master tea producers, there appear names such as "*Uki-bune*" (drifting boat), "*Momo-no-shiro*" (peach, white), "*Iwai-no-shiro*" (Iwai [celebration], castle),⁵ and "*Chiyo-no-shiro*" (millennium, white), which are said to have been given to the respective teas by the chanoyu masters Oda Uraku (d. 1621), Katagiri Sekishū (d. 1673), Kanamori Sōwa (d. 1656), and Konoe Nobuhiro (d. 1649). Although we cannot confirm whether these chanoyu masters did indeed name the teas, if we assume that they did, these would represent early instances of names selected by chanoyu masters.

⁴ One *se* = 99.3 sq. meters; one *bu* = 3.31 sq. meters.

⁵ Iwai, which literally means "celebration," is the name of one of the "seven finest tea fields of Uji" which provided tea for the shōgunal family.

In later well-known examples, Matsudaira Fumai, the head of the Matsue clan, selected the name "*Naka-no-shiro*" (middle, white) for the Kambayashi Sannyū family in 1796, and in 1804 Kawakami Fuhaku, founder of the Fuhaku branch of the Edosenke chanoyu line, named a tea produced by Miyabayashi Usai "*Ne-no-iwai*" (rat, celebration) after the animal name of the year. The Kambayashi Shunshō family of tea producers received the name "*Chiyo-mukashi*" (millennium, antiquity) from the Owari branch of the Tokugawa family, whose tea they purveyed. Gengensai Sōshitsu (1810–77; 11th-generation head of the Urasenke chanoyu lineage), who served as chief of chanoyu matters for the Owari Tokugawa clan, sent a congratulatory letter to the Kambayashi family in honor of their having been presented this name. It is clear, therefore, that this naming occurred at the end of the Edo period. It is likely that the selection and bestowal of the name was by the last head of the Owari Tokugawa clan, Yoshikatsu (1824–83). The Shunshō branch of the Kambayashi family was also purveyor of tea to the Hachisuka family of Awa-Tokushima. The close ties they therefore enjoyed with the Hachisuka family was reflected in their being given the name "*To-no-uchi-mukashi*" (in-house, antiquity) for their powdered tea, and "*Tsurezure*" (idleness) for their steeped tea (*sencha*).

松平不昧
中之白
上林三入 川上不白
宮林有齋 子の祝
上林春松
千代昔
玄々斎宗室
徳川慶勝
蜂須賀
戸ノ内むかし
徒然 煎茶

The Names of *Usucha* and Steeped Teas

As described above, the names of the various *koicha* teas were usually the same as those of the plantation where the tea was picked, and were used to differentiate the varieties of tea at the tasting tests. The characters for "antiquity," "white," and "green" were added onto the names to indicate the difference in the production process, and later, favored clients of the tea producers were requested to give names to the teas. Why, then, were *usucha* (regular powdered tea) varieties not given names until fairly recently?

Even today, in records of chanoyu gatherings (*chakaiki*) it is customary for the name of the *koicha* to be listed along with that of the packer, while the *usucha* which was served is not mentioned. There is a clear explanation for this convention. In pre-Edo times, the daimyō purchased their tea from several different tea producers. The leaf-tea used especially for making *koicha* (this tea is referred to as *fukuro-cha*, "bagged tea") was tasted, and after selection, the tea name, date of harvest, date of packing, and packer's name were listed on the bag (*hantai*). The leaves used for *usucha*, however, were used to fill the empty spaces in the tea jars in which the bags of tea were transported. The quality of

薄茶
茶会記
袋茶
半袋



梅
廻
白

川
下

換

新
白

白

祖
母
音

詰茶 the filler tea (*tsume-cha*) was left to the discretion of the individual packers, and it was not sampled by the customers. It was the tea producer's job to see that the leaf-tea selected was properly packed, but as the customer did business with more than one producer, the probability that the filler tea quality would vary was great. The difference in quality would be taken immediately by the client to reflect a difference in the skill of the producer and could mark the end of a long business relationship between the two. For example, a superior tea producer could lose customers if he happened to pack a tea they did not like. To circumvent this problem, the tea producers would have meetings and bring their various filler teas together and decide on a blend. In this way, the filler teas would be uniform. This was a clever way for fellow producers to protect themselves by cooperating.

It was for this reason that the tea producers were not able to give the *usucha* a specific name. The custom carried over into the Meiji period, and even on fairly recent price lists, one notices that *usucha* is referred to by names indicating only the grade of the tea. This makes it obvious that not only is the history of giving names to *usucha* young, but also that the recent convention of using the Chinese character for "antiquity" in the names of *koicha* and of using that for "white" in the names of *usucha* has no historical basis. In fact, it is meaningless to use the character for "white" in names, as the "green" method for making powdered tea is no longer used.

In the cases of such products as *sencha* (high grade leaf-tea for making steeped green tea), which was developed in Uji in the first half of the eighteenth century, and *gyokuro* (the finest grade of *sencha*), which began to be sold in the mid-nineteenth century and was at first referred to as *bessai o-semmyō* (differently-processed green tea), names were used from the start as these were completely new products. With the rise in popularity of *senchadō* (the equivalent of chanoyu using leaf-tea instead of powdered tea), the production of *sencha* and *gyokuro* quickly spread to tea-producing districts far and wide. Names of varieties of green tea such as "*Kisen*" (joyous selection), "*Kawayanagi*" (river willow), "*Aoyanagi*" (green willow), and "*Karigane*" (cry of geese) have become a part of the Japanese vocabulary. *Sencha* and *gyokuro* names tend to use Chinese-sounding expressions and do not include the characters for "antiquity" and "white" which are commonly used with powdered tea. Some have names associated in some way with the city of Uji, or taken from poetic Japanese phrases. Examples of these would be "*Ikeno-o*" (pond-tail), "*Shiba-fune*" (firewood-boat), "*Tomo-shiraga*" (gray-haired-together), "*Aioi*" (paired existence), and "*Yamabuki*" (Japanese kerria). In recent years, innovative names have become prominent for powdered teas as well, due perhaps to the influence of *senchadō*.

玉露

別製御煎茗

煎茶道

喜撰 川柳
青柳 雁ヶ音

池の尾
柴舟 友白髪
相生 山吹

Afterword

The opening of the Meiji era brought with it the collapse of the feudal system, drastically transforming the world of powdered tea. In May of Meiji 40 (1907), at Kōshōji temple on the banks of the Uji River, a memorial service was held to honor the ancestors of the master tea producers of Uji, who left an indelible mark on the history of powdered tea through their efforts toward the progress and development of the industry. Displayed in the main hall of the temple were memorial tablets with the names of several dozen tea producer families and wooden plaques bearing the outline of a tea jar and the name of the family's most representative tea written in the center (photo, pp. 48–49). The ceremony was held to extol the achievements of the tea industry in Uji, but most of the old tea producer families were by that time no longer in business. The traditions of the feudal clan system related to powdered tea would soon be forgotten, and the changes in the tea naming practices were indicative of the beginning of a new and modern era. ☂

The Arts in Japanese Fiction: Tachihara's *Wind and Stone*

Patricia L. Parker

While Japanese gardens have often inspired painting or poetry, in fiction they are little more than setting.¹ *Yume wa Karen o* (旅は枯野を), a short novel by Tachihara Masaaki, harmonizes tradition with the contemporary in a love story developed through the discourse of the traditional arts. The Japanese garden becomes not merely the underlying metaphor but an inherent part of the plot. The characters recall the figures of the dramatic *noh* form. The novel vividly conveys the importance of the arts in the lives of contemporary Japanese who suffer the passions and conflicts of people of any time and place, but, here, the central conflict is between art and convention.

Born in Korea, the son of a Korean Zen priest, Tachihara (1926–81) held a lifelong interest in Japanese arts, especially literature and *noh*. Author of a number of novels and short stories, Tachihara also wrote a collection of essays on the Japanese garden. *Yume wa Karen o*, translated in 1992 as *Wind and Stone*,² demonstrates considerable knowledge of classical gardening texts and gardening theory and practice. Two other Tachihara novels (not available in English translation) — *Takigi Noh*, the name of the torchlit performance, and *Tsujigahana*, the name of an early textile design method — reflect his interest in traditional arts.

Japanese gardens are but one expression of the Japanese people's interest in nature. Originating in the sixth- and seventh-century Yamato plain (now the city of Nara), gardens had their basis in both the natural beauty of the Japanese landscape and in Shintō and Buddhist beliefs. The basic components — rocks, trees, and water — were once associated with the dwelling places of Shintō gods and still carry a spiritual quality. Since Shintō myths often concerned sexual activities of the gods, the sexuality of ancient Shintō beliefs is seen today in, for example, wooden phalluses and rocks shaped as

¹ An early version of this paper appeared in *The Sextant, the Journal of Salem State College*. Vol. VI, no. 1 (1995), pp. 14–20.

² Tachihara Masaaki, *Wind and Stone*. Tr. Stephen Kohl. Berkeley, CA: Stonebridge Press, 1992. Citations are to this text.

sexual organs. Tachihara modernizes this sexuality in a story of adultery inspired by a traditional garden.

The novel traces the course of a love affair. Shida Mizue is a contentedly married woman in her 30s when her husband hires landscaper Kase Yūsaku to build their garden. During the two months of construction, she sees Kase almost daily but hardly ever speaks to him. When the garden is completed and Kase has left, Mizue finds herself thinking about him. More significantly, she feels herself being watched by the rocks in the garden. When she realizes the source of her restlessness, she goes to see Kase who confesses he designed the garden to arouse her. Their affair becomes deeply satisfying to both of them. Kase stops seeing other women, but Mizue feels unable to leave her children in order to live with him, and Kase takes up with a young woman whom his mother would like him to marry. Though Mizue loves Kase and has no regrets, even when her husband ends the marriage, she cannot leave her children and in the end makes no decision at all. The story concludes with what Western readers may feel is the lack of finality that characterizes much Japanese fiction, but a close look at its imagery shows how the story achieves complete resolution.

Tachihara is known for the intricate construction of his novels. This work is divided into six chapters, entitled "Stones," "Trees," "Water," "The Garden Path," "The Flow," and "Wind" — all elements of the garden, nature in miniature. The images begin with the title of the book, the middle line from a famous poem by the seventeenth-century poet, Bashō. The full poem reads:

*Tabi ni yande
yume wa kareno o
kakemeguru*

Taken ill on a journey
And still my dreams roam about
Over withered fields (p. 11)

The title cites only the one line, enough for most educated readers to recognize and complete for themselves the full poem, much as Japanese conversation leaves sentences unfinished. The reader knows from the start that this novel will not dramatize its action but will present its story with the understatement of haiku.

Mizue's name has a somewhat unusual spelling for a woman's name, using the kanji meaning "water" and "big river" (水江). In the chapter of the same name, Mizue's emotions are described in fluid terms, and Kase hopes Mizue will "purify" the crude lust he experiences with his ex-wife. But water is not the garden component with which Kase associates Mizue. To him, she is "just like a stone that enhances a bland landscape" (p. 50). Kase refers

not to hard or unfeeling qualities in Mizue but to the transforming qualities he finds in the stones of the *roji*, the path through the garden leading to the tea house. Like the poet Bashō, whose travel poetry described not an external landscape but the emotional or transforming effect of what he saw, Kase seeks personal transformation through garden design. Kase's struggle to avoid a sense of the artificial or contrived is also "a struggle against himself" (p. 121). Making love to Mizue, he realizes "how emblematic she was of both the path and the garden it penetrated" (p. 83). Although *roji* translates as "path," it refers to the entire garden area in front of the door to the tea house, an area which at times contains stepping stones, stone lanterns, stone basins, and/or groves of trees. The purpose of the area is to prepare the visitor's mind properly for the upcoming Tea, which itself is an effort to achieve inner peace, self-forgetfulness, and harmony between participants. Placement of *roji* stones must be precise, though not necessarily symmetrical. "One could not enter the tea house unless one trod the path. Just walking the path itself was a source of joy" (p. 95). Looking at Mizue's body, Kase experiences the delicious anticipation of the peace, harmony, and self-forgetfulness he achieves when he makes love to her.

As Kase associates the mature woman's body with the garden path, he identifies Tamiko, the young woman his mother wishes him to marry, with the garden at Tōfukuji. Visiting the Kyoto garden, he recalls that on a previous visit he had found the garden "warm and wet and throbbing with life" (p. 101). Viewing the garden with Tamiko he notices the garden's "sexual immediacy," and as he takes Tamiko to bed that afternoon he visualizes the garden at Tōfukuji. But external landscape can alter his internal perception just as surely as he as gardener alters external landscape. Before meeting Tamiko he considered Tōfukuji lacking in "sophistication and depth" (p. 75), but his growing attachment to Tamiko leads him to regard the garden as "artless" and to view its extreme simplicity less critically.

Much of Mizue's attraction to Kase is her sense of his power as a creative artist. Kase believes in the "Way of Elegance" as the only path of true value, and for him the true way to elegance is the garden. Unconcerned with social convention, Kase is uncommitted to economic, political, or social values. Twice divorced, he chooses to spend New Year's holidays alone. He defies civility even at the cost of future business when he rudely refuses to construct a garden for a politician whose house is not to his liking. The foil character to the artistic Kase is Mizue's husband, Shida Eiji. A well-to-do businessman, Shida seems a dutiful, if somewhat distant, husband and father. Shida knows good kimono fabric and how to choose the best gardeners; however, Mizue finds his refined taste merely that of a dilettante, for his occupation belies him. Shida's occupation is unclean: his family business produces canned ham and pork products. Butchering and processing of animal products in Japan is still often associated with *burakumin*, a despised cast who, though racially no different from other Japanese, have for centu-

ries been treated as outcasts and social pariahs by not being allowed into better schools or more respectable occupations and living areas. While a Japanese reader may feel startled to learn that this cultivated and conscientious man makes his living through unclean work, both Western and Japanese readers may sense the irony in the contrast between Shida's cultivation of traditional arts and his prosaic, modern occupation. Mizue is critical. "Although Shida had elegant tastes and filled his life with every sort of refined pleasure, he was not a creative person" (p. 72). And Shida is the only character not described in terms of nature imagery: he is excluded from the garden.

Shida's image of Mizue, in contrast to Kase's garden metaphor, is cruel and ugly. In his anger over her infidelity, Shida visualizes his wife as a piece of meat hanging at the canning factory, ready to be ground into sausage. The brutality of the image contrasts sharply with the peaceful tea garden stones and suggests the true nature of this man whose interest in the arts pales beside the true artist. The metaphor clarifies Mizue's dissatisfaction with her husband and strengthens the reader's sympathy with Mizue and her infidelity.

If Mizue is stone, Kase is wind, "wind blowing among the stones on a barren mountain slope" (p. 18). Although at first Mizue is attracted to this wind among the stones, she finally comes to see Kase as one who can do nothing more than place the stones and then pass over them. Unable to commit himself to Mizue fully by accepting her children as a part of her, Kase's image of himself as stone becomes, at the end, desolate. When Kase looks at an illustration of a garden designed by the seventeenth-century ukiyoe artist, Moronobu Hishikawa, he is reminded of the famous poem by Bashō. For Kase, who despaired of the raw sexuality in his relationships before Mizue, the wild grass in Moronobu's illustration is identifiable with the withered field of Bashō's poem and suggests both the original designer's and his own sense of desolation. As Kase pictures himself in Moronobu's garden, complete with predatory birds, he "imagined in the garden a man going back and forth between . . . two women [seated on two rocks]. The unsettled state of the garden reflected the bleak desolation of the man" (p. 112). This image is the closest the reader comes to being informed that Kase feels torn between Mizue and Tamiko.

At the same time, the text of the poem suggests Mizue's plight. The journey of her love affair has rendered her not merely "ill," but "physically destroyed." She still loves Kase but she knows he lies to her, and as she looks at the source of that love, the garden, she sees its physical destruction paralleling her own, as if her affair had been reduced to "withered fields." Long past the point where she can find comfort in the traditional consolation of flower arranging and chanoyu, she seems close to mental breakdown. Like Bashō who could no longer travel, Mizue may realize deep within herself that the end of her affair has come, but her dreams continue as she looks at the rocks in the garden.

The reader familiar with the structure of *noh* may find a parallel between character relations in this novel and in the traditional drama. Mizue parallels the *shite*, the main character, the only character to wear a mask. The *shite* displays little individuality but may be almost an incarnation of some powerful emotion. In fact the reader learns little about Mizue except her feelings. We know nothing of her appearance, nothing of her daily life, nothing of her children. We do know that under duress she arranges flowers and engages in *chanoyu* for herself. Her intense passion for Kase increases throughout the story, causing the dissolution of her marriage and family. At the end she feels physically destroyed, in a collapse that may parallel the madness of some female *shite* characters. Tamiko recalls the *shitetsure*, usually a shadow of a character. Tamiko is young and so compliant that she neither expects nor asks anything from Kase, though she comes to love him. Kase resembles the *waki*, technically the "person at the side." In some plays the *waki* merely asks questions and lacks a personality or identity; in others, he is a kind of antagonist who conflicts or in some way interacts with the *shite*. Shida parallels the *wakitsure*, a foil character who plays a minimal role.

The resolution of the story — often a source of dissatisfaction among Western readers of Japanese fiction — comes not with a climax and denouement but arises from the garden imagery. When Kase begins to see Tamiko as a garden path, we realize that Mizue's important place in his life has been replaced by the younger woman. This has been the story of the love affair, and when that is finished, the narrative ends. Although we have had little or no description of either garden or character, the book conveys a strong visual sense. The overriding principle is beauty, not dramatic contrast. Conflict takes place less in the social arena than in the individual psyche. The realistic ending finds Mizue packing to leave her home, undecided about whether to continue with Kase, unclear about where to go with her children, and the possibility of death, as it was at the beginning, still open to her. Her once-smoothly functioning marriage, the garden that stirred her passions, and the love affair that seemed so fulfilling, have, like all things ephemeral, passed away.





Temae — Tea Procedure

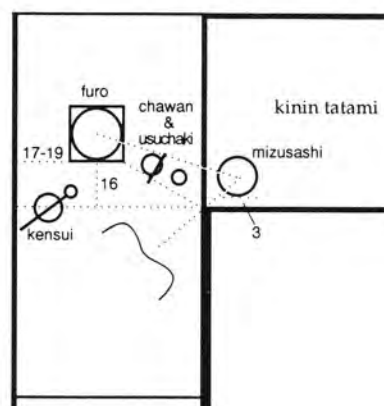
Yojōhan Furo Nagashidate

As with the ro version of the *nagashidate* temae, covered in the previous issue, this is among the tea-serving methods that are regarded as non-standard. It is a temae for intimate occasions when there is just one guest or perhaps two, and the host and guest(s) would like to converse at ease while the host prepares the tea.

On such an occasion, the tea that the host serves will be *usucha* or 'thin tea.' (There is no *koicha* version of this temae.) Furthermore, the tearoom will ideally be a small, cozy one no larger than four-and-a-half mats (*yojōhan*) in space.

The characteristic that gives this temae its friendly atmosphere is the host's position. Rather than sitting facing straight ahead as for a standard *furo* temae, the host sits diagonally facing the guest. To facilitate this, the positioning of the utensils, beginning with the *furo* itself, is quite different from a standard *furo* temae. Normally, the *shiki-ita* board on which the *furo* is placed is positioned 7 to 9 weaves of *tatami* away from the wall, but for this temae it is positioned 17 to 19 weaves away from it, whereby its longitudinal center is not quite in the center of the *tatami*. Otherwise, the actual preparation of the utensils is the same as for standard *furo usucha*.

Once the guest is seated in the tearoom, carry the sweets in to him or her, return to the *mizuya*, and close the *sadōguchi* door. Placing the prepared *mizusashi* near the threshold, to the side away from the guest, sit before the *sadōguchi*.



(1)



Open the sadōguchi door, and bow, to commence the temae (1).

(2)



Carry the mizusashi to the temae tatami, sit diagonally with body aimed at the corner of the kinin tatami, and place mizusashi in that corner of the kinin tatami, approximately 3 tatami weaves away from the tatami edges, as shown in the above diagram (2).

(3)



Return to the mizuya, hold the prepared chawan with the left hand (hereafter, L) and the usuchaki with the right hand (R), and carry them to the temae tatami. Sit diagonally, and simultaneously place the chawan and usuchaki in the positions shown in the diagram (3).



(4)

Again return to the mizuya, hold the prepared kensui in L, proceed to the temae tatami, and sit diagonally with body aimed at the corner of the kinin tatami. Set the kensui down to your side, not more than halfway across the half-mat line (4). Make sure you are seated properly, place hands on lap, and pause for concentration.



(5)

Pick up the chawan with L, transfer it to R, and place it in front of your knees, leaving room for the usuchaki (5).



(6)

Pick up usuchaki with R, and set it between chawan and knees (6).



(7)

In standard manner, take fukusa from obi, and fold it for wiping the usuchaki (7).



(8)

Purify the usuchaki, and place it where the chawan formerly was (8).



(9)

Refold fukusa, purify chashaku, and place chashaku on the usuchaki (9).



(10)

Take chasen from chawan and stand it to right of the usuchaki (10). Move chawan closer to knees. (If, according to the usual rules, the fukusa is *not* to be used for handling the kama lid, now return it to obi. If it is to be used, place it down near right knee with R.)



(11)

Take hishaku from kensui with L, hold it in the 'mirror pose,' and then take futaoki from kensui with R (11).



(12)

Place futaoki squarely in front of the furo (12).



(13)

With R, remove kama lid and rest it on futaoki (13). (Fukusa users: first pick up fukusa to do this; then place fukusa to left of left knee.)



(14)

Take chakin from chawan, and place it on kama lid (14).



(15)

Rehold hishaku for use, scoop hot water from kama, and pour it into chawan. Rest hishaku on kama in standard manner (15).



(16)

Pick up chasen with R, and do *chasen-tōshi* as usual (16). Return chasen to its place on tatami.



(17)

Pick up chawan with R, transfer it to L, and discard water into kensui. Wipe chawan with chakin (17). Return chawan to tatami, and return chakin to kama lid.



(18)

Take chashaku with R, place L fingertips on tatami, and invite the guest to take a sweet (18).



(19)

Pick up usuchaki with L, remove lid, and place lid in front of right knee. Scoop tea into chawan (19). Then return usuchaki and chashaku to their places.



(20)

In standard manner, remove mizusashi lid with R, hold it with L, regrasp it with R, and lean it against left-hand side of mizusashi (20).



(21)

Scoop ladleful of hot water, and pour suitable amount into chawan (21).



(22)

Return remainder of hishaku water to kama, and rest hishaku on kama in usual manner (22).



(23)

Whisk the tea (23). Return chasen to its place on tatami.



(24)

Pick up chawan, turn it to face the guest, and place it on adjacent tatami so it is approximately one chawan's width 'down' from the kinin tatami border (24). Bow in acknowledgement when the guest says he or she will partake of the tea. (Fukusa users: after the guest takes the first sip, pick up fukusa with R, and return it to your obi.)



(25)

When chawan is returned, place it briefly on L palm, and set it in front of knees. Scoop hot water, pour it into chawan (25), and return hishaku to kama in standard manner.



(26)

Discard chawan water into kensui (26). If, at this point, there is another guest to make tea for or the guest wishes another bowl of tea, wipe chawan with chakin and basically repeat from step 17.



(27)

If no more tea is to be prepared and the guest asks you to finish the temae, acknowledge this. Then place chawan in front of knees, bow, and tell the guest you will finish the temae (27).



(28)

Take hishaku from kama, rehold it for use, scoop cold water from mizusashi (28), and pour it into chawan.



(29)

Return hishaku to kama in standard manner (29).



(30)

Do *chasen-tōshi* as usual for finishing the temae (30). Return chasen to its place.



(31)

Discard chawan water into kensui, place chakin in chawan (31), and return chawan to front of knees. Place chasen in chawan.



(32)

Take chashaku with R. Then, (without moving kensui back), take fukusa from obi and fold it for wiping chashaku. Wipe chashaku, and set it on chawan (32). Dust fukusa off over kensui, and return it to obi.



(33)

With R, resituate usuchaki to the right — where it was placed at the beginning of the temae (33).



(34)

Pick up chawan with R, transfer it to L, and place it in its original position to the left of the usuchaki (34).



(35)

Take hishaku from kama, rehold it for use, and ladle cold water from mizusashi into kama (35).



(36)

Hold hishaku as in 'mirror pose' with L, and replace lid on kama with R, leaving it slightly ajar (36).



(37)

With aid of R, regrasp hishaku and rest it face down across kensui with L (37).



(38)

Take futaoki with R, transfer it to L, and place it in back of the kensui (38).



(39)

Pick up mizusashi lid with R, transfer it to L, and replace it on mizusashi with R (39).



(40)

At this point, the guest asks to inspect the usuchaki and chashaku. Bow in acknowledgement (40).



(41)

Pick up the chawan with R, and place it squarely in front of the furo (41).



(42)

Place usuchaki on L palm, and shift 'a half knee's width' to slightly more diagonal sitting position (42).



(43)

Place usuchaki in front of knees, take fukusa from obi and fold it for wiping usuchaki, and wipe usuchaki in the standard manner for placing it out for inspection (43).



(44)

Turn usuchaki so front faces the guest, and place it out on the adjacent tatami, slightly 'down' from border of kinin tatami (44). Return fukusa to obi.



(45)

Shift to former sitting position, and take chashaku from chawan with R (45). Transfer chashaku to L, again shift sitting position as before, and, in standard manner, place chashaku beside usuchaki on the adjacent tatami.



(46)

Shift to former sitting position. Pick up hishaku with L, and transfer it to R so the cup faces up and to the left. Pick up futao-ki with L, and transfer it to R (46).



(47)

Shift sitting position 'a half knee's width' to slightly less diagonal position, hold kensui with L (47), and, while rising to stand up, swivel to directly face the furo. Then, in the standard manner, turn in the direction away from the guest, and return the items to the mizuya.



(48)

Return to temae tatami, and sit in front of the chawan. Pick up the chawan and return it to the mizuya (48).



(49)

Return to temae tatami, and sit facing the mizusashi. Pick up the mizusashi (49), and return it to the mizuya.



(50)

Sit just outside the sadōguchi to make sure the guest has finished inspecting the usuchaki and chashaku. Then go sit directly in front of the returned items. Answer any questions the guest might have (50).



(51)

Set the usuchaki on L palm, hold the chashaku with R (51), and exit the tearoom.



(52)

Sit just outside the sadōguchi, place the items to the side, bow together with the guest(s) (52), and close the door. ☂

Book Review

Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why. By Ellen Dissanayake. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995. xxi + 298 pp., including bibliography and indexes. US\$16.95, paperback. Originally published in 1992 by The Free Press.

Adopting the species-centered view as the foundation for our personal understanding of art and life in a wider sense, we can better appreciate the continuity of ourselves and our art making with nature. Artistic behavior and response, which Western society treats as an ornamental and dispensable luxury, are really essential parts of our nature. Contemporary Western society's remoteness from nature and the body has obscured and displaced the form-giving and elaborating propensities that . . . are inherent in our biological makeup. Our philosophy of art, which either exalts its subject or "problematizes" it past comprehension, remains unaware that art's distinctiveness resides not entirely in its disinterested stratospheric isolation but in its primordial biological rootedness. If a species-centered approach can make clear that the arts are as intrinsic and imperative in our lives as our lovers, our children, and our gods, it deserves the attention of all who claim to care deeply for art or the arts. (pp. 224–25)

This summary appeal, which concludes Ellen Dissanayake's most recent volume, *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why*, might serve well as an effective preface to a revised edition that would also include her first book investigating the subject, *What Is Art For?* published in 1988 also by the University of Washington Press. Yet, a single volume combining both of these fascinating essays would be no small commitment on the part of an avid reader, for *Homo Aestheticus* alone is unusually demanding. Those "art educators, art therapists and craftspeople" Ellen Dissanayake identifies as her primary audience will be well advised to have at their fingertips substantial reference material, notably the *Oxford English Dictionary* or at least the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, a hefty volume defining art terms, and *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Not that Dissanayake has left any stones unturned in her effort to substantiate her arguments or clarify her basis of analysis. *Homo Aestheticus* —

the text of which numbers only 225 pages — is a remarkably learned study, with 27 pages containing 166 explanatory notes and 394 references that cite 344 separate works.

The richness of the length and breadth of human experience explored and the density of the author's original thinking are at once what make this book stimulating, provocative, and, at times, exhausting reading. As a development out of her earlier essay, *What Is Art For?* which examined the question of why art should exist at all, *Homo Aestheticus* introduces the "aesthetic or artistic human" who — when compared to *Homo faber* (the tool user), *Homo erectus* (who walked upright), *Homo ludens* (playful), and *Homo sapiens* (wise) — is the key for understanding not only what art is, but also that it is intrinsic (natural) to human behavior — not imposed (cultural) through learning.

By citing copious examples of human behavior in cultures throughout the world over thousands of years — and many of these startling and illuminating facts come from references to significant research by others — Dissanayake systematically and carefully regards the culturally learned practices such as dance, song, performance, visual display, and poetic speech to be universally common tendencies of the aesthetic or artistic human (*Homo aestheticus*) to "make special" events which are critical to the development and survival of the species.

At least some behavioral scientists may have failed to recognize art as universal and biological because, like the larger society to which they belong, they consider art to be either totally "useless" or something created in the service of sociopolitical ends. In the opposite camp, art lovers may recoil from biological and universalist explanations of art as a result of their own mistaken adherence to a now untenable tradition of considering mind and body, or the soul and body, to be separate, and from a prejudice that distorts science into something pitilessly mechanistic and reductionist. Each side misunderstands the other, and both are affected by the limited and confused ideas that have come to characterize twentieth-century thought about art. (p. xiii)

Thus begins one of the book's serious themes: Dissanayake's critical assessment of the traditional Western and Eurocentric bias in art, and the mentality of "the Great Books" that has not only neglected, but has also oppressed non-Western cultures and the increasing numbers of Western minorities who have become visible in modern multicultural society. At the center of the confused state of the arts today, she sees, not surprisingly, the theorists and defenders of "Postmodernism" as the most offensive of culprits, with their vociferous dissatisfactions with established notions of "fine" and "high" art for having failed in resolving social inequities. In so many words, Dissanayake's disenchantment with both postmodernist theory and practice is that they have 'thrown the baby out with the bath water.'

While appreciative of the “fresh air” provided by postmodernist challenges and heightened consciousness, she rejects its “brutally impenetrable theory” on the grounds, first, that it is inaccessible to most ordinary people and, second, for “the trashy clutter [it leaves] at ground level.” (p. xiv)

The chief purpose of *Homo Aestheticus* is to build, from varied academic perspectives, an argument that art is as normal and as necessary a behavior of human beings as talking, working, playing, learning, socializing, loving, and caring; indeed, certain intrinsic aesthetic tendencies in our species — many of which are shared with other species in nature — have made it possible for us to go about those activities in ways that are so very special that universally recognizable artistic patterns have developed. Moreover, these activities are cognitive; not only are we innately artistic, but we know that we are.

In the Introduction, Dissanayake poses one of her first provocative questions, which also forms a general framework for her far-reaching considerations: “How much have we improved upon or how far have we strayed from a core human nature? Is that primitive self something to fear, guard against, and amend, or something to exalt and return to?” (p. 6) Her answers engage more than half of this fascinating discourse, focusing considerable attention on early or precivilized cultures and the tribal, premodern form-giving that typified human response to the “affordances” of nature. In her enthusiastic acknowledgement of Marianna Torgovnick’s *Gone primitive: Savage intellects, modern lives*, published in 1990, Dissanayake agrees that even today’s New Age exotic tourism can be understood as part of the continuum of the three to four million years of evolution; that “‘going primitive’ may be viewed as trying . . . to go home”; or, in Dissanayake’s words, part of the process of our learning that “‘home’ is our human nature. . .” (p. 7)

Among the efforts of contemporary people throughout the world to gain or reclaim spiritual direction — adapting motifs from other traditions, the involvement with spiritual practices of native traditional cultures, using natural materials, making kinds of art or performances, giving a raw or unfinished quality to one’s work — one sees a “borrowing” or “adapting” of archetypal symbols as a means of engaging more fully in life, and as a means of recovery from spiritual bankruptcy. However, she warns, “We need to be made aware of the less-than-fully-conscious attitudes that lurk within our interest in premodern peoples.” (p. 7) Undoubtedly, such efforts underscore the deficits of modern and postmodern society, but throughout history, they have also often been used to satisfy preconceptions that are imperialist, elitist, racist, and sexist.

Dissanayake describes her approach to art as a behavior as “species-centered” and interchangeable “with ‘Darwinian’ to suggest that our evolution as a species unifies us as much as or more than our cultural and individual variability divides us. . .” (p. 227, n. 2) Further, this “species-centrist” approach to the nature of human art must understand that it is both humanity and the humanities that have made us what we are, but that they are not replaceable studies, one for the other.

One by one, Dissanayake tackles the plethora of those who have either failed to lift the shrouds that have veiled the Western notion of art, or have simply ignored it . . . "even biologists and social scientists who more than anyone should have noticed that engaging with the arts is as universal, normal, and obvious in human behavior as sex or parenting." (p. xiii)

The titles of the first six chapters suggest not only the expansiveness of the subject matter, but also the specific nature of the progression of Dissanayake's argument: "Why Species-Centrism?"; "Biology and Art: The Implications of Feeling Good"; "The Core of Art: Making Special"; "Dromena, or 'Things Done': Reconciling Culture and Nature"; "The Arts as Means of Enhancement"; "'Empathy Theory' Reconsidered: The Psychobiology of Aesthetic Responses." But it is the seventh and final chapter, "Does Writing Erase Art?" that addresses the development and practice of art during the past two centuries wherein Western culture has undergone significant and dramatic social changes. And it is here that the author draws blood, as it were, from the society that — whether or not one appreciates or ignores them — gave birth to modernist and postmodernist theories of art. "In light of the political calamities and barbarisms of the mid-twentieth century — totalitarianism of the right and left, genocide, the possibility of nuclear annihilation — the modernists' faith in human intelligence and their belief in the progress and perfectibility of human existence seem as antiquated and untenable as medieval theology." (pp. 200–01)

Seeing the leaders of modernist art (such as Joyce, Mann, Proust, Eliot, Stravinsky, Picasso, Nolde) as experimentors, expressing through distortion and abstraction an underlying reality, Dissanayake sees, in contrast, the postmodernists embracing discontinuity and chaos of life "without attempting to counteract or transcend it or trying to define any eternal elements within it"; a tolerance (quoting David Harvey) "'which finally amounts to indifference.'" (p. 201) And here, once more, she invokes the "Darwinian metanarrative which discerns a few encouraging handholds that should provide escape from the abyss and restore access to a world of human meaning and human reality." (p. 202)

There are two somewhat troublesome issues about *Homo Aestheticus*: one is a seeming omission, and the other an uncharacteristic and uneasy compression in the exposition of Dissanayake's argument in the final chapter — but of the latter, admittedly, it would require more than one very careful reading to know for certain. While there are numerous references to premodern and tribal Eastern cultures, there is no specific attention given to the great religious (sacred) and metaphysical arts of Asia, nor to the continuing presence of disciplined ceremonial or ritual activities in the East that conceivably encode messages about reality through highly evolved artistic means. However, this is not to suggest that *Homo Aestheticus* is in any way remote for those interested in Asian studies.

Nor is the fret concerning the density of the discussion of modern hyper-literacy in the final chapter intended to raise doubts about Ellen Dissanayake's thoroughness or her overall thesis. But one has the sense that the final chapter

could easily be developed into a separate volume altogether. In the context of comparing oral cultures (eight-ninths of human history) with literate cultures — the former being personal and involved, the latter impersonal and detached — she points to a reliance on reading and writing as both the *raison d'être* and the failure of postmodern thought, literacy so powerful and influential that it “not only erases art but has influenced the practitioners and apologists of postmodernist theory in ways that seem not to be evident to them.” (p. 203)

In this complex concluding chapter, made dense by a provocative selection of references, Dissanayake analyzes concepts in the postmodernist canon that she believes inherently serve to distance us from reality and, in their way, “make alienation and the abyss special.” (p. 221) And she provides considerable food for thought with her brief sketch of literacy over the forty-thousand-year-old history of modern humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*). Counting a generation as 25 years, there have been some 1600 generations, 1300 of which lived as nomadic hunter-gatherers, with only 300 generations having become settled agriculturalists; there have been only 150 generations since writing was invented (circa 4000 B.C.), requiring the subsequent development of alphabets (pictographs, ideographs, etc.) before non-specialists (those not priests or scribes) could benefit; only 20 generations have had the advantage of information afforded by the invention of the printing press (five hundred years ago); meaning, ultimately, that only 20 out of 1600 generations have had the potential opportunity to learn to read and write, with the eventual number of actual readers fewer still.

As she traces the development of cultural literacy from the time of Plato, she exposes the deepening of the accompanying alienation from the realities of nature. Whereas the written word is inclined to be a detached reference to a thing, the spoken word is more inclined to represent the thing itself. “To the primitive and to the traditional religious devotee everywhere, the statue *is* the god, the presence of the god, as the word *oak* is an oak and the stars’ names are part of the stars themselves. Primitive carvings and masks are embodiments of the spirit; both participate in reality as does, for that matter, the persons themselves who do not feel themselves alone in ultimate solitude.” (p. 207)

The weight of so much critical thought is not lacking in a sense of humor. Nor is it lacking in the kinds of meaningful, ordinary parallels to which most of us can relate: the familiar ways in which mockingbirds embellish their singing, or the unusual way bowerbirds decorate their nests. One of Dissanayake’s 394 human references is *Lame Deer*, an American Sioux medicine man, whose lengthy meditation on an old cooking pot is given a full page near the end of the book:

... We Indians live in a world of symbols and images where the spiritual and the commonplace are one. . . . What to you seems commonplace seems to us wondrous through symbolism. This is funny, because we don’t even have a word for symbolism, yet we are all wrapped up in it. You have the word, but that is all.” (p. 215)

Homo Aestheticus is heady stuff, and could serve as an essential reading list for a lifetime.

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Japanese Historical Periods

Asuka period, 538–645
Hakuhō period, 645–710
Nara period, 710–794
Heian period, 794–1192
Kamakura period, 1192–1336
Muromachi period, 1336–1568
Momoyama period, 1568–1603
Edo period, 1603–1868
Modern period, 1868–

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