SHIBUI

SUBTLE ELEGANCE

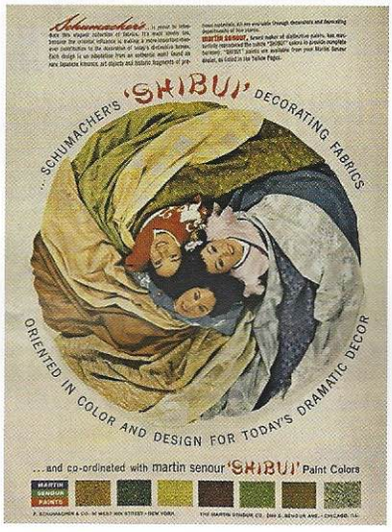


Plate 1-8 (above) *Advertisement for Schumacher's Shibui decorating fabrics and coordinated paints by Martin Senour*, published in *House Beautiful* 102/9 (September 1960), p. 66. Elizabeth Gordon encouraged selected home furnishing and paint companies to manufacture "*Shibui*" lines of products.

Shibui*, the adjective form of the noun *shibusa* or *shibumi, has the literal meaning of something possessing an astringent taste. Its usage dates back to the Muromachi period. By the seventeenth century, the term had come to describe a distinct sense of beauty, understated and well crafted, exquisite but not overly sweet, the opposite of showiness or gaudiness. The word conveys a sense of elegance and refinement, sophisticated simplicity, tranquility, natural imperfection, and modesty. It is closely associated with the *wabi-sabi* aesthetics of the Japanese tea ceremony of *chanoyu*, and is often used interchangeably with the word *suki* that is used to describe the aesthetic of tea rooms (*sukiya*).

Katsura figured prominently in the mind of Elizabeth Gordon (1906–2000), editor-in-chief of *House Beautiful* magazine from 1941 to 1964, when she set out to explain the beauty of Japanese design and its relevance to the modern American lifestyle in two issues of her magazine (August and September 1960). In fact, she used images of the complex on the cover of both these issues, declaring in the caption for the photograph of the main *shoin* buildings on the first issue's cover

Plate 1-9 (below) *Lobby of the Okura Hotel, Tokyo*, 1962. Designed by Taniguchi Yoshiro (1904–1979). Unchanged since the time of its design, this quietly elegant room, with its white paper *shōji* screens accented with finely textured and patterned latticework, and pale wood ceiling and wall surfaces, reflects a contemporary interpretation of the *shibui* aesthetic in Japanese architectural design of the 1960s, influenced by interest then in the Katsura Imperial Villa.

that Katsura was "a distillation of all that is most beautiful in Japanese architecture, gardening, and interiors—a fitting first glimpse of an issue devoted to an interpretation of Japan and its centuries-old concepts of beauty expressed in all facets of daily life."[10] Gordon used the Japanese word *shibui*, which she described as "easy-to-live-with beauty," as her overarching theme for these issues, titling the first, "*Shibui*—The Word for the Highest Level of Beauty," and the second, "How to Be *Shibui* with American Things." Following on the success of these issues, she organized a traveling exhibition on *shibui* that toured eleven American museums between 1961 and 1964.

Because Elizabeth Gordon was responsible for making this word, and related aesthetic concepts, the linchpin of the Japanese aesthetic vocabulary in the West, it is worth discussing why she chose to feature *shibui* and Japanese aesthetics generally in her magazine. Her initial interest in Japanese design followed her exposure to Japanese furnishings in the homes of Americans who had been in Japan during the early postwar Occupation period and the concurrent permeation of Japanese goods into the American marketplace. As

The Sumiya, located in Kyoto's historic Shimabara entertainment district, is the finest extant example of an Edo period *ageya*, an elegant restaurant and banquet hall where the highest ranking geisha (*taiyū*) entertained affluent male clients. Originally constructed in 1641, it was greatly expanded in 1787. Elizabeth Gordon prominently featured many illustrations of its rooms and architectural details in her August 1960 *House Beautiful* issue on *shibui*, though there she described it as "a famous Kyoto residence … now open to the public … a good example of the *shoin* style of architecture."[18] Although related aesthetically to Katsura, the Sumiya's greater opulence derives from its function. In fact, it combined in a single structure both *sukiya* and *shoin* elements, which are seen in separate buildings at Katsura.

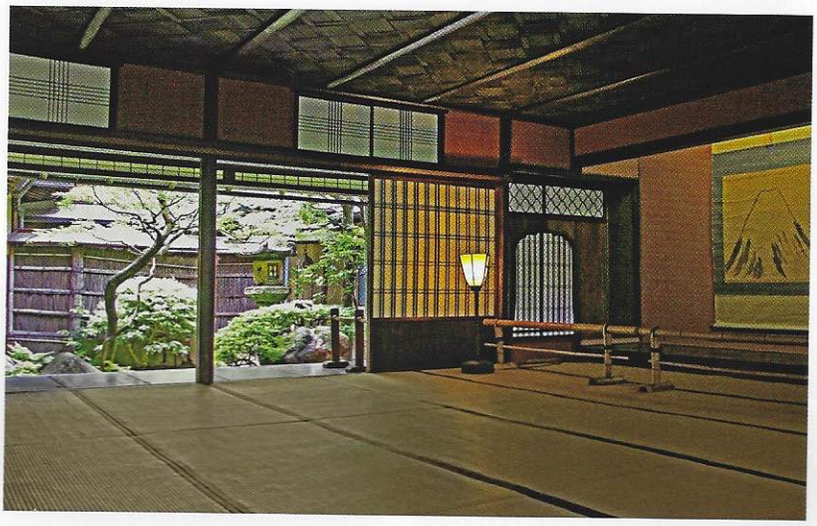
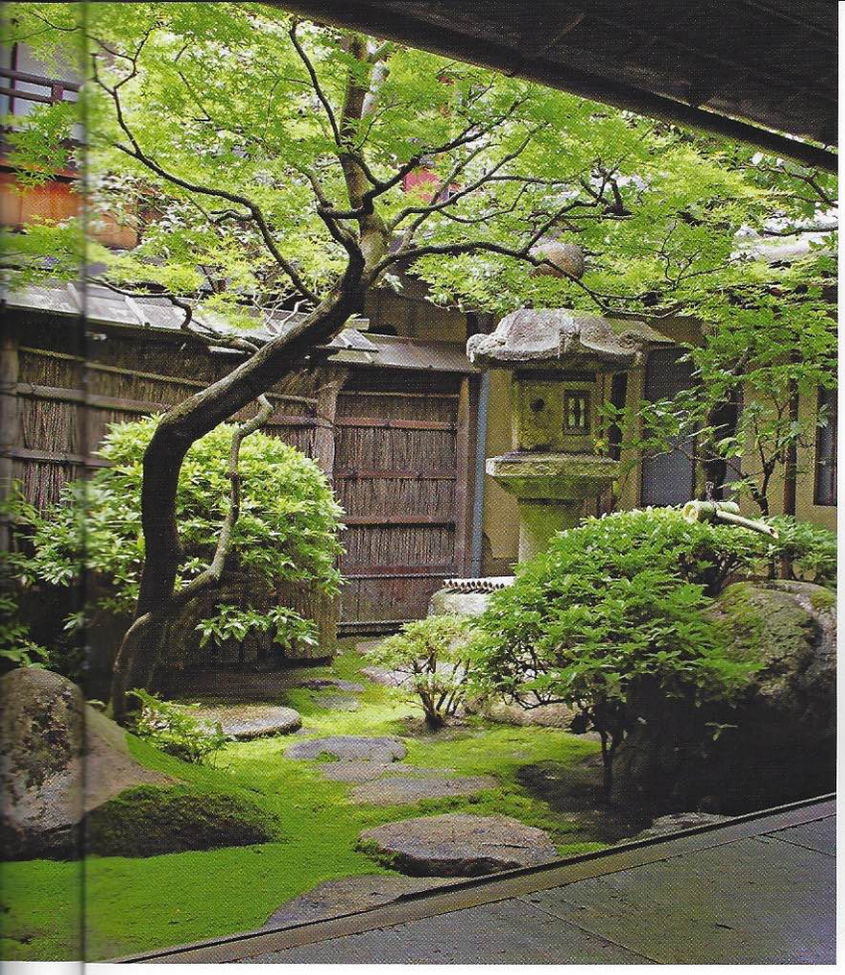


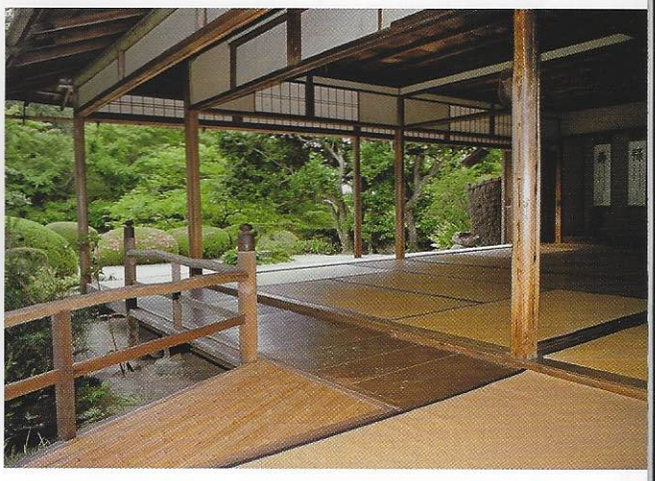
Plate 1-10 (left) *Interior of the Ajiro no Ma (Net Pattern Room) on the first floor of the Sumiya banquet hall, Shimabara licensed district, Kyoto.* The room takes its name from the interlocking lattice pattern of the wooden ceiling planks.

editor of a prominent magazine for style-conscious readers, she wanted her magazine not only to reflect current fashions but to set them. A staunch advocate of a more comfortable alternative to the rigid anonymity of orthodox modernist architecture, Gordon initiated a "Pace Setter House" program in 1946 to showcase modern-style houses that she deemed humanistic and livable.[11] Her attitude was much influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959; see page 130) and his concept of organic architecture. Indeed, two key members of her editorial team when she produced her Japan issues, Curtis Besinger (1914–1999) and John DeKoven Hill (1920–1996), were disciples of Wright.

Gordon's highlighting of *shibui* was also tied to critiques of post-war American affluence raised by economist John Kenneth Galbraith (1908–2006) in his popular book, *The Affluent Society*.[12] Just months after that book's release, Gordon editorialized about it in the November 1958 issue of *House Beautiful*, maintaining that "[t]aste, discrimination, and a maturing sense of appropriateness" was what she saw in the "homes of America."[13] As Robert Hobbs has observed, "[o]ver the next few years, her magazine embarked on an educational campaign to teach its readership to "discern differences between ostentation and true value."[14] This was the conceptual basis for her emphasis on *shibui*.

Gordon's presentation of *shibui* was remarkably sophisticated, derived from her steadfast study of Japanese culture over a five-year period preceding her magazine's feature issues in 1960. Her research included four field trips to Japan during 1959 and 1960, totaling sixteen months.[15] She became acquainted with or quoted many authorities in her magazine, including Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904; see page 133) and Yanagi Sōetsu (1889–1961; see page 138), whom she met in Tokyo in December 1959 and whose definition of *shibui* she paraphrased at length.[16] She also met or corresponded with a number of high-profile Japanese design professionals, including architect





Yoshimura Junzō, one of the designers of the International House of Japan.

Although she titled her *House Beautiful* issue "*Shibui*," she also introduced many other related Japanese aesthetic terms that she described as either dependent upon *shibui* (*wabi-sabi*, for example) or as expressing what she described as less exalted forms of beauty: *hade* (bright and exuberant beauty), *iki* (chic and sophisticated beauty), and *jimi* (somber and proper beauty).[17]

Plate 1-11 (above left) *The inner courtyard garden adjacent to the Ajiro no Ma at the Sumiya.*

Plate 1-12 (above right) *View of the main room and garden at the Shisendō, the former residence of the scholar Ishikawa Jōzan*, constructed in 1641. As described in *House Beautiful*, when opened for the summer to its adjacent garden, the exposed framework of this *sukiya shoin*-style house reveals how the interior rooms function as one large open space.[19]

Plate 1-13 (top) *Transom (ranma) partition in the Matsu no Ma (Pine Viewing Room) at the Sumiya banquet hall, Shimabara licensed district, Kyoto.* Elizabeth Gordon commented on this wooden grille attached to the ceiling, a common interior architectural element that allows for ventilation and light between rooms. Note the elegant cloud-shaped metal nail-head covers at the post-and-beam junctures.

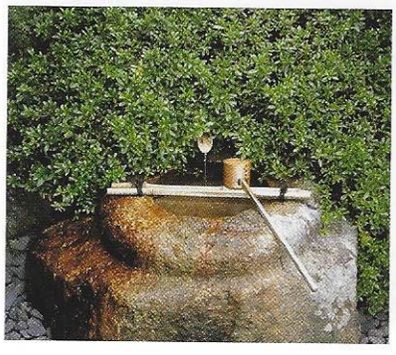
Plate 1-14 left) *Sakura (cherry) bark tea caddy, made in Kakunodate, Akita, Japan.* Beech wood covered with waxed cherry bark, height 11.5 cm. The lustrous natural wood finish of this traditional craft of northern Japan radiates a quiet beauty much admired by Elizabeth Gordon, who included several of these caddies in her *House Beautiful* issues on *shibui*.

WABI AND SABI

RUSTIC AND WITHERED ELEGANCE

The words *wabi* and *sabi* have been closely linked to the aesthetics of the *chanoyu* tea ceremony since the time of Murata Shukō (1421?-1502). He described his preferences for using as tea wares inexpensive, locally made utilitarian vessels (instead of more finely wrought Chinese objects) as *wabi-suki*, an expression that, by the seventeenth century, had evolved into the phrase *wabi-cha* (poverty tea). His followers, Takeno Jōō (1502–1555) and Sen no Rikyū (1521–1591), perfected and popularized this tea aesthetic, which remains closely associated with *chanoyu* today.[20] Objects used for *wabi*-style tea ceremonies, although seemingly simple and humble in appearance, are among the most costly and desirable tea ceremony products of all.

The origin of the *wabi* style of *chanoyu* is usually described as emerging from Zen Buddhism's philosophy of worldly detachment, simplicity, purity, and humility. Indeed, all the early *wabi* tea masters were devout Zen Buddhists. However, aesthetic values implicit in *wabi* and *sabi* already existed prior to Zen's introduction to Japan. The word *sabi* appeared in Japan's earliest native language (*waka*) poetry anthology of the eighth century, the *Manyōshū* (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves), where it described a wistful melancholia for exquisite beauty that vanished with the vicissitudes of time. By the eleventh century, this sentiment came to be expressed with the term *mono no aware* (the "pathos of things"). A fourteenth-century Kamakura period courtly poet and Buddhist hermit, Yoshida Kenkō (1283?–1350?), made this aesthetic the basis of his influential *Tsurezuregusa* (Essays in Idleness), and his writing was well known and quoted by the early *chanoyu* tea masters.



Difficult to translate, *wabi* and *sabi* are today acclaimed, along with *shibui* and *suki*, as the "essence of Japanese beauty."[21] *Wabi* means desolate or lonely, and embodies appreciation of a rustic beauty in natural imperfections, and celebrates the noble spirit of poverty and humility. *Sabi* means rusted, lonesome, or dreary, and aesthetically evokes sorrow for the fragility of life.

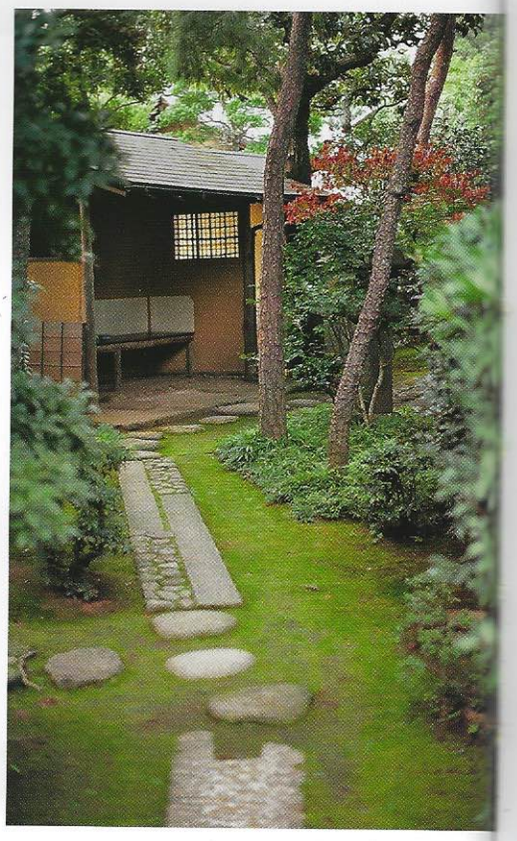
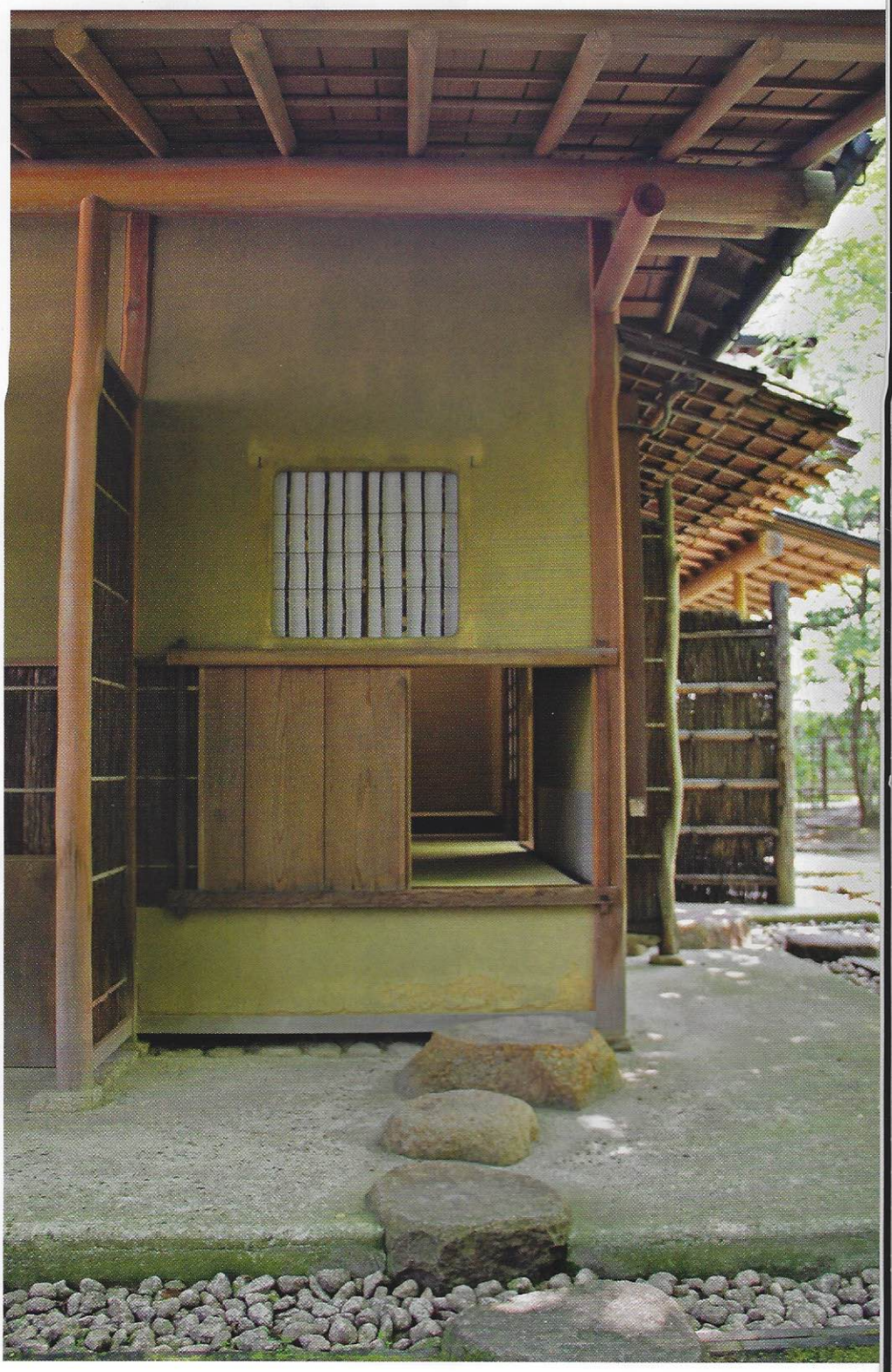


Plate 1-15 (opposite right) *Machiai (waiting shelter) in a tea house garden*, early 20th century, Toyama Memorial Museum, Kawashima, Hiki-gun, Saitama Prefecture. Guests reach the tea house by passing through a garden laid out along a path (*roji*) designed as a transition space between the everyday world and the sanctuary of the tea room. The main architectural feature within these gardens is a small rustic shelter (*machiai*), a bench protected by three walls, and an open front. There, guests wait to enter the tea room or rest during gaps between tea services.

Plate 1-16 (opposite left) *Stone water basin in the garden of the Jōnangu Shrine, Kyoto*. Within tea gardens, guests stop to purify their hands and mouth at a stone water basin (*chōzubachi*), often of a type placed low to the ground (*tsukubai*) and sometimes, as here, formed from a natural boulder. In addition, this basin features a bamboo pipe (*suikinkutsu*) through which water courses and hits the basin with a pleasing, splashing sound, creating an aural component to the experience.

Plate 1-17 (right) *Tea room at the Rakusuien, Fukuoka*, 1995. Tea gardens lead guests along a path to the tea house where they enter via a *nijiri guchi*, a small "crawl door" through which they must bow to enter.



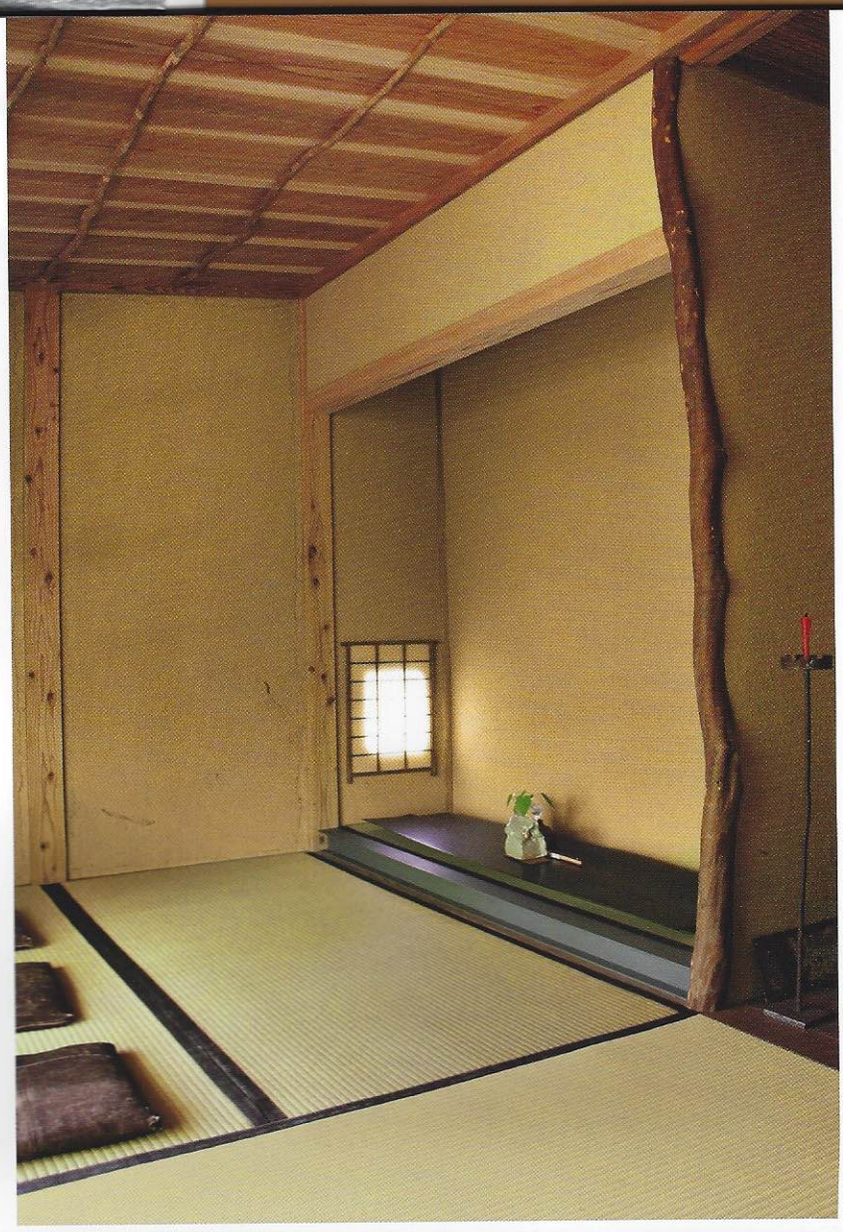
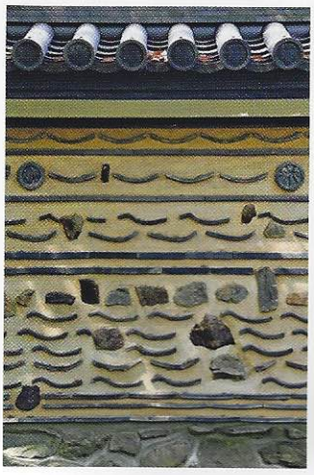


Plate 1-18 a & b (right, above and below) *Two views of the four and a half tatami mat tea room in the "Kitchen House" of artist Jinzenji Yoshiko, Kyoto, Japan*, 2008. Designed by Ms Jinzenji. This small contemporary tea room evokes purity in keeping with the principles of *wabi* and *sabi*, evident in the muted coloration of the earthen walls, the unpainted wooden ceiling slats and posts, and a naturally twisted tree trunk to the right of the *tokonoma* alcove. The weathered looking leather-covered *zabuton* cushions and the light streaming through the paper-covered *shōji* sliding doors impart an air of modernity.

Plate 1-19 (below) *Karatsu ware tea bowl of the Okugōrai (Old Korean) type*, late 16th–early 17th century. Glazed stoneware, 7.6 x 14 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 32-62/6. Photo: Joshua Ferdinand. Yanagi Sōetsu described the *wabi-sabi* beauty found in tea bowls as "the beauty of the imperfect and the beauty that deliberately rejects the perfect … a beauty lurking within."[29] *Chanoyu* tea bowls endowed with *wabi-sabi* aesthetics generally lack decorative embellishment and emphasize the tactile forms of the bowls themselves with natural or minimal application of glazes in subdued, earthy colors. The understated beauty of Karatsu tea bowls are among those most revered by *chanoyu* tea masters. The long, natural drip of glaze at the front of this magnificent bowl is particularly cherished. (For other tea bowls, see Plates 2-30 and 2-37.)

Plate 1-20 (right) *Detail of the perimeter wall at Shōfukuji, Fukuoka,* Japan's first Zen temple, founded in Japan in 1195. Made of mud embedded with old broken clay tiles and rocks for structural support, walls like this are a common sight at Japanese Zen temples and traditional residences, especially in the Fukuoka area, when they were first made during the late sixteenth century as part of reconstruction efforts after Japan's conflicts with the Korean peninsula. Their incorporation of old and broken pieces of roof tiles expresses the aesthetic of *sabi.*

Plate 1-21 (far right) *Moss-covered garden lantern at the Ōkōchi Sansō Villa, Arashiyama, Kyoto.* This lantern, old at the time it was installed in its present location in the garden surrounding the villa of the Japanese film actor Ōkōchi Denjirō (1898–1962), helps to infuse the estate grounds with the spirit of *wabi* and *sabi.*



Westerners first became enamored with the aesthetic concepts of *wabi* and *sabi* through the writings of Okakura Kakuzō (see page 136), especially *The Book of Tea* (1906), in which he explained how *chanoyu* owed its values to Zen Buddhist monastic practices. Okakura did not use the words *wabi* and *sabi,* however. Instead, he described these aesthetics as "Zennism." Writing several decades later, D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966; see page 137) avowed these same values in his book, *Zen and Japanese Culture,* where he defined *wabi* as "the worshipping of poverty" and *sabi* as "rustic unpretentiousness or archaic imperfection, apparent simplicity or effortlessness in execution, and richness in historical associations."[22] Yanagi Sōetsu (see page 138), champion of Japan's folk art aesthetics, also wrote about *wabi* and *sabi,* describing them as a hidden "irregular," and imperfect beauty, and also linked them to *shibui.*[23]

Influenced by Yanagi, Elizabeth Gordon helped to popularize the concepts through her inclusion of a short article about them in her *House Beautiful* magazine *Shibui* issue, where she explained *wabi* and *sabi* as underlying principles of *shibui.*[24] Gordon noted the presence of *sabi* in gardens that possess a "tranquil and serene atmosphere," and *wabi* as a design concept in which "nothing is over-emphasized or extravagant or exaggerated." She further noted that "the humility in *wabi,* the hint of sadness in the recognition of perfection in any human achievement, springs from the knowledge that with the bloom of time comes the first embrace of oblivion."[25]

The words *wabi* and *sabi* are perhaps the most familiar, and also overused, Japanese aesthetic terms in the present day. Leonard Koren (b. 1948), a consultant and prolific writer specializing in design and aesthetics, helped to popularize these words in his 1994 book *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets and Philosophers,* which contrasted Japanese and Western ideals of beauty.[26] They "became a talking point for a wasteful culture intent on penitence and a touchstone for designers of all stripes, including some makers of luxury goods."[27] More recently, these words have been applied to a wide variety of crafts, fine arts, commercial products, architectural designs, and even interpersonal relationships.[28] Clearly, usage of these terms has strayed far from their original meanings. Nowadays, it has become popular to associate *wabi-sabi* with virtually anything having abbreviated and suggestive qualities, and products created from rustic and tactile, seemingly old, natural materials.

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IKI

STYLISH, SOPHISTICATED ELEGANCE

The aesthetic of *iki*, first noted in writings of the second half of the eighteenth century, described the taste preferences of the most sophisticated men and women participants (clients, geisha, and Kabuki actors) of the thriving entertainment quarters, called the Ukiyo or "Floating World," of Japan's urban centers, particularly Edo (Tokyo), Osaka, and Kyoto (see also Plate 3-6). It celebrated the dynamic sense of coquetry that defined their amorous but strained interrelationships, and captured the boldness and *joie de vivre* attitude with which they lived under the specter of a politically repressive military regime. This sensibility was manifested visually in their tasteful, finely made clothing, refined accoutrements, and the elegantly appointed banquet halls and tea rooms they frequented,

Iki was one of the aesthetic words briefly mentioned by Elizabeth Gordon in her *shibui* issue of *House Beautiful*, which she described as "stylish, à la mode, smart…, [the Japanese] equivalent of France's chic."[30] It has more recently been translated as "urbane, plucky stylishness."[31]

Although Gordon regarded *shibui* as the highest category of

Plate 1-22 (opposite) Kitagawa Utamaro (1753?–1806), *Folding Fan Seller, Round Fan Seller, Barley Pounder (Ogi Uri, Uchiwa Uri, Mugi Tsuki)*, from the series *Female Geisha Section of the Yoshiwara Niwaka Festival (Seiro niwaka onna geisha no bu)*. Polychrome woodblock print, ink and color on paper with mica ground, 37.5 x 24.8 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 32-143/139. Photo: Mel McLean. In this print, a genre known as *mitate* (humorous visual allusions to classical themes in *ukiyoe* prints), a group of geisha entertain attendees at a festival by parodying various types of merchants.

Plate 1-23 (right) Katsukawa Shunshō (1726–1792), *The Kabuki Actor Ichikawa Danjūro V in the Role of Gokuin Senuemon*, 1782, from a set of five prints showing actors in roles from the play *Karigane Gonin* (Karigane Five Men). Polychrome woodblock print, ink and color on paper, 30.8 x 14.8 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 32-143/71 A. Photo: Tiffany Matson. Kuki Shūzō commented that purely geometric designs, especially those featuring parallel lines which created patterns of vertical stripes, as seen in the kimono design of this actor, express the essence of *iki*.[32]

refined beauty, not all critics agree. Widespread Japanese intellectual interest in promoting *iki* as an aesthetic that represented the essential spirit of the Japanese people had arisen in the early twentieth century, initially through the writings of philosopher Kuki Shūzō (1888–1941), whose father, Kuki Ryūichi, a high-ranking Meiji government official in charge of cultural institutions, had served as mentor to Okakura Kakuzō (see page 136). Kuki Shūzō's mother, a former geisha who eventually divorced his father, had carried on a romantic relationship with Okakura, and this enabled her son to develop a close spiritual bond with him that influenced the trajectory of his philosophical inquiries.

Kuki Shūzō wrote his seminal work, *The Structure of Iki* (*Iki no kōzō*), while living in Paris in 1926 and published it in Japan in 1930. It is no coincidence that the European intellectual climate in which he immersed himself in Paris influenced his choice of emphasis and the manner in which he discussed this aesthetic, as did his exposure there

Plate 1-24 (opposite) *Tsuke shoin (writing desk alcove) adjacent to the tokonoma of the Matsu no Ma (Pine Viewing Room) at the Sumiya banquet hall, Shimabara licensed district, Kyoto*, 18th century. Kuki Shūzō observed that *iki* in architecture features a "dualistic opposition" in subtle juxtapositions of textures and colors, for example, in pairing wood and bamboo structural components, and in suffusing space with subdued, indirect lighting.[35] The interplay of the textures and colors of the walls, windows, and post-and-beam architecture, and the subdued lighting infuse this room with an elegant tension characteristic of the aesthetic of *iki*.

Plate 1-25 (left) Shibata Zeshin (1807–1891), *Inrō with design of prunus blossoming outside a latticed window*. Bamboo, lacquer, porcelain, agate. The Walters Art Museum, 61.203. This elegant object, a tour de force of virtuosity, embodies the essence of *iki*.

to *ukiyoe* prints, which celebrated the Edo period pleasure quarter sophisticates who were his mother's social forebears. Kuki Shūzō especially admired the prints of Kitagawa Utamaro (1753?–1806), which he described as embodying a "high-class feminine taste that revealed a 'heroic affinity' with modernity."[33] As Westernized modernization was quickly and drastically altering daily life and cultural attitudes in Japan, Kuki sought to define an identifiably Japanese aesthetic that highlighted both his own culture's past and its unique sense of the modern. In the beginning of the book, he introduced other words used in the Japanese language to describe taste, to tease out their subtle differences.[34] Because of his scholarly prestige, interpreting the meaning of *iki* through the lens of Kuki has remained a topic of much discussion among writers of Japanese aesthetics to the present day, both in Japan and abroad.

MIYABI AND FŪRYŪ
OPULENT AND STYLISH ELEGANCE

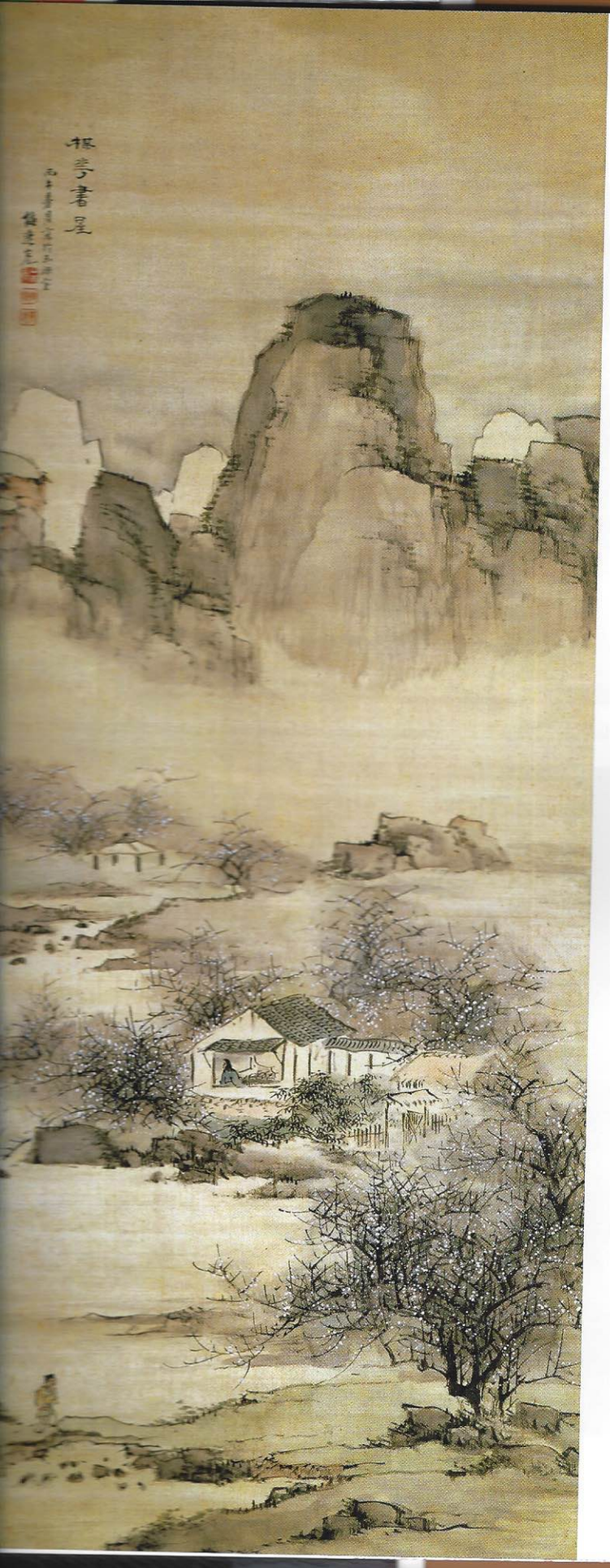
The flip side of the understated and restrained beauty of *shibui, wabi, sabi,* and *iki,* is a more opulent elegance associated with Japan's élites and intellectuals. Formal aristocratic culture of the Heian period (794–1185) gave rise to the first flowering of this aesthetic in Japan, then described as *miyabi*, "courtly elegance," a word that expressed the pinnacle of refinement and beauty wistfully contemplated in the expression *mono no aware.*

Closely related to *miyabi* is *fūryū* ("blowing with the wind"), a word that was also first clearly articulated in the Heian period. Originally a Chinese term (*fengliu*), it entered the Japanese vocabulary in the eighth century when it more simply described the gracefulness and propriety of courtiers. By the Heian period, *fūryū* had become an aesthetic term describing things and events out of the ordinary, such as poetry competitions, unconventional displays of flowers in a garden, opulent decorative arts, lavish banquets, and spectacles associated with court and religious festivals.[36]

By the late sixteenth century, multiple meanings of *fūryū* proliferated, depending on the context. For example, the *wabi* aesthetic of the *chanoyu* tea ceremony became described as a *fūryū* activity. In this sense, *fūryū* implied a conspicuously rusticated elegance closer to *shibui.* Meanwhile, influenced by the later Chinese evolution of the word among literati of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), *fūryū* came to be used to describe the aesthetic preferences of Japanese intellectuals and artists who abhorred the repressive policies of the Tokugawa military regime and held great admiration for Chinese

Plate 1-26 (above) *Section of the Lotus Sutra*, Heian period, mid-12th century. Handscroll mounted as a hanging scroll, ink on paper with gold leaf ruled lines, gold leaf and silver leaf decoration, gold and silver dust, and painted decoration in margins, 24.8 x 40.6 cm. Collection of Sylvan Barnet and William Burto. The aesthetic of *miyabi* permeates this sumptuously decorated sacred text.

Plate 1-27 (left) *Kemari scene from the Tale of Genji*, 18th century. Six-panel folding screen, ink and color on gold leaf, 159.9 x 378.2 cm. Gift from the Clark Center for Japanese Arts & Culture to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2013.29.12. *The Tale of Genji*, a novel penned around the year 1000 by Murasaki Shikibu, a lady-in-waiting to the court, dwells on the aesthetic pastimes and romantic entanglements of courtiers. In this idealized scene from the novel, courtiers, dressed in fine Heian period style multilayered silk brocade robes have gathered in a palace courtyard to participate in a traditional New Year's game of kickball (*kemari*). The robes, cherry trees, and palace veranda, reflect the spirit of *fūryū*.



literati recluses who in troubled times had secluded themselves in rustic retreats in the mountains to pursue elegant pastimes. Prominent among the pastimes of these intellectuals was participation in a more informal Chinese-style service of steeped green tea (*sencha*).[37] *Fūryū* became the aesthetic term that defined the *sencha* tea ceremony, in contrast to *wabi,* which was closely identified with *chanoyu*.

Contemporaneous with the Chinese-influenced meaning of *fūryū*, the word carried a wholly different connotation among those who frequented the pleasure districts. To them, it continued to evoke the rarified courtly taste of the distant Japanese past, fused with a sense of fashion consciousness.

Plate 1-28 (left) Yamamoto Baiitsu (1783–1856), *The Plum Blossom Studio*, 1846. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on satin, 133 x 51.4 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: Edith Ehrman Memorial Fund, F79-13. Baiitsu here depicts the idealistic *fūryū* lifestyle of the Chinese scholar-gentleman. Baiitsu was one of the key participants in the Chinese-style *sencha* tea ceremony.

Plate 1-29 (above) Eiraku Hozen (1795–1854), *Set of five teacups for steeped tea* (*sencha*), mid-19th century. *Kinrande*-style porcelain with overglaze red enamel, underglaze blue, and gold leaf, height 3.8 cm. Saint Louis Art Museum. Museum Shop Fund, 355: 1991.1-5. Designed for use in the Chinese-style tea ceremony of *sencha*, Eiraku's teacups are suffused with an elegant Chinese *fūryū* taste in vogue among sophisticated admirers of Chinese culture.

Plate 1-30 (below) Kikugawa Eizan (1787–1867), *The Jewel River in Ide, Yamashiro Province*, from the series *Fūryū seirō bijin mutamagawa uchi (Elegant beauties of the green houses matched with the six Jewel Rivers)*, ca. 1810. Color woodblock print, horizontal *oban* format, 23.8 x 34.7 cm. Helen Foresman Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, 1964-0040. The beauty of geisha was sometimes described as *fūryū* and many prints that portray them, like this one, feature titles using the word. Here, the allusion to Heian period aesthetics is underscored through the subject of the Jewel (Tama) River, popular among ancient courtly poets.

KAREI
SUMPTUOUS ELEGANCE

Throughout the medieval and early modern periods (roughly the fourteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries) the formal, public life of Japanese aristocrats and élite warriors required the use of luxurious objects and clothing befitting their status. These objects are described with the aesthetic expression *karei* (literally "flowery beauty") that connotes a sumptuousness and elegance most evident in styles of clothing and theatrical costumes, residential furnishings, including gold leaf ground folding screens and lacquer objects made for trousseaus and other official gifts, and accoutrements and garments for military display, court pageantry, and Shinto rituals. Befitting the association of *karei* with pomp and ceremony, the word entered the Japanese vocabulary during the ninth century, a time of great opulence in the performance of court rituals (see Plate 2-49, a screen of an ascension ceremony for a seventeenth-century empress that exudes this aesthetic). The ambiance of *karei* persists into the present in imperial court and public festivals, especially those celebrated in Kyoto, the old imperial capital, that recreate court life in the ancient Heian era.

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Plate 1-31 (left) Motoyoshi (active late 16th–early 17th century), *Lacquer saddle with scenes of some the 53 stations of the Tōkaidō Road*, Momoyama period, dated 1606. Gold lacquered wood, length 40 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 32-202-13 O. Photo: Tiffany Matson. This saddle features small scenes, each carefully identified, of the individual way-stations along the Tōkaidō, the highway that linked the political capital of Edo (Tokyo) with the imperial capital of Kyoto, in what is possibly the earliest known representation of this subject, made famous later in woodblock prints by Utagawa Hiroshige.

Plate 1-32 (above) *Arita ware, Kutani-style dish with design of peonies*, late 17th–early 18th century. Porcelain with polychrome overglaze enamels, diameter 32.7 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Gift of Samuel Hammer, 63-33. Photo: Joshua Ferdinand. Bold, brightly colored designs like these against a golden background reflect the same *karei* taste as gold leaf ground folding screens.

Plate 1-33 (left) *Kosode robe with designs of fans, bamboo, plums, and pines*, early 18th century. Gold figured satin ground with stencil tie dyeing, silk and metallic thread embroidery, with an orange plain silk lining, 139.7 x 111.8 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 31-142/21. Photo: Tiffany Matson. Many *karei* designs on women's robes juxtaposed unlikely motifs. Here, purely decorative folding fans are scattered amongst plants known as the "three friends of winter," Chinese Confucian symbols of perseverance and integrity.

Plate 1-34 (right) *Nuihaku-type Nō robe with paulownia vine design and horizontal stripes*, 18th century. Gold leaf covered silk ground with silver foil and silk thread embroidery, 157.5 x 147.3 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 31-142/1. Photo: Jamison Miller. The glittering beauty of this Nō robe contributed to the stately *karei* atmosphere of the Nō theater.

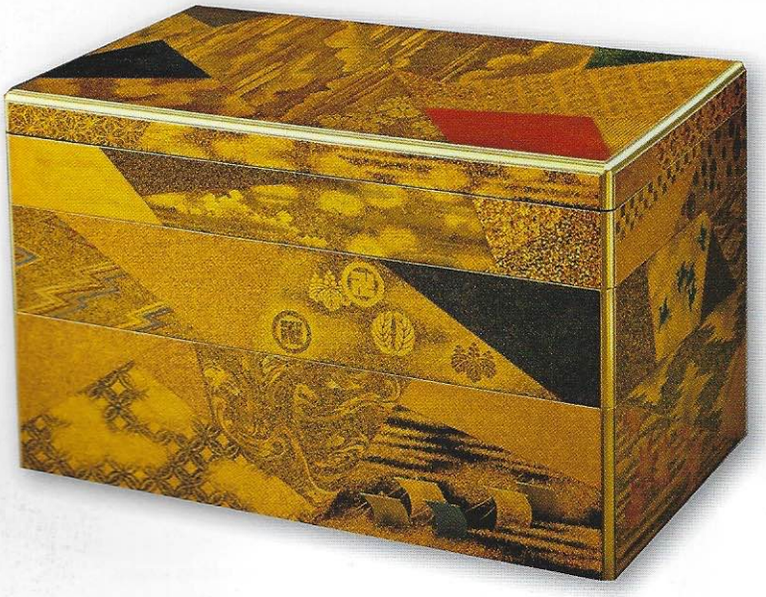


Plate 1-35 (left) Iizuka Tōyō (active ca. 1760–1780), *Tiered stationery box (ryoshi bako)*, ca. 1775. *Makie* lacquer over wood core, gold and silver inlays, and colored lacquer, 21.6 x 34.9 x 21 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: David T. Beales III Fund, F78-23. Photo: E. G. Schempf. This boldly decorated box expresses the elegant *karei* taste of the upper echelons of the samurai class. Its varied minute designs, including family crests, cranes, and sailboats, as well as patchwork areas of pure abstraction, were created using a multitude of lacquer techniques that required many months of patient effort on the part of the artist to complete.

KABUKU AND BASARA
OUTLANDISH ELEGANCE

After the Tokugawa warriors took control of the country in the early seventeenth century, urban commoner culture flourished as never before. Participants in this new culture included warriors forced to become masterless samurai (*rōnin*), who fought on the losing side of the recent civil wars, and commoners displaced by the conflicts. These individuals became subsumed into the ranks of the newly emerging urban commoner classes who participated en masse in popular Shinto shrine festivals, attended Kabuki theater performances, and partook of other leisure activities, many of which took place in new red light districts of Japan's burgeoning urban centers, where banquet halls like the Sumiya, were constructed. Their reckless attitude became identified with a new type of extravagant *fūryū* elegance known as *kabuku*, literally "twisted, out of kilter, or outlandish."[38] This word implied "rebellion against conventional social and artistic attitudes, with a strong suggestion of a clash with norms of sexual behavior comparable to that carried today by words such as 'gay' or 'queer.'"[39]

The distinguished Japanese art historian Tsuji Nobuo (b. 1932) was the first scholar to recognize a broad range of arts and artists whose works seem to have been inspired by a sense of heterodoxy and playfulness implicit in the word *kabuku*. He traced this aesthetic from the dawn of Japanese history to the present day, and noted that it reached its apogee during the Edo period in the work of artists he has famously described as eccentrics.[40]

Influenced by Tsuji's writings, recently another older expression for this bold aesthetic, *basara*, has been

Plate 1-36 (below) *Elegant Amusements at a Mansion*, second half 17th century. Pair of six-panel screens, ink, colors, and gold leaf on paper, each screen 106.7 x 260.35 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 32-83/14,15. Photo: Tiffany Matson. This imaginary view of a mansion portrays the wide variety of *kabuku* spirit leisure activities, some refined and others boisterous, enjoyed by affluent warriors and merchants in the privacy of their walled-off residences or in the houses of entertainment and assignation that they frequented.

revived by the neo-Nihonga (modern Japanese painting) artist Tenmyouya Hisashi (b. 1966). He claims to have made this aesthetic the basis of his art because it expresses the current climate of social upheaval in Japan. Tenmyouya organized an exhibition titled *Basara* for the Spiral Garden Gallery in Tokyo in 2010. In addition to showcasing his own work, the exhibition featured pre-modern Japanese art that inspired him. In the catalogue, he described *basara* as:

the family of beauty that

Plate 1-37 (above) *Mino ware, Oribe-type set of five serving dishes with persimmon design*, 1600–1620s. Stoneware with underglaze iron oxide design and copper green glaze, each 9.8 x 5.7 x 6.4 cm. Collection of John C. Weber, New York. Photo: John Bigelow Taylor. Tea ceremony aesthetics also succumbed to the influence of the new *kabuku* aesthetic, as seen here in newly popular Oribe wares, whose style is characterized by the application of bright green, spontaneous looking glazes and quirky, playful asymmetrical designs.

Plate 1-38 (right) *Suit of Armor (marudō tōsei gusoku type),* made for daimyō Abe Masayoshi (1700–1769). Suit ca. 1730–1740; helmet bowl by Neo-Masanobu, early 18th century. Lacquer, silver, gold, whale baleen, silver gilded *washi* (paper), silk, *rasha* (textile), bear fur, leather, iron, copper alloy, gilt copper, silks, *shakudō* (alloy of copper and gold patinated to a rich black), wood, crystal, doe skin, gilded metal, ink stone. Crow Collection of Asian Art, 2013.1. The best craftsmen of the day created this armor for a samurai of refined taste, who wore it during formal processions. It typifies the outlandish warrior (*kabuku* or *basara*) taste. Intricate floral scroll patterns and family crest designs cover the surface. A red lacquered wood dragon perches between gilded wood hoe-shaped decorations atop the helmet (*kabuto*). The face mask projects a fierce expression, while in contrast, the breast plate features delicate maple leaves. The forearm sleeves hide hinged compartments for medicines and writing implements.

stands on the opposite end of the spectrum from wabi sabi and zen.... The term basara originally referred to social trends that were popular during the Nanbokucho Period (1336 to 1392), and people with an aesthetic awareness that wore ornate and innovative wardrobes and favored luxurious lifestyles. The term comes from the name of the 12 Heavenly Generals [Buddhist guardians] and originally means "diamond" in Sanskrit. Just as diamonds are hard and can break anything, the term was taken to mean people that rebel against authority in an attempt to destroy existing concepts and order. At the same time, they were persons with a superior aesthetic sense that favored chic and flamboyant lifestyles in addition to elegant attire.... BASARA art has continually flowed through the channels of Japanese street culture—from the furyu of the Heian period ... being delivered to modern times.[41]

Plate 1-39 (above) Tenmyouya Hisashi (b. 1966), *Archery*, 2008. Acrylic on wood, 90 x 70 cm. Photo © Tenmyouya Hisashi, courtesy of Mizuma Art Gallery. In this painting, Tenmyouya has created a personification of the *basara* aesthetic by combining the fierce stance of the warrior with the tattooed body of a gangster, juxtaposed with a vibrantly-colored bird and snake.

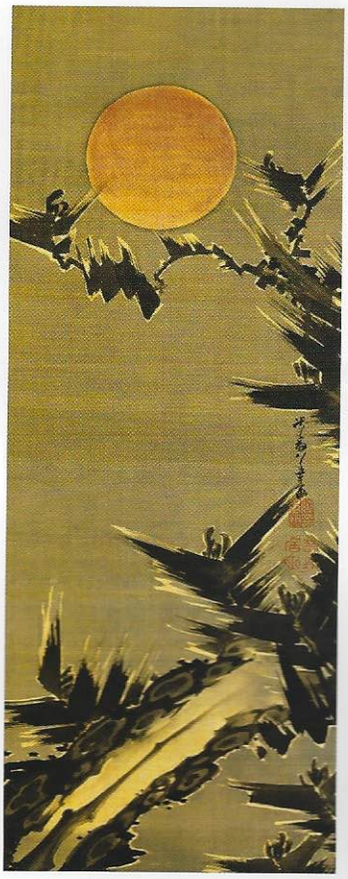


Plate 1-40 (right) Itō Jakuchū (1716–1800), *New Year's Sun*, late 18th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 101 x 39.7 cm. Gift from the Clark Center for Japanese Arts & Culture to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2013.29.9. Jakuchū's art, the epitome of eccentricity, is exemplified in this painting by the artist's bold, dramatic brushwork, asymmetrical composition, and truncated view of his subject.

Plate 1-41 (below) Kano Kazunobu (1815–1863), *Five Rakan Saving Sinners from Hell*, 1862–1863, scroll number 23 from a set of *One Hundred Scrolls of the Five Hundred Rakan*, Zōjōji, Tokyo. Hanging scroll, ink, gold, and colors on silk, 172.3 x 85.3 cm. This graphic, gruesome scene of sinners trapped in an ice-filled pool is one Tenmyouya included in his *basara* exhibition. It exemplifies the penchant for violence during the mid-19th century.

MA

AN INTERVAL IN TIME AND SPACE

The term *ma* has become a popular buzzword for defining a whole cluster of Japanese aesthetics in the post-war period among Japanese architects and cultural critics. Literally translated as "an interval in time and/or space," *ma* describes the partiality in Japanese design for empty spaces, vagueness, abstraction, asymmetrical balance, and irregularity.

The earliest reference to *ma* in Japanese occurs in the eighth century *Manyōshū* anthology. There, poets used it to express the misty spaces between mountains and as a marker of the passage of time. By the eleventh century, the word defined the gaps between pillars in Japanese rooms and the in-between spaces of verandas that separated the interiors of buildings from their adjacent gardens. By the nineteenth century, it described the pauses in action in Kabuki theatrical performances. Until the post-war period, it had never been used as an aesthetic term.

Soon after World War II, Kawai Hayao (1928–2007), Japan's first Western-trained Jungian psychoanalyst, incorporated Buddhist values into his ideas about psychology, describing the key to understanding the Japanese psyche as a "hollow center," a reference to the Buddhist concept of *mushin* (emptiness). Kumakura Isao, writing in 2007, equated Kawai's concept with the word *ma*, although he does not make it clear if Kawai actually used the word.[42] Architect Isozaki Arata is largely responsible for the current

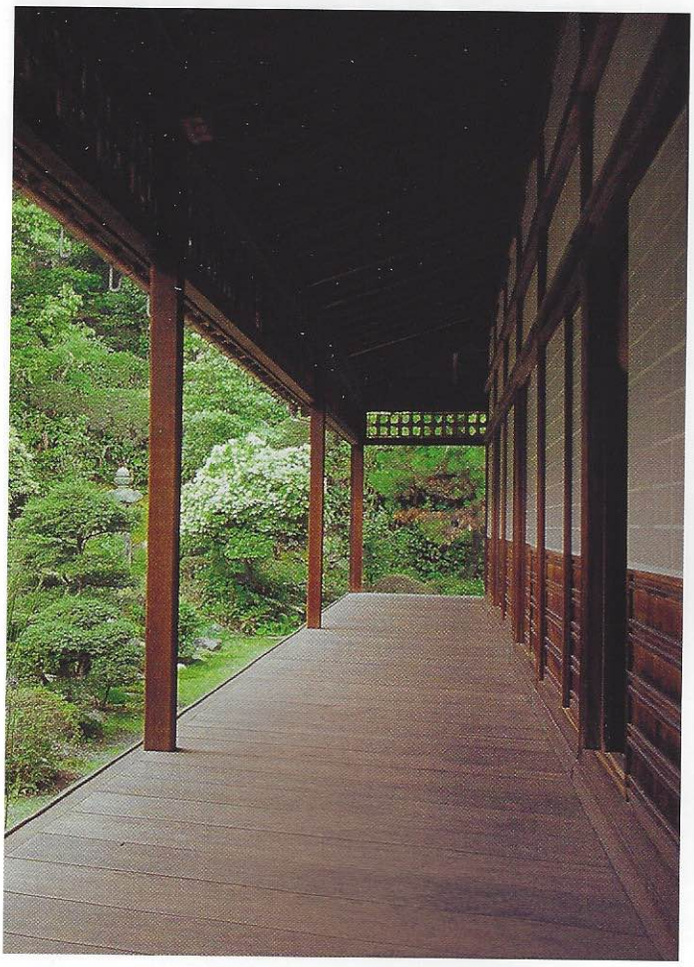
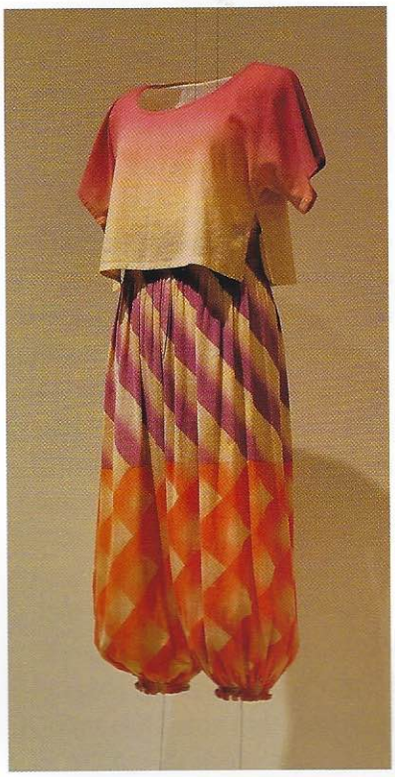


Plate 1-42 (above) *Veranda of the Mani'in subtemple at Kongōji, Osaka Prefecture*, 14th century. Photo: David M. Dunfield, 1991.

popularity of *ma* as an aesthetic trope, which began in the late 1970s following a major exhibition on modern Japanese design he organized, titled *Ma: Space-Time in Japan*.[43] The exhibition situated *ma* within the context of other traditional Japanese aesthetic terms, among them *sabi* and *suki* discussed above, and presented it as a shorthand explanation for describing the "Japan-ness" of a wide variety of contemporary avant-garde Japanese performing, martial, and visual arts, music, fashion, and garden and architecture design.[44] The exhibition explored *ma* in relation to the cosmology of *kami*, the unseen deities of Japan's indigenous Shinto religion, and in the acting style and stage set of the stylized Nō theater. It is important to note though that in pre-modern times neither Shinto nor Nō theater was ever described with the word *ma*. Nō, for example, in traditional aesthetic terminology is always described as infused with the

Plate 1-43 (left) *Prefectural Nō Theater, Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture*. Photo © Ishikawa Prefecture Tourist Association and Kanazawa Convention Bureau/© JNTO. Nō theater is characterized by the stylized dance movements and gestures of its actors, hypnotic music, recitation, and chanting, all set against a bare stage set featuring a lone pine tree. The interplay of these elements creates a sedate yet emotionally charged aura (see also Plate 2-15).

Plate 1-44 (right) *View of the Inland Sea from Mount Mikasa, Itsukushima*. Photo: Patricia J. Graham, October 2006.



Buddhist spirit of *yūgen* ("mysterious beauty"), discussed further in Chapter 2).

Isozaki explained that he chose *ma* as the exhibition's unifying theme because the concepts behind it represent the foundation of almost all aspects of Japanese life. He saw it as a uniquely Japanese perception of spatial and temporal reality that resonated with contemporary theories of the universe as defined by quantum physicists who understand space and time not as separate categories but as interdependent dimensions.[45] As Gian Carlo Calza has recently observed, this idea had first been suggested by Werner Heisenberg (1901–1976), the Nobel laureate theoretical physicist who

Plate 1-45 (above left) Issey Miyake (b. 1938), *Blouse and pants with laser-beam printed geometric design in graduated colors*, 1977. Printed on cotton. Collection of Mary Basket, Cincinnati. Photo: Katy Uravitch, The Textile Museum, Washington, DC. This outfit was published in 1978 in a pioneering book on Miyake's designs, *Issey Miyake, East Meets West*.[48] Miyake was one of a number of prominent avant-garde contemporary artists and designers who contributed to the landmark 1978 exhibition about *ma*.

Plate 1-46 (above) Jun Kaneko (b. 1942), *Dango*, 2006. One of a group of seven sculptures for the Water Plaza at the Bartle Hall Convention Center in Kansas City, Missouri. Glazed ceramic, height ca. 230 cm. Kaneko is famous for his large-scale, boldly glazed sculptures called *dango*, named after the Japanese word for "steamed dumpling," that he fabricates with seemingly endless variations of scale and surface design. Kaneko has said that *ma* "defines his entire practice as an artist—as painter, sculptor, designer, ceramicist … a term that derives from what one might call the metaphysics of Shinto."[49]

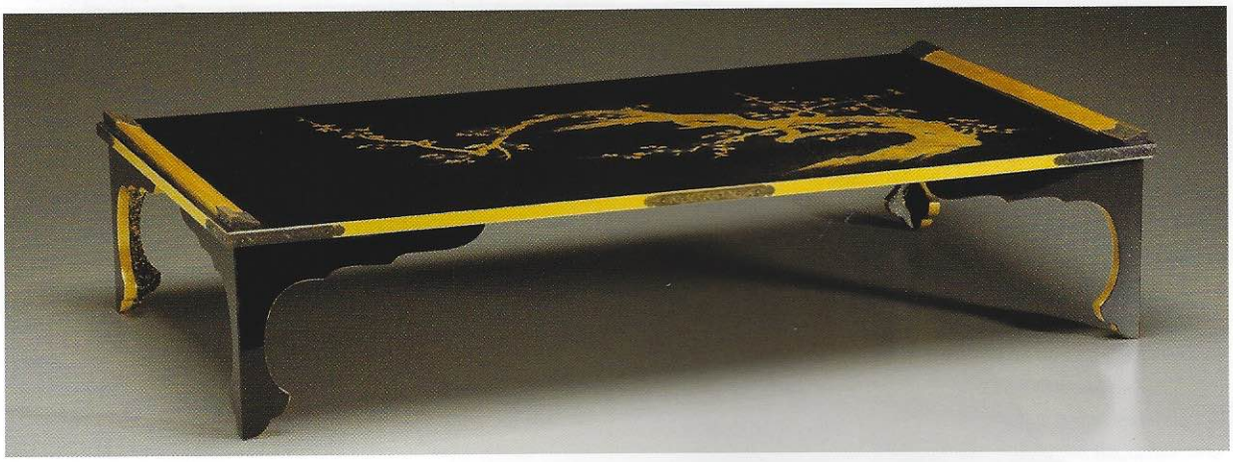
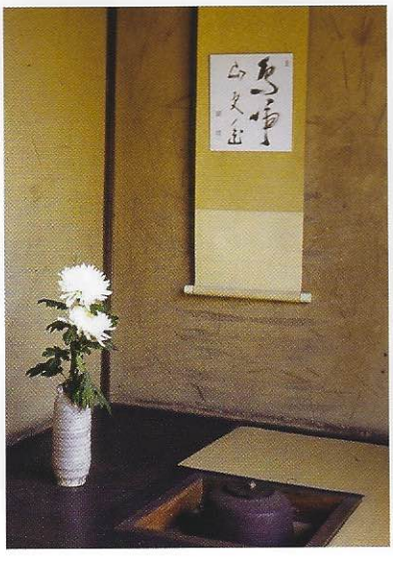


Plate 1-47(above) *Writing table* (*bundai*), Meiji period, late 19th century. Black lacquer on wood with gold sprinkled powder (*makie*) and engraved gilt bronze fittings, 14.4 x 63.8 x 36.4 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Gift of Mrs Jack Rieger in memory of Mrs Hortense P. Lorie, F76-30/1. Photo: Jamison Miller. In describing the beauty of Japanese lacquer, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō wrote that "lacquerware decorated in gold is not something to be seen in a brilliant light, to be taken in a single glance; it should be left in the dark, a part here and a part there picked up by a faint light. Its florid patterns recede into the darkness, conjuring in their stead an inexpressible aura of depth and mystery, of overtones but partly suggested."[50]

Plate 1-48 (below) *Tokonoma alcove in the tea room at the Sesshūin subtemple, Tōfukuji, Kyoto*. Tanizaki Jun'ichirō eloquently noted of these essential spaces in tea rooms that "Of course the Japanese room does have its picture alcove, and in it a hanging scroll and flower arrangement. But the scroll and the flowers serve not as ornament but rather to give depth to the shadows."[51]

pioneered the study of quantum mechanics. Heisenberg wondered if Japanese scientists' great contributions to theoretical physics stemmed from philosophical ideas of the Far East.[46] Calza also echoed Isozaki in his observations that "it is precisely this kind of aesthetic model—flexible, open, attentive to every change and variation, full of symbolic references and allusions, and not given to concretizing description—that encouraged the rapid advance of Japanese art into the avant-garde."[47]

In 1933, at a time when Western-influenced modernity was beginning to exert profound influences on the Japanese way of life, novelist Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886–1965) wrote a short essay about what he considered the essential character of the Japanese aesthetic psyche. Titled *In Praise of Shadows*, the essay was only translated into English in 1977, and immediately became an inspiration to foreign enthusiasts of Zen-influenced Japanese aesthetics. Not surprisingly, Tanizaki's essay



was acclaimed at the same time the word *ma* came into fashion, because it describes aesthetics sympathetic with *ma*. In his essay, Tanizaki railed against the garishness of the electric light bulb and argued that Japanese objects and rooms possess a mysterious beauty dependent on their being visible only in spaces permeated with the diffused light of *shōji* screens or the flickering of candles or oil lamps. In short, he promoted an aesthetic centered on beauty emerging from the darkness of the void-like space of *ma*.

NŌTAN

THE DARK–LIGHT PRINCIPLE

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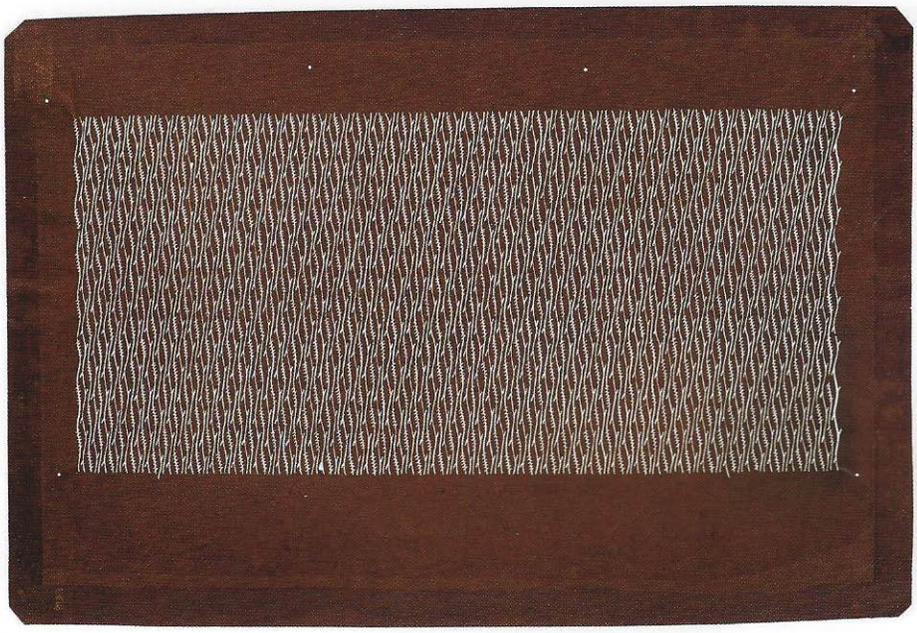

Plate 1-50 (left) *Stencil with undulating vertical lines with cross hatchings at intervals.* Late 19th–early 20th century. Mulberry paper, persimmon tannin, 18.1 x 38.8 cm. Santa Barbara Museum of Art. Gift of Virginia Tobin, 1994.48.9. Japanese stencils, with their bold, flat, contrasting patterns, are generally regarded as the pre-eminent Japanese art form in which the principle of *nōtan* is most clearly apparent (see also Plate 3-8).

***Nōtan*, the dynamic interaction between dark and light values** in a two-dimensional image, is a Japanese aesthetic term wholly invented by modern-day Westerners, used mainly by artist educators and designers. The two Japanese words, "dark" and "light," that comprise this term were never joined together as aesthetic terminology in Japan. However, it has been widely used in the international design community since the early twentieth century and therefore merits consideration. Arthur Wesley Dow (1857–1922; see page 121) was responsible for its initial wave of popularity. In the 1920s, artist Rudolph Schaeffer (1886–1988), then a professor of the California School of Fine Arts, began using it to teach design principles. Later, he founded the Rudolph Schaeffer School of Design in San Francisco, which was influenced by Asian aesthetics and philosophies. One of his students in the 1920s was artist Dorr Bothwell (1902–2000), who in 1968 co-authored an influential book on *nōtan* for design educators, *Notan: The Dark–Light Principle of Design.* Her book featured practical exercises for instilling understanding of *nōtan* in students, and it remains in print to this day.[52] The book's foreword described *nōtan* as "the basis of all design" and noted that the mirror-image circular symbol for the Eastern philosophical concept of the opposing values of *yin* and *yang* embodies its principles.[53] The book explained how to create dynamic designs on flat surfaces by emphasizing positive/negative spaces including symmetrical and asymmetrical balance, relative placement of dark and light areas, and spatial distortions. Its acknowledgements section credits Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908; see page 134) as probably the first to *introduce* (my italics) the term to the US in the 1890s and Dow as the first to apply it to Western art design.[54] This description reflects the misunderstanding of many artists and art educators who regard it as an authentic Japanese design term, not one invented by Fenollosa and used by Dow, as was actually the case.[55] Regardless of its derivation, the term remains widely used. American artist Sharon Himes, founder of the early Internet artists community ArtCafe, recently authored an article about it in her widely read online journal, "Notan: Design in Light and Dark."[56]

Plate 1-49 (left) *Sword guard (tsuba) with eight folding fans*, Edo period. *Shakudo*, gold, and copper, 6.9 x.6.5 x .42 cm. The Walters Art Museum, 51.140. The design for this *tsuba* relies on the strength of its positive and negative *nōtan* elements. Folding fans encircle the perimeter and the eye reads the empty spaces where they intersect as a bold star-shaped pattern.

MINGEI
JAPANESE FOLK CRAFTS

e 1-51 (above) *Kettle hook (jizaigaki)*, late
-early 20th century. Zelkova wood, height
7 cm, width 30 cm, diameter 7 cm. Photo
ntesy of Toyobi Far Eastern Art. The central
n of traditional Japanese commoners'
es featured charcoal fires in open
ths where an iron kettle hung from an
stable wooden hook attached to a rope
g over the roof structure's cross beams.
obust form of this hook is more than
ly a practical object. Its inverted V shape
tionally recalls the shape of the hat worn
ikoku, one of the Seven Gods of Good
ne, protector of the home.

Early *chanoyu* tea masters were the first to recognize and admire a definitive aesthetic, defined by rusticity and unpretentious ruggedness, associated with the dwellings and functional objects used by Japanese farmers. Medieval period tea masters incorporated this aesthetic into their new *wabi*-style tea ceremony in preferences for rough, unglazed stoneware ceramic tea utensils and unpainted, wood-framed, thatched-roof tea houses. But tea masters only valued arts that resonated with their ideas about *chanoyu*. It was Yanagi Sōetsu (see page 138) who rediscovered and promoted appreciation for a much wider variety of inexpensive, utilitarian, handmade crafts by and for commoners that extended from Japan's prehistory to his own time. In 1926, he coined the phrase *mingei* ("people's arts"), which he translated into English as "folk crafts," purposely avoiding the word "art." He believed that the anonymous artisans who made these objects utilized natural materials and pre-modern production methods to create practical, functional products imbued with an unconscious spiritual beauty that revealed an elevated moral or social consciousness superior to objects created as luxury goods for the wealthy and élites of society. He considered these arts reflective of the true aesthetic expression of the Japanese people. Although he spearheaded appreciation for these crafts, many of which would otherwise have been lost to history, his insistence that they be classified as separate from other types of fine arts and crafts has led to their marginalization from many mainstream art museums and collections of Japanese art.

Although Yanagi called these products "folk crafts," and although some *mingei* artists are self-taught and their arts have a rusticated appearance, these crafts are far from primitive. *Mingei* products are sophisticated in both design and technique. Their varied appearance stems from the fact that the definition of commoners in pre-modern Japan encompasses a wide range of individuals, from rural peasants to urban dwellers, with varied tastes, income levels, and access to different types of raw materials. The common denominators for these crafts include their reliance on locally sourced materials (for example, local clays, wood species, cotton, and plant dyes), their utilitarian function (including clothing, tableware, furniture, and even crafts and statuary made for religious devotions), the anonymity of their makers (who often

Plate 1-52 (above) *Demo*
century. Hanging scroll,
Gift from the Clark Cente
Minneapolis Institute of
humorous talisman pictu
that travelers purchased
way-station along the To
a demon dressed as a mo
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Plate 1-54 (right) *Massive*
Stoneware with natural a
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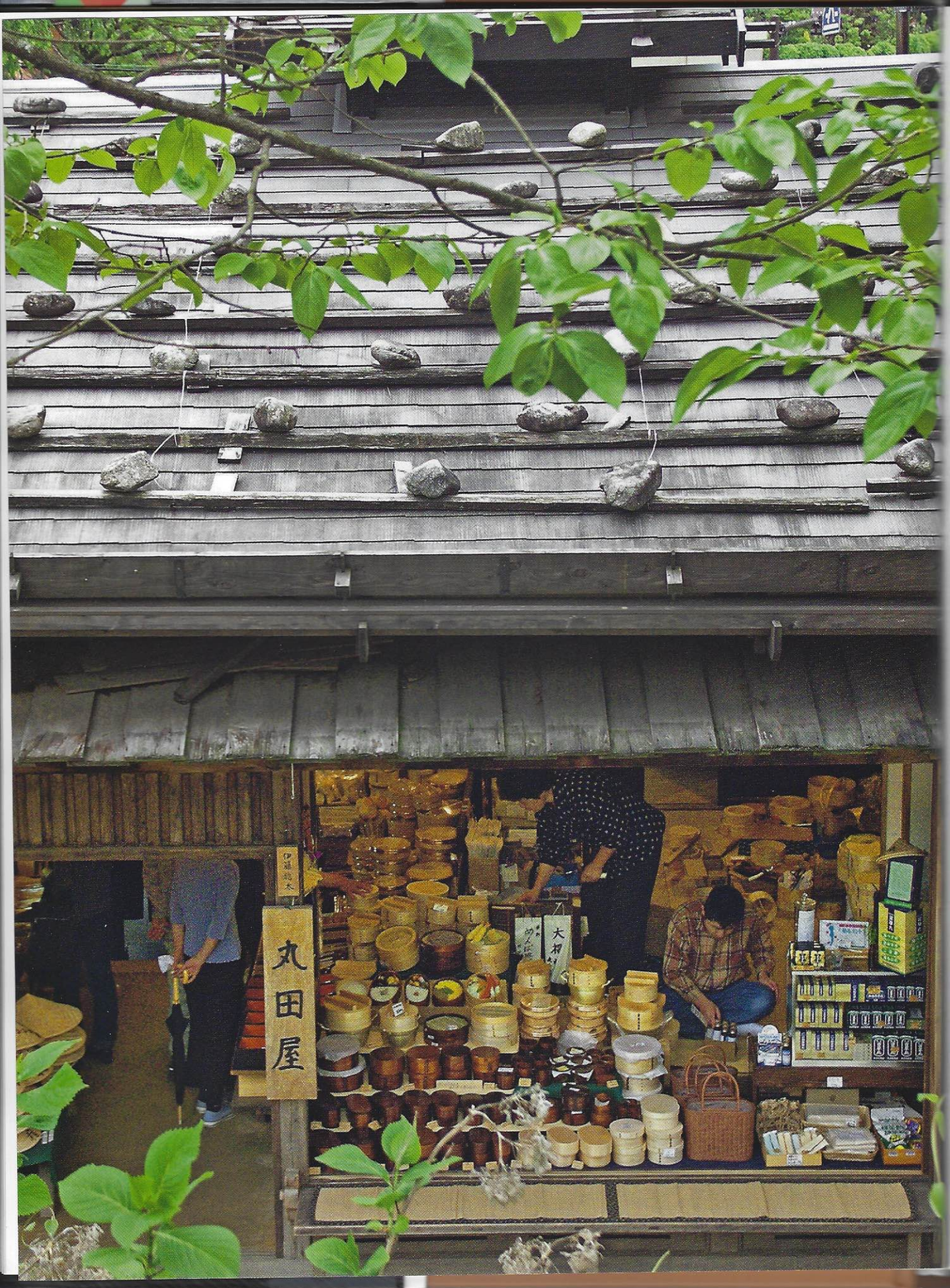
Edith Ehrman Memorial Fu
This sturdy pot is a classic
of the sort appreciated by
by its irregular shape, deri
and wheel-thrown technic
embedded with coarse gra
occurring ash glaze that d
potters cultivated.

Plate 1-52 (above) *Demon Reciting Prayers*, 18th–early 19th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 53.0 x 20.4 cm. Gift from the Clark Center for Japanese Arts & Culture to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2013.29.47. These charmingly humorous talisman pictures (Ōtsue) were popular souvenirs that travelers purchased from makers in the town of Ōtsu, a way-station along the Tōkaidō highway. This one portrays a demon dressed as a monk, an image that was believed to prevent infants from crying at night.

Plate 1-53 (left) *Futon (bedding) cover with pine crest and auspicious motifs*, late 19th–early 20th century. Plain weave handspun, handwoven cotton cloth with *tsutsugaki* (free-hand paste-resist dyed) decoration in colors on dark indigo ground, 197 x 160 cm. Portland Art Museum. Gift of Terry Welch, 2009.25.44. Flaming jewels, a magic mallet, and peacock feathers were among the auspicious emblems blessing the person who slept under this cover.

Plate 1-54 (right) *Massive Echizen ware water jar*, 16th century. Stoneware with natural ash glaze, height 72.4 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: Edith Ehrman Memorial Fund, F92-32. Photo: Jamison Miller. This sturdy pot is a classic example of Japanese folk ceramics of the sort appreciated by *chanoyu* masters. It is distinguished by its irregular shape, derived from a combination of coil and wheel-thrown techniques, and a thick-walled surface embedded with coarse grains, augmented with a naturally occurring ash glaze that drips down its sides, an effect later potters cultivated.



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work together in a communal spirit to produce crafts for the people of the area in which they live), and their handmade production techniques (see also Plates 2-57–2-61, and 3-22).

Many types of traditional *mingei* featured auspicious emblems to offer their owners protection from diseases, injury, and other calamities, and as prayers for health, wealth, safe childbirth, and the like (see Plate 2-10).

Yanagi did not single-handedly create appreciation for *mingei*. He developed his theories together with artist-friends, potters Hamada Shōji (1894–1978; see Plate 2-21) and Kawai Kanjirō (1890–1966), whose works reinterpret *mingei* aesthetics for the modern world.

Today in Japan, the word *mingei* is widely used to refer to many types of local crafts, often produced for tourists, but based aesthetically on traditional, regionally made handicrafts.

Plate 1-57 (above) Munakata Shikō (1903–1975), *In Praise of Flower Hunting*, 1954. Woodblock print mounted as a hanging scroll, 150.5 x 169.4 cm. Art Institute of Chicago. Anonymous Donor, 1959.584. The prints of Munakata, a self-taught artist famous for carving his own woodblocks at a feverish pace, first attracted the attention of Yanagi Sōetsu and Kawai Kanjirō in the 1930s for his art's sincerity and unpretentiousness. These qualities accorded with Yanagi's beliefs that the beauty of folk crafts derived from the makers' inherently Buddhist attitude of selflessness. This print, produced well after Munakata met Yanagi and Kawai, portrays hunters shooting flowers, not arrows, a Buddhist reference to compassion and connectedness. The sharp, energetic lines and bold contrasts between dark and light areas characterize Munakata's style.

Plate 1-55 (left) *Mingei crafts shop in the town of Tsumago, Nagano Prefecture*. Photo: David M. Dunfield, May 2003.

Plate 1-56 (right) *Interior view of the Takishita House, Kamakura*, renovation dating to 1976; originally constructed early 19th century; moved and restored by architect Takishita Yoshihiro (b. 1945). Takishita has made a career of saving old *minka* (farmhouses) from demolition by moving those that cannot be preserved in situ and using their skeletal framework to create comfortable modern houses for himself and clients worldwide. Originally a village chief's house from a town in Fukui Prefecture, this large *minka* features posts made of *keyaki* (Japanese zelkova) and massive curved beams from giant old pine trees.

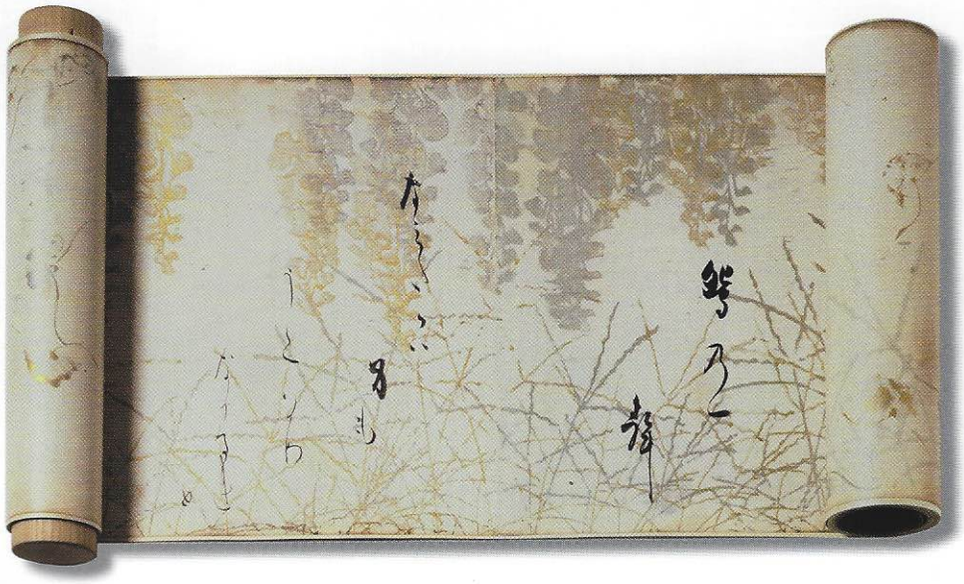

Plate 1-58 (above) Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637), *Poems from the Shinkokin wakashū (New Collection of Japanese Poems from Ancient and Modern Times)*. Handscroll in ink, gold, and silver on woodblock printed paper, 33.8 x 830 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art, 125th Anniversary Acquisition. Purchased with funds contributed by members of the Committee on East Asian Art, 1999-39-1. The aesthetic appeal of this handscroll relies on the collaboration between the calligrapher Kōetsu and an unknown craftsman who first created beautiful stencil designs of ivy, grasses, and wisteria in gold and silver ink on the paper.

RINPA

DECORATIVE ART OF THE KŌRIN SCHOOL

The artistic style known as Rinpa emerged in the old imperial capital of Kyoto during the early seventeenth century through the efforts of a small group of independent-minded individuals. Their leader was Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637), a calligrapher from a well-connected samurai family of sword polishers who immersed himself in various arts at an artists' colony he founded, and his less well-recorded collaborator, the painter Tawaraya Sōtatsu (d. ca. 1640). The subjects and styles of Rinpa art recalled the courtly culture of the Heian period and often featured ancient *waka* poetry, yet its greater abstraction and bolder colors imparted a modern flair to these arts.

Beginning with Kōetsu, artists of the Rinpa tradition worked in multiple media, including lacquers, ceramics, and textiles, in addition to paintings in various formats. Many, like Kōetsu, collaborated with specialized craftsmen such as dyers, lacquer makers, or paper makers. Unlike the more familiar atelier system of artistic production in Japan, the Rinpa tradition has endured due to efforts of individual artists inspired by the achievements of earlier Rinpa masters. Following the initial burst of activity under Kōetsu, Sōtatsu, and his immediate followers in the seventeenth century, the painter Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716) and his younger brother Ogata Kenzan (1663–1743) created a second wave of interest in Rinpa designs, which they modified to appeal to patrons of their own time.

The artist Sakai Hōitsu (1761–1828), whose well-to-do samurai family had, generations earlier, patronized Ogata Kōrin, initiated a third major revival of the Rinpa tradition. Hōitsu revered Kōrin as the greatest Rinpa master and worked tirelessly both to promote him and to emulate his style.

Although today the name Rinpa is widely used to designate artists whose work follows this tradition, that was not always the case. Since the time of Hōitsu and through the Meiji period it was called the "Korin School." Before that it had no name. Influenced by Ernest Fenollosa (see page 134), who revered Kōetsu as the founder of this artistic lineage, these artists were sometimes referred to as the "Kōetsu School" (see Plate 3-19). Some design qualities associated with the Rinpa artistic movement possess similarities with

Plate 1-59 (above) Tawaraya Sōtatsu (d. ca. 1640) and an unidentified calligrapher, *Visiting the Shrine, A Scene from the Tales of Ise (Ise monogatari)*. Album leaf mounted as a hanging scroll, ink, color, and gold paint on paper, 24.4 x 21 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Gift of Mrs. George H. Bunting, Jr, 74-37. Photo: Jamison Miller. Like more conservative painters who portrayed courtly themes (see Plates 1-27 and 2-33), Rinpa artists preferred thick mineral colors but applied them more freely, omitting details to engage the viewer's imagination.

Plate 1-60 (left) *Copy of a lacquer box for writing implements by Ogata Kōrin with designs of the eight-plank bridge (Yatsuhashi)*, Meiji period, late 19th century. Lacquer with metallic and mother-of-pearl inlays, 27.6 x 19.9 x 14.7 cm. Collection of Edmund and Julie Lewis, Chicago. This box faithfully copies one of the most famous of all known works by Kōrin in the Tokyo National Museum. Such copies were created not as forgeries but as homage to their original creator. This subject was a favorite of Kōrin and subsequent Rinpa artists, a famous passage from the celebrated courtly prose-poem, the *Tales of Ise*.

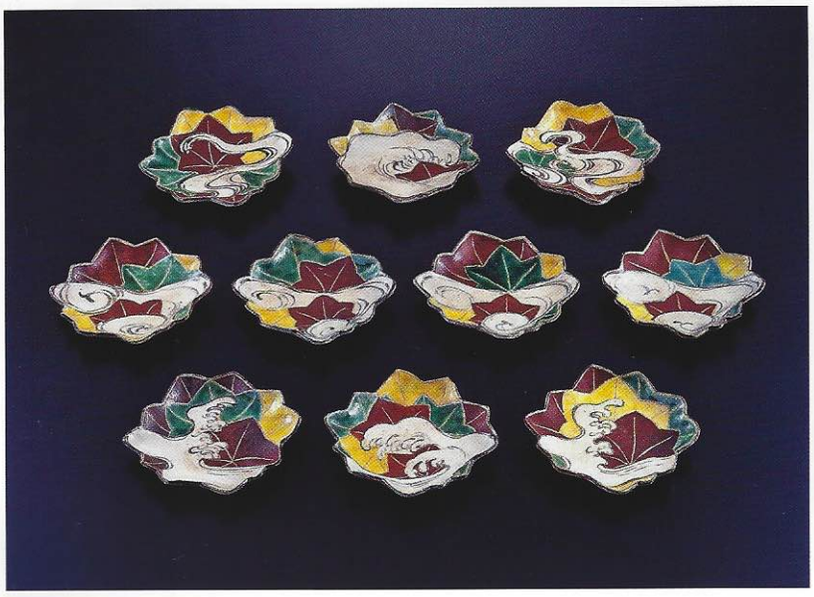

Plate 1-61 (above) Ogata Kenzan (1663–1743), *Set of food dishes for the tea ceremony meal (mukōzuke) with designs of autumn leaves floating in the Tatsuta River*, 18th century. High-fired pottery, polychrome and overglaze, and gold pigment, height 3.4 cm, diameter 16.3– 18.1 cm, foot diameter 9 cm. Miho Museum, Shiga. The varied and abbreviated playful designs on each of these plates reveal Kenzan's creative genius.

Plate 1-62 (right) Kamisaka Sekka (1866–1942), *Snowcaps (Yuki bōshi)*, from vol. 1, p. 22, of the 3-volume set of albums, *Chigusa (All Kinds of Things)*, 1899–1900. Color woodblock print, 24 x 36 cm. Gift from the Clark Center for Japanese Arts & Culture to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2013.29.61.1. Sponsored by the Japanese government, Sekka traveled to Europe to study the fashion for Japonisme. After returning, he spearheaded interest in reviving Rinpa designs as models for Japanese designers, fused with a new sense of abstraction influenced by his exposure to Western Art Nouveau styles.

bold designs described as *nōtan*, so it is no wonder that Fenollosa, who conceived the term *nōtan*, was one of the early promoters of Rinpa artists. Beginning in the early twentieth century, Japanese scholars reasserted the importance of Kōrin in naming this tradition, but linked him with Sōtatsu, whom they had recently identified, and so the name "Sōtatsu-Kōrin School" came into vogue. By the post-war period, an abbreviated appellation of Kōrin's name (joining the second character of his name, "Rin" with the word for school, "ha") resulted in the tradition being renamed "Rimpa" (which is now more commonly spelled "Rinpa"). This name came into standard usage in the early 1970s following two popular exhibitions, one in the USA at the Japan Society (1971) and the other at the Tokyo National Museum (1972).[57]

In 2012, a landmark exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum interpreted Rinpa more broadly than ever before. As the exhibition's curator, John Carpenter adroitly explained in the catalogue:

> ***The Rinpa aesthetic embraces bold, exaggerated, or purely graphic renderings of natural motifs as well as formalized depictions of fictional***

characters, poets, and sages. Underlying Rinpa design sensibilities is a tendency toward simplification and abbreviation, often achieved through a process of formal exaggeration. Rinpa is also celebrated for its use of lavish pigments, conspicuous or sometimes subliminal references to court literature and poetry, and eloquent experimentation with calligraphy. Central to Rinpa is the evocation of nature as well as eye-catching compositions that cleverly integrate text and image.[58]

Carpenter's exhibition featured the core artists associated with Rinpa, but it also explored the influence of Rinpa aesthetic on arts as varied as textile pattern books, *fin de siècle* ceramics, cloisonné enamels of the Meiji period, and modern Japanese-style (Nihonga) artists.

Plate 1-63 (above) Sakai Hōitsu (1761–1828), *The Thirty-Six Immortal Poets*, ca. 1815. Two-panel folding screen, ink and colors on paper, 165.1 x 180.3 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Gift of Mrs George H. Bunting, Jr, 77-50. Photo: Jamison Miller. The thirty-six poets lived at various times between the seventh and eleventh century and so could never have gathered as a group. Hōitsu based this whimsical composition on one invented by Kōrin. It is actually not a finished painting but a preparatory drawing he kept in his studio as a model, indicative of how popular the subject was among patrons of Rinpa artists.