24: Japan After 1333 CE
24.1: The Muromachi Period

24.1.1: Zen Ink Painting

During the Muromachi period (1333–1578), Zen Buddhism played an influential role in the development of Zen ink painting in Japan.

**Learning Objective**

Distinguish the techniques of the Yamato-e, Sumi-e, Sansuiga, and Shigajiku styles of Japanese Zen Ink painting

**Key Points**

- The development of the great Zen monasteries in Kamakura and Kyoto had a great influence on the visual arts of the Muromachi period.
- The foremost painter of the new Sumi-e style was Sesshū Tōyō (1420–1506), whose most dramatic works were completed in the Chinese splashed-ink (Haboku) style.
- The Sumi-e style was highly influenced by calligraphy, employing the same tools and style as well as its Zen philosophy.
- By the end of the 14th century, monochrome landscape paintings (sansuiga) had found patronage by the ruling Ashikaga family and were the preferred genre among Zen painters, gradually evolving from its Chinese roots to a more Japanese style.
- Another style that developed during the Muromachi period was Shigajiku (詩), or paintings accompanied by poetry; this style had its roots in China, where painting and poetry were seen as inherently connected.

**Key Terms**

- **calligraphy**
  The art of writing letters and words with decorative strokes.

- **Koan**
  A story, dialogue, question, or statement, which is used in Zen practice to provoke the "great doubt" and test a student’s progress.

- **shogunate**
  A hereditary military dictator in Japan during the period from 1185 to 1868 (with exceptions).

**Background: The Muromachi Period**
During the Muromachi period (1333–1578), also known as the Ashikaga period, a profound change took place in Japanese culture. The Ashikaga clan took control of the shogunate and moved its headquarters back to Kyoto, to the Muromachi district of the city. With the return of government to the capital, the popularizing trends of the Kamakura period came to an end, and cultural expression took on a more aristocratic, elitist character. During the Muromachi Period, Zen Buddhism rose to prominence—especially among the elite Samurai class, who embraced the Zen values of personal discipline, concentration, and self-development.

Impact on the Arts

The establishment of the great Zen monasteries in Kamakura and Kyoto had a major impact on the visual arts. Because of secular ventures and trading missions to China organized by Zen temples, many Chinese paintings and objects of art were imported into Japan, profoundly influencing Japanese artists working for Zen temples and the shogunate. These imports not only changed the subject matter of painting, but they also modified the use of color; the bright colors of Yamato-e yielded to the monochromes of painting in the Chinese manner of Sui-boku-ga (水) or Sumi-e (墨). This style mainly used only black ink—the same as used in East Asian calligraphy.

Sesshū Tōyō and the Haboku Style

The foremost painter of the new Sumi-e style was Sesshū Tōyō (1420–1506), a Rinzai priest who traveled to China in 1468–69 and studied contemporary Ming painting. Some of his most dramatic works are in the Chinese splashed-ink (Haboku) style. Upon returning to Japan, Sesshū built himself a studio and established a large following; these painters are now referred to as the Unkoku-rin school or School of Sesshū.

To make one of the calligraphic and highly stylized Haboku paintings, the painter would visualize the image and then make swift broad strokes onto the paper, resulting in a splashed and abstract composition. This was all done with meditative concentration. This impressionistic style of painting was supposed to capture the true nature of the subject. The Sumi-e style was highly influenced by calligraphy, using the same tools and style as well as its Zen philosophy. To paint in this style, the practitioner had to clear his mind and apply the brushstrokes without too much thinking, termed mushin (無) by the Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitaro. The concept of mushin is central to many Japanese arts, including the art of the sword, archery, and the tea ceremony.
Haboku-Sansui, Sesshū, 1495, ink on silk,

Splashed-ink style landscape by Sesshū Tōyō (1420–1506)

Sansuiga

By the end of the 14th century, monochrome landscape paintings (sansuiga) had found patronage by the ruling Ashikaga family and became the preferred genre among Zen painters, gradually evolving from their Chinese roots to a more Japanese style. An important landscape painter during this period was Tenshō Shūbun, a monk at the Kyoto temple of Shōkoku-ji who traveled to Korea and studied under Chinese painters. He returned to Japan in 1404 and settled in Kyoto, then the capital city. He became director of the court painting bureau that had been established by Ashikaga shoguns, who were influential art patrons. Shūbun's best known landscape painting, designated as a National Treasure in Japan, is Reading in a Bamboo Grove, now kept in the Tokyo National Museum.
Detail of *Reading in a Bamboo Grove, 1446*, Shūbun

Tenshō Shūbun's (1414–1463) best known landscape painting.

**Shigajiku**

Another style that developed in the Muromachi period is Shigajiku (詩). This is usually a painting accompanied by poetry and has its roots in China, where painting and poetry were seen as inherently connected. This style grew out of literary circles; an artist would usually be given a subject to paint, and the poets would compose accompanying verses to be written above the work.

A famous example is the scroll *Catching a Catfish with a Gourd* (Hyōnen-zu 瓢), located at Taizō-in, Myōshin-ji, Kyoto. Created by the priest-painter Josetsu (c. 1386–1428), it includes 31 verses of many Zen priests inscribed above the painting. In the foreground of the painting, a man is depicted on the bank of a stream holding a small gourd and looking at a large slithery catfish. Mist fills the middle ground, and the background mountains appear to be far in the distance. The painting was commissioned by the 4th Shogun of the Muromachi Period, Ashikaga Yoshimochi (1386–1428), and was based on the nonsensical riddle: "How do you catch a catfish with a gourd?" The painting and accompanying poems capture both the playfulness and the perplexing nature of Zen Buddhist Koans, which were supposed to aid the Zen practitioner in their meditation.

In the late Muromachi period, ink painting had migrated out of the Zen monasteries into the art world in general. Artists from the Kano School and the Ami School adopted the style and themes but introduced a
more plastic and decorative effect that would continue into modern times.

24.1.2: Zen Dry Rock Gardens

Zen dry rock gardens were created at temples of Zen Buddhism during the Muromachi Period to imitate the intimate essence of nature.

Learning Objective

Describe the features of the Zen dry rock gardens of the Muromachi Period

Key Points

- The Muromachi Period in Japan was characterized by political rivalries that frequently led to wars, but also by an extraordinary flourishing of Japanese culture. It saw the beginning of Noh theater, the Japanese tea ceremony, the shoin style of Japanese architecture, and the zen garden.
- In Kyoto in the 14th and 15th century, a new kind of garden designed to stimulate meditation began to appear at the important zen temples.
- These new zen dry rock gardens were usually relatively small, surrounded by a wall, and meant to be seen while seated from a single viewpoint outside the garden.
- The invention of the zen garden was closely connected with developments in Japanese ink landscape paintings. Japanese painters such as Sesshū Tōyō (1420–1506) and Soami (1472–1525) greatly simplified their views of nature, showing only the most essential aspects of nature.
- The most famous of all zen gardens in Kyoto is Ryōan-ji, built in the late 15th century when, for the first time, the zen garden became purely abstract.

Key Terms

Noh theater

A major form of classical Japanese musical drama that has been performed since the 14th century; many characters are masked, with men playing both male and female roles.

shoin

A type of audience hall in Japanese architecture that was developed during the Muromachi period; the term originally meant a study and a place for lectures on the sūtra within a temple, but later it came to mean just a drawing room or study.

Background: The Muromachi Period

The Muromachi Period in Japan, which took place at roughly the same time as the Renaissance in Europe, was characterized by political rivalries that frequently led to wars. However, it was also characterized by an extraordinary flourishing of Japanese culture. It saw the beginning of Noh theater, the Japanese tea ceremony, the shoin style of Japanese architecture, and the zen garden.
A New Kind of Garden

Zen Buddhism was introduced into Japan at the end of the 12th century. It quickly achieved a wide following, particularly among the Samurai class and war lords, who admired its doctrine of self-discipline. The gardens of the early zen temples in Japan resembled Chinese gardens at the time, with lakes and islands. However, in Kyoto in the 14th and 15th century, a new kind of garden appeared at the important zen temples. These zen gardens were designed to stimulate meditation. "Nature, if you made it expressive by reducing it to its abstract forms, could transmit the most profound thoughts by its simple presence," Michel Baridon, a well-known researcher, wrote. "The compositions of stone, already common China, became in Japan, veritable petrified landscapes, which seemed suspended in time, as in a certain moment of Noh theater, which dates to the same period."

Saihō-ji

The first garden to begin the transition to this new style is considered by many experts to be Saihō-ji, The Temple of the Perfumes of the West—popularly known as Koke-dera, the Moss Garden—in the western part of Kyoto. The Buddhist monk and zen master Musō Kokushi transformed a Buddhist temple into a zen monastery in 1334 and built the gardens. The lower garden of Saihō-ji is in the traditional Heian Period style: a pond with several rock compositions representing islands. The upper garden is a dry rock garden featuring three rock "islands." The first, called Kameshima (the island of the turtle), resembles a turtle swimming in a "lake" of moss. The second, Zazen-seki, is a flat meditation rock that is believed to radiate calm and silence. The third island is the kare-taki, a dry "waterfall" composed of a stairway of flat granite rocks. The moss that now surrounds the rocks and represents water was not part of the original garden plan; it grew several centuries later when the garden was left untended. However, it is now the most famous feature of the garden.

The moss gardens of Saihō-ji

Golden Pond in the center of the moss garden.
Tenryū-ji

Muso Kokushi built another temple garden at Tenryū-ji, known as the Temple of the Celestial Dragon. This garden appears to have been strongly influenced by Chinese landscape paintings of the Song Dynasty, which feature mountains rising in the mist and suggest great depth and height. The garden at Tenryū-ji has a real pond with water and a dry waterfall of rocks, appearing similar to a Chinese landscape. Saihō-ji and Tenryū-ji show the transition from the Heian style garden toward a more abstract and stylized view of nature.

Ginkaku-ji

The gardens of Ginkaku-ji, also known as the Silver Pavilion, are also attributed to Muso Kokushi. This temple garden includes a traditional pond garden, but it had a new feature for a Japanese garden: an area of raked white gravel with a perfectly shaped mountain of white gravel, resembling Mount Fuji, in the center. The scene is called ginshana, or "sand of silver and open sea." This garden feature became known as kogetsudai, or "small mountain facing the moon." After this garden was built, similar small Mount Fujis made of sand or earth covered with grass appeared in Japanese gardens for centuries afterwards.

Silver Pavilion at Ginkaku-ji, a Buddhist temple in Kyoto, Japan

At the gardens at Ginkaku-ji, commonly known as the Silver Pavilion, the viewer can see the perfectly shaped mountain of white gravel, resembling Mount Fuji, in the center.

Ryōan-ji

The most famous of all zen gardens in Kyoto is Ryōan-ji, built in the late 15th century where, for the first time, the zen garden became purely abstract. The garden is a rectangle of 340 square meters. Placed within it are 15 stones of different sizes, carefully composed in five groups: one group of five stones, two groups
of three, and two groups of two stones. The stones are surrounded by white gravel, which is carefully raked every day by the monks. The only vegetation in the garden is some moss around the stones. The garden is meant to be viewed from a seated position on the veranda of the hōjō, the residence of the abbot of the monastery.

Ryōan-ji (late 15th century) in Kyoto, Japan, a famous example of a zen garden

The most famous of all zen gardens in Kyoto is Ryōan-ji, built in the late 15th century where for the first time the zen garden became purely abstract.

Daisen-in

The garden at Daisen-in (1509–1513) took a more literary approach than Ryōan-ji. A "river" of white gravel represents a metaphorical journey through life—beginning with a dry waterfall in the mountains, passing through rapids and rocks, and ending in a tranquil sea of white gravel with two gravel mountains.
A mountain, waterfall, and gravel "river" at Daisen-in (1509–1513)

The garden at Daisen-in took a more literary approach than Ryōan-ji, with its "river" of white gravel representing a metaphorical journey through life.

Attributions

- Zen Ink Painting
  - "Boundless." [http://www.boundless.com/](http://www.boundless.com/). Boundless Learning [CC BY-SA 3.0](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/).
- Zen Dry Rock Gardens
  - "Boundless." [http://www.boundless.com/](http://www.boundless.com/). Boundless Learning [CC BY-SA 3.0](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/).
24.2: The Momoyama Period

24.2.1: Japanese Architecture in the Momoyama Period

The ornate castle architecture and interiors of the Momoyama period were a reflection of both a feudal lord's power and a new aesthetic sense.

Learning Objective

Explain the relevance of ornate castle architecture and interiors of Momoyama architecture

Key Points

- During the Momoyama period (1573–1603), Japan underwent a process of unification after a long period of civil war, and rulers Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi built castles as symbols of their power. Typically, castles build during this period consisted of a central tower or tenshu surrounded by gardens and fortified buildings.
- The dark interiors of castles were often decorated by artists, and the spaces were separated using sliding fusuma panels and byōbu folding screens.
- The ornate castle architecture and interiors, adorned with painted screens embellished with gold leaf, marked a clear departure from the somber monotones favored during the previous Muromachi period.
- The shoin style, or a style of Japanese residential architecture that forms the basis of today's traditional-style Japanese houses, had its origins within the earlier Muromachi period and continued to be refined during the Momoyama period.
- Ōsaki Hachiman-gū (大崎八幡宮) is a Shinto shrine in Aoba-ku, Sendai, Miyagi, Japan and is a fine example of Momoyama architecture.

Key Terms

daïmyo

A lord during the Japanese feudal period.

hip-and-gable

An East Asian style of roof architecture in which a hip roof slopes down on all four sides and integrates a gable on two opposing sides; it is usually constructed with two large sloping roof sections in the front and back respectively, while the two sides each are usually constructed with a smaller roof section.

Overview: Architecture in the
Momoyama Period

During the Momoyama period (1573–1603), Japan underwent a process of unification after a long period of civil war. It was marked by the rule of Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, men who built castles as symbols of their power: Nobunaga in Azuchi, the seat of his government, and Hideyoshi in Momoyama. The Ōnin War during the previous Muromachi period had led to the rise of castle architecture in Japan. By the time of the Momoyama period, each domain was allowed to have one castle of its own.

The Momoyama period was a period of interest in the outside world, while it also saw the development of large urban centers and the rise of the merchant class. The ornate castle architecture and interiors, adorned with painted screens embellished with gold leaf, were a reflection of both the power of the feudal lord (known as a daimyo) and a new aesthetic sense that marked a clear departure from the somber monotones favored during the previous Muromachi period. A specific genre that emerged at this time was called the Namban style—exotic depictions of European Christian priests, traders, and other "southern barbarians."

Castle Architecture

Typically, castles during this period consisted of a central tower or tenshu surrounded by gardens and fortified buildings. All of this was set within massive stone walls and surrounded by deep moats. The dark interiors of castles were often decorated by artists, and the spaces were separated using sliding fusuma panels and byōbu folding screens.

Byōbu

A six-panel byōbu folding screen from the 17th century painted with nature imagery.

Matsumoto, Kumamoto, and Himeji (popularly known as the White Heron castle) are excellent examples of the castles of the period, while Nijo Castle in Kyōto is an example of castle architecture blended with that of an imperial palace, to produce a style that is more in keeping with the Chinese influence of previous centuries.
Matsumoto Castle in Matsumoto, Nagano, completed in 1600.

This picture depicts the typical central tower set within massive stone walls and surrounded by a deep moat.

Residential Architecture

The shoin style, or a style of Japanese residential architecture that forms the basis of today's traditional-style Japanese houses, had its origins within the earlier Muromachi period and continued to be refined during the Momoyama period. Verandas linked the interiors of residential buildings with highly cultivated exterior gardens. Fusuma (vertical rectangular panels that can slide from side to side) and byōbu (folding screens) became highly decorated with paintings, and often an interior room with shelving and an alcove (tokonoma) was used to display art work (typically a hanging scroll).

Ōsaki Hachiman-gū

Ōsaki Hachiman-gū (大崎八幡宮) is a Shinto shrine in Aoba-ku, Sendai, Miyagi, Japan and is a fine example of Momoyama architecture. The main shrine building (社殿 shaden) is the oldest extant structure in which the worship hall and the main sanctuary are interconnected under the same roof in the shape of an H (a structure known as ishi-no-ma-zukuri). It is a single-storied structure consisting of a main sanctuary (honden) and a worship hall (haiden), which are joined via a connecting passage called ishi-no-ma. All three structures are under a single roof covered with shake shingles. The sanctuary and worship hall are both built with a hip-and-gable roof, to which a simple gabled roof of the ishi-no-ma connects. On the front of the building is an attached triangular dormer with a decorative bargeboard of concave shape; the entrance is covered by an elaborate canopy.
Ōsaki Hachiman-gū shrine in Sendai city

The main shrine building is an example of Momoyama architecture.

24.2.2: Shoin Rooms

A shoin is a type of audience hall in Japanese architecture that was developed during the Muromachi period and refined during the Momoyama period.

Learning Objective

Discuss the changes in Japanese shoin rooms during the Momoyama Period

Key Points

- Shoin originally referred to a study and a place for lectures on the sūtra within a temple, but later it came to mean simply a drawing room or study.
- The emerging architecture of the Muromachi period was subsequently influenced by the increasing use and appearance of shoin. One of the most noticeable changes in architecture to arise from the shoin came from the practice of lining the floors of the room with tatami mats.
- The architecture surrounding and influenced by the shoin quickly developed many distinguishing features, such as the tokonoma (an elevated recess built into the wall to display art) and chigaidana (shelving structures built into the tokonoma to display smaller objects).
- Occurring at the same time as the development of shoin architecture was the rise in popularity of fusuma, or sliding doors used to divide rooms.

Key Terms

tokonoma

A recess in a domestic interior in which a hanging scroll, flower arrangement, or other art is
fusuma

A vertical rectangular sliding panel, often painted or decorated, used in Japan as a door or movable wall.

tatami

Straw matting, in a standard size, used as a floor covering in Japanese houses.

sūtra

An aphorism (or line, rule, formula) or a collection of such aphorisms in the form of a manual or, more broadly, a text in Hinduism or Buddhism.

Overview

A shoin (書院, drawing room or study) is a type of audience hall in Japanese architecture that was developed during the Muromachi period. The term originally referred to a study and a place for lectures within a temple, but later it came to mean simply a drawing room or study. The shoin-zukuri style takes its name from these rooms. In a shoin-zukuri building, the shoin is the room dedicated to the reception of guests.

The Shiro-shoin at Hongan-ji

Shoin is a type of audience hall in Japanese architecture.

Development of the Shoin

The foundations for the design of today's traditional Japanese residential houses were established in the late Muromachi period and refined during the ensuing Momoyama period. Shoin-zukuri, a new architectural style influenced by Zen Buddhism, developed during that time from the earlier Heian period's palaces and
the subsequent residential style favored by the warrior class during the Kamakura period.

One of the most noticeable changes in architecture to arise from the shoin came from the practice of lining floors with tatami mats. Since tatami mats have a standardized size, the floor plans for shoin rooms had to be developed around the proportions of the tatami mat; this in turn affected the proportions of doors, the height of rooms, and other aspects of the structure. Before the shoin popularized the practice of lining floors with tatami mats, it had been standard to only bring out a single tatami mat for the highest-ranking person in the room to sit on.

The architecture surrounding and influenced by the shoin quickly developed many other distinguishing features. Because guests sat on the floor rather than on furniture, they were positioned at a lower vantage point than their Chinese counterparts at that time, who were accustomed to using furniture. This lower vantage point generated such developments as suspended ceilings, which functioned to make the room feel less expansive and also resulted in the ceilings rafters no longer being visible, as they were in China. The new suspended ceilings also allowed for more elaborate and ornate decoration.

Other characteristics to arise from the lower vantage point were the tokonoma and chigaidana. The tokonoma was an elevated recess built into the wall to create a space for displaying Chinese art, which was popular at the time, at a comfortable eye level. The chigaidana, or "staggered shelves," were shelving structures built into the tokonoma to display smaller objects. Fusuma, or sliding doors, were also becoming a popular means to divide rooms. As a result, columns began to be created that were square-shaped to accommodate the sliding doors.

The asymmetry of the tokonoma and chigaidana pair, as well as the squared pillars, differentiated the shoin design from the contemporary Chinese design of the time, which preferred symmetric pairs of furniture and round pillars. Soon after its advent, shoin architecture became associated with these evolving elements as it developed into the predominant format for formal gathering rooms.

24.2.3: The Tea Ceremony

The art of the tea ceremony flourished during the Momoyama period and was influenced by Zen principles of imperfection and transience.

Learning Objective

Describe the cultural relevance of the Japanese Tea Ceremony

Key Points

- The Momoyama period saw the budding of what is generally regarded as Japanese traditional culture as we know it today.
- The Japanese tea ceremony developed as a transformative practice centered around the aesthetic of wabi-sabi, a concept derived from Zen Buddhism that emphasizes simplicity, humility, impermanence, and intense appreciation of the immediate experience.
- Murata Jukō is known as the founder of the tea ceremony as a spiritual practice. He was the first to emphasize the concept of wabi-sabi in the aesthetic of the ceremony.
- Sen Rikyū (1522–1591) is the most famous and revered tea master in the history of the tea ceremony. His teachings perfected many newly developed forms in architecture and gardens, art, and the full development of the Way of Tea.
- Sen Rikyū emphasized several key aspects of the ceremony, including rustic simplicity, directness of
approach, and honesty of self; he was also responsible for the creation of hand-moulded Raku teabowls.

Key Terms

chanoyu

A traditional Japanese tea ceremony in which matcha is prepared and presented.

wabi-sabi

A Japanese aesthetic that derives from imperfection and transience.

Introduction

The Japanese tea ceremony or chanoyu, also known as the Way of Tea, is a Japanese cultural ritual involving the ceremonial preparation and presentation of matcha or powdered green tea. Loose leaf green tea or sencha is also used, but far less commonly. Zen Buddhism was a formative influence in the development of the tea ceremony.

History of the Tea Ceremony

The art of the tea ceremony flourished during the Momoyama period (ca. 1568–1603). Both Oda Nobunaga—the initiator of the unification of Japan under the shogunate in the late 16th century—and his successor Toyotomi Hideyoshi lavished time and money on this pastime, collecting tea bowls and other implements, sponsoring lavish social events, and patronizing acclaimed masters of the tea ceremony.

By the 16th century, tea drinking had spread to all levels of society in Japan. Sen Rikyū (1522–1591) is perhaps the most well-known and still revered figure in the history of the tea ceremony. He was driven by the concept of ichi-go ichi-e, a philosophy that each meeting should be treasured, for it can never be reproduced. His teachings perfected many newly developed forms in architecture, gardens, art, and the full development of the Way of Tea. He also reestablished and emphasized several key aspects of the ceremony, including rustic simplicity, directness of approach, and honesty of self. The principles he set forward—harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility—are still central to the tea ceremony today.
The tea ceremony flourished during the Momoyama period

An open tea house serving matcha (right) and a peddler selling decoctants (left). The monk clothing depicts the relationship between matcha culture, tea ceremony, and Buddhism.

Cultural Relevance of the Tea Ceremony

The Japanese tea ceremony developed as a transformative practice and began to evolve its own aesthetic over the years. Murata Jukō is known as an early developer of the ceremony as a spiritual practice; he studied Zen Buddhism under the monk Ikkyū, who revitalized Zen in the 15th century, and this is considered to have influenced his use of the Zen concept of wabi-sabi in the aesthetic of the tea ceremony.

"Wabi" represents the inner spiritual experiences of human life. Its original meaning indicates quiet or sober refinement, or subdued taste characterized by humility, restraint, simplicity, naturalism, profundity, imperfection, and asymmetry. "Sabi," on the other hand, represents the outer material side of life. Originally, it meant "worn," "weathered," or "decayed." Together, wabi-sabi emphasizes simplicity, humility, consciousness of impermanence, and intense appreciation of the immediate experience, and this was reflected in the aesthetics of the tea ceremony.

Tea Ceremony Objects

Tea equipment is called chadōgu. A wide range of chadōgu are available and different styles and motifs are used for different events and in different seasons. All of the tools for the tea ceremony are handled with exquisite care. They are scrupulously cleaned before and after each use and before storing, and some are handled only with gloved hands. Some items, such as the tea storage jar "chigusa," were so revered that they were given proper names like people.

The pottery used for the tea ceremony is often simple and natural, in accordance with wabi-sabi, and came to transform the manner in which the Japanese viewed ceramic ware. Tea master Sen Rikyū was involved in the innovation of Raku teabowls with the collaboration of a tile maker named Raku Chōjirō, prompted by his preference for simple, rustic items made in Japan rather than the expensive Chinese ware that was in fashion at the time. These hand-moulded and glazed vessels have become intimately connected with the tea ceremony and are still in use to the present day.

The following are a few of the essential components:

- The chakin, a small rectangular white linen or hemp cloth mainly used to wipe the tea bowl.
- The tea bowl, available in a wide range of sizes and styles, with different styles used for thick and thin tea. Shallow bowls, which allow the tea to cool rapidly, are used in summer, while deep bowls are used in winter. Bowls over four hundred years old are in use today. The best bowls are thrown by hand, and irregularities and imperfections are prized and often featured prominently as the "front" of the bowl.
- The tea caddy, a small lidded container in which the powdered tea is placed for use in the tea-making procedure.
- The tea scoop, generally carved from a single piece of bamboo, ivory, or wood and used to scoop tea
from the tea caddy into the tea bowl. Different styles and colors are used in various tea traditions.

- The tea whisk, used to mix the powdered tea with the hot water and typically carved from a single piece of bamboo.

**Attributions**

- **Japanese Architecture in the Momoyama Period**

- **Shoin Rooms**

- **The Tea Ceremony**


24.3: The Edo Period

24.3.1: Rinpa School Painting in the Edo Period

In the early years of the Edo period, some of Japan's finest expressions in painting were produced by the Rinpa School.

Learning Objective

Identify key attributes of Rinpa painting during the Edo period

Key Points

- In the early years of the Edo period, the full impact of Tokugawa policies had not yet been felt, and some of Japan's finest expressions in architecture and painting were produced by the Rinpa School.
- Rinpa artists worked in various formats, notably screens, fans, hanging scrolls, woodblock printed books, lacquerware, ceramics, and kimono textiles. Many Rinpa paintings were used on the sliding doors and walls (fusuma) of noble homes.
- In 1615, Hon'ami Kōetsu founded the Rinpa School of painting by establishing an artistic community of craftsmen supported by wealthy merchant patrons in northeastern Kyoto.
- Kōetsu's collaborator, Tawaraya Sōtatsu, maintained an atelier in Kyoto and produced commercial paintings such as decorative fans and folding screens; Sōtatsu specialized in decorated paper, to which Kōetsu added calligraphy.
- Like Kōetsu, Sōtatsu pursued the classical Yamato-e genre, but he also pioneered a new technique with bold outlines and striking color schemes.
- The Rinpa School was revived in the Genroku era (1688–1704) by Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan; Kōrin's innovation was to depict nature as an abstract using numerous color and hue gradations and mixing colors on the surface to achieve eccentric effects.

Key Terms

swordsmith

A maker of swords.

lacquerware

A decorative object coated with lacquer.

Background: The Edo Period

In the Edo (江) or Tokugawa (徳) period between 1603 to 1868, Japan was under the rule of the Tokugawa shogunate, a form of military rule headed by the shogun. The period was characterized by economic
growth, strict social order, isolationist foreign policies, increased environmental protection, and popular enjoyment of the arts. It was officially established in Edo on March 24, 1603 by Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616). The period came to an end with the Meiji Restoration on May 3, 1868, after the fall of Edo to forces loyal to the Emperor.

One of the dominant themes in the Edo period was the repressive policies of the shogunate and the attempts of artists to escape these strictures. The foremost of these strictures was the closing of the country to foreigners and the imposition of strict codes of behavior affecting many aspects of life, including the clothes one wore, the person one married, and the activities one could or should not pursue. In the early years of the Edo period, however, the full impact of Tokugawa policies had not yet been felt, and some of Japan's finest expressions in architecture and painting were produced by the Rinpa School.

The Rinpa School

Style and Technique

Rinpa artists worked in various formats, notably screens, fans, hanging scrolls, woodblock printed books, lacquerware, ceramics, and kimono textiles. Many Rinpa paintings were used on the sliding doors and walls (fusuma) of noble homes. Subject matter and style were often borrowed from Heian period traditions of Yamato-e, with elements from Muromachi ink paintings, Chinese Ming Dynasty flower-and-bird paintings, and Momoyama period Kanô School developments. The stereotypical standard painting in the Rinpa style involves simple natural subjects such as birds, plants, and flowers with the background filled in with gold leaf. Emphasis on refined design and technique became more pronounced as the Rinpa style developed.

Development of the School

Rinpa is one of the major historical schools of Japanese painting. In 1615, Hon'ami Kōetsu founded an artistic community of craftsmen, supported by wealthy merchant patrons of the Nichiren Buddhist sect at Takagamine in northeastern Kyoto. Merchants, who were the lowest of the four social classes and often considered unproductive members of society, were increasingly relied on by the samurai for the production of consumer goods and artistic works. Both the affluent merchant town elite and the old Kyoto aristocratic families favored arts that followed classical traditions, and Kōetsu obliged by producing numerous works of ceramics, calligraphy, and lacquerware. Kōetsu's collaborator, Tawaraya Sōtatsu, maintained an atelier in Kyoto and produced commercial paintings such as decorative fans and folding screens. Sōtatsu specialized in making decorated paper with gold or silver backgrounds, which Kōetsu assisted by adding calligraphy.

The Founders: Hon'ami Kōetsu and Tawaraya Sōtatsu

Both artists came from families of cultural significance. Kōetsu came from a family of swordsmiths who had served the imperial court and great warlords and shoguns. Kōetsu's father evaluated swords for the Maeda clan, as did Kōetsu himself. However, Kōetsu was less concerned with swords and more interested in painting, calligraphy, lacquerwork, and the Japanese tea ceremony (he later created several Raku ware tea bowls). His own painting style was flamboyant, recalling the aristocratic style of the Heian period.
Sōtatsu also pursued the same classical Yamato-e genre as Kōetsu, but he pioneered a new technique with bold outlines and striking color schemes. Two of his most famous works include the folding screens *Wind and Thunder Gods* (⾵ Fūjin Raijin-zu), located in Kennin-ji temple in Kyoto, and *Matsushima* (松) at the Freer Gallery in Washington, DC.

**Early Rinpa School work**

Portion of Sōtatsu's *Fūjin Raijin-zu* (*Wind and Thunder Gods*). 17th century.

**Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan**

The Rinpa school was revived in the Genroku era (元 1688–1704) by Ogata Kōrin and his younger brother Ogata Kenzan, sons of a prosperous Kyoto textile merchant. Kōrin's innovation was to depict nature as an abstract, using numerous color and hue gradations, mixing colors on the surface to achieve eccentric effects, and liberally using precious substances like gold and pearl.

Kōrin's masterpiece *Red and White Plum Trees* (紅 Kōhakubai-zu, c. 1714–15) is now at the MOA Museum of Art in Atami, Shizuoka. As a dramatic composition, it established the direction of Rinpa for the remainder of its history. Kōrin collaborated with Kenzan in painting designs and calligraphy on his brother's pottery. Kenzan remained a potter in Kyoto until after Kōrin's death in 1716, when he began to paint professionally. Other Rinpa artists active in this period were Tatebayashi Kagei, Tawaraya Sōri, Watanabe Shikō, Fukae Roshū, and Nakamura Höchū.
Portion of Ogata Kōrin's Kōhakubai-zu

Kōrin's Red and White Plum Trees (1714–15) established the direction of Rinpa for the remainder of its history.

Sakai Hōitsu

Rinpa was revived again in 19th century Edo by Sakai Hōitsu (1761–1828), a Kanō School artist whose family had been one of Ogata Kōrin's sponsors. Sakai published a series of 100 woodcut prints based on paintings by Kōrin, and his painting Summer and Autumn Grasses (夏 Natsu akikusa-zu) is painted on the back of Kōrin's Wind and Thunder Gods screen and is now at the Tokyo National Museum.

24.3.2: Kanō School Painting in the Edo Period

The Kanō School, which had a naturalistic style, was the dominant style of the Edo period (1603 - 1868).

Learning Objective

Describe the defining characteristics of the Kano School during the Edo Period, and distinguish it from literati painting

Key Points

- The Kanō School began by reflecting a renewed influence from Chinese painting, and it continued to produce monochrome brush paintings in the Chinese style over the years.
- However, the school simultaneously developed a brightly colored and firmly outlined style for large
panels, which reflected distinctively Japanese traditions.

- The school was supported by the shogunate, effectively representing an official style of art; under the Edo period in which art and culture were strictly regulated, this essentially monopolized the field of painting.
- Kanō School artists worked mainly for the nobility, shoguns, and emperors, covering a wide range of styles, subjects, and formats.
- While initially innovative, from the 17th century onward, the artists of the school became increasingly conservative and academic in their approach.

**Key Terms**

literati

Well-educated, literary people; intellectuals who are interested in literature.

Kanō school

One of the most famous schools of Japanese painting, and the dominant style of painting from the late 15th century until 1868, when the Meiji period began.

**Overview: The Kanō School**

The Kanō School (狩) was the dominant style of painting during the Edo period. The Kanō family itself produced a series of major artists over several generations, and a large number of unrelated artists trained in workshops of the school. Some artists married into the family and changed their names, while others were adopted, creating a family known for its artistic innovations.

**The Style of the School**

The school began by reflecting a renewed influence from Chinese painting, and it continued to produce monochrome brush paintings in the Chinese style over the years. However, it simultaneously developed a brightly colored and firmly outlined style for large panels, which reflected distinctively Japanese traditions. Kanō Motonobu, a Japanese painter and member of the Kano School, is particularly known for expanding the school's repertoire through his bold artistic techniques and patronage. Many of the works during this period combined the forceful quality of work from the earlier Momoyama period with the tranquil depiction of nature and more refined use of color typical of the current Edo period.

The school was supported by the shogunate, effectively representing an official style of art; under the Edo period in which art and culture were strictly regulated, this essentially monopolized the field of painting. The Kanō School drew on the Chinese tradition of literati painting by scholar-bureaucrats, but the Kanō painters were firmly professional artists: they were very generously paid if successful and received formal workshop training in the family workshop (similar to European painters of the Renaissance or Baroque period). Kanō painters worked primarily for the nobility, shoguns, and emperors, covering a wide range of styles, subjects, and formats. While initially innovative, from the 17th century onward, the artists of the school became increasingly conservative and academic in their approach.
Tan'yū headed the Kajibashi branch of the Kanō School in Edo and painted in many castles, including the Imperial palace. He used a less bold but extremely elegant style, which tended to become stiff and academic in the hands of less talented imitators.

The range of forms, styles, and subjects that were established in the early 17th century continued to be developed and refined without major innovation for the next two centuries. Although the Kanō School was the most successful in Japan, the distinctions between its work and the work of other schools tended to diminish over time, as all schools worked in a range of styles and formats, making the attribution of unsigned works often unclear. By the end of the Edo period and the beginning of the Meiji period (1868), the Kanō School had divided into many different branches.
24.3.3: Japanese Literati Painting in the Edo Period

An important art trend during the Edo period was the bunjinga or Nanga School, a kind of literati painting highly influenced by China literati.

Learning Objective

Discuss literati painting in Edo Japan and its debt to China

Key Points

- Japanese bunjinga paintings—usually in monochrome black ink, sometimes with light color, and nearly always depicting Chinese landscapes or similar subjects—were patterned after Chinese literati painting.
- Due to the Edo period policy of sakoku, Japanese literati artists were left with an incomplete view of Chinese literati ideas, and the bunjinga style emerged from a fusion of Chinese and Japanese ideals.
- Japanese literati were not members of an academic, intellectual bureaucracy like their Chinese counterparts; while the Chinese literati were academics aspiring to be painters, the Japanese literati were professionally trained painters aspiring to be academics and intellectuals.
- Bunjinga paintings almost always depicted traditional Chinese subjects, and artists focused almost exclusively on landscapes, birds, and flowers.
- As Japan became exposed to Western culture at the end of the Edo period, many bunjinga artists began to incorporate stylistic elements of Western art into their own.

Key Terms

sakoku

The foreign relations policy of Japan in which strict regulations were applied to commerce and foreign relations by the shogunate; the policy stated that, with the exception of certain circumstances, no foreigner could enter nor could any Japanese citizen leave the country on penalty of death; the policy was enacted by the Tokugawa shogunate from 1633–39 and remained in effect until 1853, with the arrival of the Black Ships of Commodore Matthew Perry and the forcible opening of Japan to Western trade.

Bunjinga

A school of Japanese painting that flourished in the late Edo period among artists who considered themselves literati, or intellectuals; also known as Nanga.

Rise of Bunjinga

An important trend in the Edo period was the rise of the bunjinga genre, a kind of literati painting, also known as the Nanga School or Southern Painting school. This genre started as an imitation of Chinese scholar-amateur painters of the Yuan Dynasty, whose works and techniques came to Japan in the mid-18th century. Later bunjinga artists considerably modified both the techniques and the subject matter of this genre to create a blending of Japanese and Chinese styles. Exemplars of this style include Ike no Taiga,
Uragami Gyokudo, Yosa Buson, Tanomura Chikuden, Tani Buncho, and Yamamoto Baiitsu.

Fishing in Springtime by Ike no Taiga (1747)

Bunjinga paintings most often depicted traditional Chinese subjects. Artists focused almost exclusively on landscapes, birds, and flowers.

A detailed landscape depicting a river running through hills with huts scattered throughout. Two fishermen sit in a boat in the river.

As part of the Nanga School, the bunjinga style of Japanese painting flourished in the late Edo period among artists who considered themselves literati, or intellectuals. While each of these artists was unique and independent, they all shared an admiration for traditional Chinese culture. Their paintings—usually in monochrome black ink, sometimes with light color, and nearly always depicting Chinese landscapes or similar subjects—were patterned after Chinese literati paintings, called wenrenhua. Poetry or other
inscriptions were also an important element of these paintings and were often added by friends of the artist, rather than the artist themselves.

**China's Influence**

Chinese literati painting focused on expressing the rhythm of nature rather than the realistic depiction of it. However, the artist was encouraged to display a cold lack of affection for the painting, as if he, as an intellectual, was above caring deeply about his work. Ultimately, this style of painting was an outgrowth of the idea of the intellectual, or literati, as a master of all the core traditional arts—painting, calligraphy, and poetry.

Under the Edo period policy of sakoku, Japan was cut off from the outside world almost completely. Its contact with China persisted, although this was greatly limited. What little did make its way into Japan was either imported through Nagasaki or produced by the Chinese people living there. As a result, the bunjinga artists who aspired to the ideals and lifestyles of the Chinese literati were left with a rather incomplete view of Chinese literati ideas and art. Bunjinga grew, therefore, out of what did come to Japan from China, including Chinese woodblock-printed painting manuals and an assortment of paintings widely ranging in quality.

*Yearning for a Pleasurable Place in Mountains of the*
Heart by Kameda Bôsai, 1816

Kameda Bôsai (1752–1826) was a well-known Japanese literati painter.

Two figures sit near the edge of a cliff, facing each other.

Bunjinga was also shaped by the great differences in culture and environment of the Japanese literati as compared to their Chinese counterparts. The form was, to a great extent, defined by its rejection of other major schools of art like the Kano and Tosa Schools. In addition, the literati themselves were not members of an academic, intellectual bureaucracy, as their Chinese counterparts were. While the Chinese literati were academics aspiring to be painters, the Japanese literati were professionally trained painters aspiring to be academics and intellectuals.

Unlike other schools of art that pass on their specific style to their students, every bunjinga artist displayed unique elements in their creations, and many diverged greatly from the stylistic elements employed by their forebears. As Japan became exposed to Western culture at the end of the Edo period, some bunjinga artists began to incorporate stylistic elements of Western art into their own.
8 Daoist Immortals by Tani Bunchō

Tani Bunchō (1763–1841) was a Japanese literati painter and poet.

The eight immortals are shown in various poses and movement, interacting with an unknown creature.

24.3.4: Ukiyo-e Woodblock Prints in the Edo Period

With the rise of popular culture in the Edo period, a style of woodblock prints called ukiyo-e became a major art form.

Learning Objective
Describe the ukiyo-e woodblock prints of Edo Japan, and the social milieu they most famously depicted

**Key Points**

- With the rise of popular culture in the Edo period, a style of woodblock prints called ukiyo-e became a major art form.
- Its techniques were fine tuned to produce colorful prints of everything from daily news to schoolbooks. Subject matter ranged from Kabuki actors and the demimonde to courtesans and famous landscapes.
- Ukiyo-e prints began to be produced in the late 17th century, with Harunobu producing the first polychrome print in 1764.
- The dominant artistic figure of the 19th century was Hokusai’s contemporary, Hiroshige, a creator of romantic and somewhat sentimental landscape prints.

**Key Terms**

Hiroshige

(1797–1858) A Japanese ukiyo-e artist and one of the last great artists in that tradition.

ukiyo-e

A Japanese woodblock print or painting depicting everyday life.

Katsushika Hokusai

(1760–1849) A Japanese artist famous for his woodblock print series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, which includes perhaps the most famous Japanese woodblock print, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*.

**Overview**

With the rise of popular culture in the Edo period, a style of woodblock prints called ukiyo-e became a major art form. Its techniques were fine tuned to produce colorful prints of everything from daily news to schoolbooks. Subject matter ranged from Kabuki actors and courtesans to famous landscapes. By 1800, ukiyo-e flourished alongside Rinpa and literati painting.

The school of art best known in the West is that of the ukiyo-e paintings and woodblock prints of the demimonde—the world of the Kabuki theater and the brothel district. Ukiyo-e prints began to be produced in the late 17th century, and required a highly involved process that included a designer, engraver, printer, and publisher. Suzuki Harunobu produced the first polychrome (multicolor) print in 1764, and print designers of the next generation, including Torii Kiyonaga and Utamaro, created elegant and sometimes insightful depictions of courtesans.

**Notable Artists**

The best known work of ukiyo-e from the Edo period is the woodblock print series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* (富岳三十六景, c. 1831), which includes the internationally recognized print *The
Great Wave off Kanagawa, was created during the 1820s by Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849). Hokusai was influenced by such painters as Sesshu and other styles of Chinese painting. While Hokusai's work prior to this series is certainly important, it was not until this series that he gained broad recognition. It was also The Great Wave print that initially received, and continues to receive, acclaim and popularity in the Western world.

The Great Wave off Kanagawa, Hokusai's most famous print, the first in the series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji

Although it is often used in tsunami literature, there is no reason to suspect that Hokusai intended it to be interpreted in that way. The waves in this work are sometimes mistakenly referred to as tsunami (津), but they are more accurately called okinami (沖), great off-shore waves.

The dominant artistic figure of the 19th century was Hokusai's contemporary, Hiroshige, a creator of romantic and somewhat sentimental landscape prints. The odd angles and shapes through which Hiroshige often viewed landscapes, with his emphasis on flat planes and strong linear outlines, had a profound impact on such Western artists as Edgar Degas and Vincent van Gogh. Through artworks held in Western museums, these same printmakers would later exert a powerful influence on the imagery and aesthetic approaches used by early Modernist poets like Ezra Pound and Richard Aldington.
Hiroshige's *Upright Tōkaidō* depicts Hakone.

This print shows travelers and porters crossing a steep pass in the mountains at the Hakone station on the Tōkaidō Road.

Ukiyo-e was closely linked to the bunjinga, or literati, style of painting that emerged during the same period. Just as ukiyo-e artists chose to depict figures from life outside of the strictures of the Tokugawa shogunate, bunjinga artists turned to Chinese culture and based their paintings on those of Chinese scholar-painters. The exemplars of this style include Ike no Taiga, Yosa Buson, Tanomura Chikuden, and Yamamoto Baiitsu.

### 24.3.5: Zenga Painting in the Edo Period

Zenga is the Japanese term for the practice and art of Zen Buddhist painting and calligraphy, which developed during the Edo period.

**Learning Objective**
Describe Zenga and its relation to Zen Buddhism

Key Points

- Zenga is a style of Japanese ink-based calligraphy and painting.
- In many instances of Zenga, calligraphy and images are combined in the same piece; the calligraphy denotes a poem, or saying, that teaches some element of the path of Zen.
- The brush painting in Zenga is characteristically simple, bold, and abstract.
- In keeping with individual paths to enlightenment, nearly any subject matter can lend itself to Zenga; however the enso, sticks, and Mt. Fuji are the most common elements.

Key Terms

Ensō

A Japanese word meaning "circle" and a concept strongly associated with Zen.

Zenga

The Japanese term for the practice and art of Zen Buddhist painting and calligraphy.

Overview: Zenga Painting

Zenga is the Japanese term for the practice and art of Zen Buddhist painting and calligraphy; it is associated with the Japanese tea ceremony and also various martial arts. As a noun, Zenga is a style of Japanese calligraphy and painting done in ink. In many instances, both calligraphy and image will be merged within the same piece. The calligraphy denotes a poem or saying that teaches some element of the path of Zen; the brush painting is characteristically simple, bold, and abstract.
Example of Zen painting, Edo period

This Japanese scroll calligraphy of Bodhidharma reads: “Zen points directly to the human heart, see into your nature and become Buddha.” A man's face is drawn under the calligraphy. It was created by Hakuin Ekaku (1685 to 1768).

Development of Zenga

Though Zen Buddhism had arrived in Japan at the end of the 12th century, Zenga art didn't come into its own until the beginning of the Edo period in 1600. In keeping with individual paths to enlightenment, nearly any subject matter can and has lent itself to Zenga; however, the most common elements depicted were the ensō, sticks, and Mt. Fuji. In Zen Buddhism, an ensō is a circle that is hand-drawn in one or two uninhibited brushstrokes to express a moment when the mind is free to let the body create. The ensō symbolizes absolute enlightenment, strength, elegance, the universe, and mu (the void), and it is characterized by a minimalism born of Japanese aesthetics.
Ensō

Though nearly any subject matter can and has lent itself to Zenga paintings, one of the most common elements depicted was the ensō, a symbol of enlightenment.

Japanese aesthetics used in Zenga paintings were shaped by a set of ancient ideals that include wabi (transient and stark beauty), sabi (the beauty of natural patina and aging), and yūgen (profound grace and subtlety). These ideals, along with others, underpin much of Japanese cultural and aesthetic norms on what is considered tasteful or beautiful. Japanese aesthetics now encompass a variety of ideals; some of these are traditional, while others are modern and sometimes influenced by other cultures.

24.3.6: Crafts in the Edo Period

Traditional Japanese handicrafts associated with the Edo period include temari (a toy handball for children), doll-making, lacquerware, and weaving.

Learning Objective

Name the traditional Japanese handicrafts developed during the Edo period

Key Points

- The craft of making temari or handballs evolved into an art in the early Edo period. These balls were made from strips of old kimono silk and exquisitely embroidered with complex decorative stitching.
- Another craft that developed during the Edo period, when Japan was closed to most international trade, was elaborate doll-making; a market of wealthy individuals would pay for the most beautiful
doll sets for their homes or as gifts.
- Japanese lacquerwork reached its peak in the 17th century, when lacquer was used to decorate a range of everyday items; the famous lacquerer Ogata Korin introduced a greater use of pewter and mother of pearl in lacquerware.
- Other important crafts during the Edo period include nishijin weaving, yuzen dying, and the production of wadokei or Japanese clocks.

**Key Terms**

Hinamatsuri
A traditional Japanese doll festival held every year on March 3rd.

Edo
Former name of Tokyo.

temari
A folk craft born in ancient Japan from the desire to amuse and entertain children with a toy handball.

gofun
A smooth, porcelain-like substance made from ground oyster shell.

lacquer
A glossy, resinous material used as a surface coating.

**Temari**

Of the many and varied traditional handicrafts of Japan, the one closely associated with the Edo period (1600–1868) is the ancient craft of temari. Temari means "handball" in Japanese, and it is a folk craft born in ancient Japan from the desire to amuse and entertain children with a toy handball. Temari is said to have its origins from Kemari (football), brought to Japan from China about 1400 years ago. These balls were constructed from the remnants of old kimonos; pieces of silk fabric were wadded up to form a rough ball, and this preliminary ball was then further wrapped in additional strips of fabric. Temari-making gradually became an art, and the initially purely functional stitching assumed a decorative and detailed quality over the years, displaying intricate embroidery.

Temari-making grew as a pastime for noble women in the early part of the Edo period, with women of the aristocracy and upper class competing in creating increasingly more intricate and beautiful balls. Over the years and region by region, the women of Japan explored the craft and improved it. Noisemakers were added to the inside of the balls, Japanese designs mimicked the colors of nature, and the brilliant colors of kimono silk were used to stitch eye-catching patterns.
**Temari**

Temari balls are a folk art form that originated in China and was introduced to Japan around the 7th century A.D.

**Doll-Making**

Another craft that developed during the Edo period, while Japan was closed to most international trade, was doll-making. During this time, there was a market of wealthy individuals who would pay for the most beautiful doll sets for display in their homes or as valuable gifts. Sets of dolls came to include larger and more elaborate figures. The competitive trade was eventually regulated by the government, meaning that doll-makers could be arrested or banished for breaking laws restricting materials and heights.

Hina dolls are the dolls for Hinamatsuri, the doll festival held annually on March 3rd. They can be made of many materials, but the classic hina doll has a pyramidal body of elaborate, many-layered textiles stuffed with straw and/or wood blocks; carved wood hands (and in some cases feet) covered with gofun; a head of carved wood or molded wood compo covered with gofun, with set-in glass eyes (though before about 1850, the eyes were carved into the gofun and painted); and human or silk hair. A full set comprises at least 15 dolls representing specific characters, with many accessories (dogu); however, a basic set consists of a male-female pair, often referred to as the Emperor and Empress.
Hinamatsuri Hina Dolls, the Emperor with Two Handmaidens

Fine dollmaking developed during the Edo period (1603-1867).

Lacquerwork

Japanese lacquerwork reached its peak in the 17th century during the Edo period. Lacquer was used both for solely decorative objects as well as everyday items, such as combs, tables, bottles, headrests, small boxes, and writing cases. The most famous lacquerer-painter of the time was Ogata Korin, who was the first artist to use mother of pearl and pewter in larger quantities in lacquerware.
Lacquered Writing Box by Ogata Korin, ca. 1700.

This writing box made of black lacquered wood with gold, maki-e, abalone shells, silver, and corroded lead strip decorations dates from the 18th century and reflects the skill of the Edo painter and lacquerer Ogata Korin.

Other Crafts

Several techniques of Japanese weaving and dying also thrived during the Edo period. Nishijin weaving involved weaving many different types of colored yarn together to form decorative designs. In yuzen, or the paste-resist method of dying, designs were applied to textiles using stencils and rice paste, resulting in the imitation of aristocratic brocades, which were forbidden to commoners by laws of the Edo period.

Another Edo period craft that reflected contemporary Japan's interest in electrical phenomena and mechanical sciences was the development of wadokei, or Japanese clockwatches. These were typically made of brass or iron in the lantern clock design and driven by weights.

Attributions

- Rinpa School Painting in the Edo Period
- Kanō School Painting in the Edo Period
- Japanese Literati Painting in the Edo Period
  - "800px-
Ukiyo-e Woodblock Prints in the Edo Period

Zenga Painting in the Edo Period

Crafts in the Edo Period
- "Japanese_folk_art%3B_Temari%EF%BC%8CE6%89%8B%E9%9E%A0.jpg." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temari_(toy)#/media/File:Japanese_folk_art;_Temari%EF%BC%8C%EF%BC%89.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temari_(toy)#/media/File:Japanese_folk_art;_Temari%EF%BC%8C%EF%BC%89.jpg), Wikipedia CC BY 2.0.
24.4: The Modern Period

24.4.1: Japanese Art in the Meiji Period

The art of the Meiji period (1868–1912) was marked by a division between European and traditional Japanese styles.

Learning Objective

Explain how the conflict caused by Europeanization and modernization during the Meiji Period was reflected in the artwork of the time

Key Points

- The Meiji period (September 1868 through July 1912) represents the first half of the Empire of Japan, during which Japanese society moved from being an isolated feudalism to its modern form.
- During this period, western style painting (Yōga) was officially promoted by the government, which sent promising young artists abroad for studies and hired foreign artists to establish an art curriculum at Japanese schools.
- After an initial burst of western style art, there was a revival of appreciation for traditional Japanese styles (Nihonga) led by art critic Okakura Kakuzo and educator Ernest Fenollosa.
- In the 1880s, western style art was banned from official exhibitions and was severely criticized by critics. Supported by Okakura and Fenollosa, the Nihonga style evolved with influences from the European pre-Raphaelite movement and European romanticism.
- In 1907, with the establishment of the Bunten exhibitions, both competing groups—Yōga and Nihonga—found mutual recognition and co-existence and even began the process toward mutual synthesis.

Key Terms

Romanticism

An artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century and in most areas was at its peak from 1800 to 1840; partly a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, it was also a revolt against aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment and a reaction against the scientific rationalization of nature.

pre-Raphaelite movement

An art movement founded by a group of English painters, poets, and critics with the intention of reforming art by rejecting what they considered to be the mechanistic approach first adopted by the Mannerist artists who succeeded Raphael and Michelangelo.

feudalism

A social system based on personal ownership of resources, personal fealty of a lord by a subject, and
a hierarchical social structure reinforced by religion.

Overview: The Meiji Period

The Meiji period (明 Meiji-jidai) was an era in Japanese history that extended from September 1868 through July 1912. This period represents the first half of Japan's time as an imperial power. Fundamental changes affected Japan's social structure, internal politics, economy, military, and foreign relations. Japanese society moved from being an isolated feudalism to its modern form. In art, this period was marked by the division into competing European and traditional indigenous styles. In 1907, with the establishment of the Bunten exhibition under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, both competing groups found mutual recognition and co-existence and even began the process towards mutual synthesis.

The Yōga Style

During the Meiji period, Japan underwent a tremendous political and social change in the course of the Europeanization and modernization campaign organized by the Meiji government. Western style painting (Yōga) was officially promoted by the government, which sent promising young artists abroad for studies. The Yōga style painters formed the Meiji Bijutsukai (Meiji Fine Arts Society) to hold its own exhibitions and to promote a renewed interest in western art. Foreign artists were also hired to come to Japan to establish an art curriculum in Japanese schools. The Yōga style encompassed oil painting, watercolors, pastels, ink sketches, lithography, etching, and other techniques developed in western culture.
Yōga style painting of the Meiji period by Kuroda Seiki (1893)

Yōga, in its broadest sense, encompasses oil painting, watercolors, pastels, ink sketches, lithography, etching, and other techniques developed in western culture. However, in a more limited sense, Yōga is sometimes used specifically to refer to oil painting.

The Nihonga Style

After an initial burst of western style art, however, the pendulum swung in the opposite direction. Led by art critic Okakura Kakuzo and educator Ernest Fenollosa, there was a revival of appreciation for traditional Japanese styles (Nihonga). In the 1880s, western style art was banned from official exhibitions and was severely criticized by critics. Supported by Okakura and Fenollosa, the Nihonga style evolved with influences from the European pre-Raphaelite movement and European romanticism. Paintings of this style were made in accordance with traditional Japanese artistic conventions, techniques, and materials based on traditions over a thousand years old.
Nihonga style painting: *Black Cat by Kuroki Neko, 1910*)

Nihonga style paintings were made in accordance with traditional Japanese artistic conventions, techniques, and materials. While based on traditions over a thousand years old, the term was coined in the Meiji period of the Imperial Japan to distinguish such works from Western style paintings, or Yōga.

**24.4.2: Japanese Art in the Showa Period**

During the Shōwa period, Japan shifted toward totalitarianism until its defeat in World War II, when it led an economic and cultural recovery.
Learning Objective

Create a timeline describing the upheaval, occupation, democratic reforms, and economic boom of the pre- and post-war Shōwa period

Key Points

- Japanese painting in the pre-war Shōwa period was largely dominated by the work of Yasui Sōtarō (1888–1955) and Umehara Ryūzaburō (1888–1986).
- During World War II, government controls and censorship meant that only patriotic themes could be expressed, and many artists were recruited into the government propaganda effort.
- After the end of World War II in 1945, many artists began working in art forms derived from the international scene, moving away from local artistic developments into the mainstream of world art.

Key Terms

Surrealism

An artistic movement and an aesthetic philosophy, pre-dating abstract expressionism, that aims for the liberation of the mind by emphasizing the critical and imaginative powers of the subconscious.

fascism

A political regime having totalitarian aspirations, ideologically based on a relationship between business and the centralized government, business-and-government control of the market place, repression of criticism or opposition, a leader cult, and exalting the state and/or religion above individual rights.

Treaty of San Francisco

A treaty between Japan and part of the Allied Powers, officially signed by 48 nations on September 8, 1951 and coming into force on April 28, 1952; representing the official conclusion of World War II, it ended Japan's position as an imperial power and allocated compensation to Allied civilians and former prisoners of war who had suffered Japanese war crimes.

Overview: The Shōwa Period

The Shōwa period in Japanese history corresponds to the reign of the Shōwa Emperor, Hirohito (裕), from December 25, 1926 through January 7, 1989. The Shōwa period was longer than the reign of any previous Japanese emperor. During the pre-1945 period, Japan moved toward political totalitarianism, ultra-nationalism, and fascism, culminating in Japan's invasion of China in 1937. This was part of an overall global period of social upheavals and conflicts such as the Great Depression and the Second World War.

Defeat in the Second World War brought radical change to Japan. For the first and only time in its history, Japan was occupied by foreign powers. This occupation by the United States on behalf of the Allied Forces (which included the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and China) lasted seven years. Allied occupation brought forth sweeping democratic reforms, leading to the end of the emperor's status as a living god and
the transformation of Japan into a democracy with a constitutional monarch. In 1952, with the Treaty of San Francisco, Japan became a sovereign nation once more and underwent an economic revitalization. In these ways, the pre-1945 and post-war periods regard completely different states: the pre-1945 Shōwa period (1926–1945) concerns the Empire of Japan, while the post-1945 Shōwa period (1945–1989) was a part of the State of Japan.

### Art in the Pre-War Shōwa Period

Japanese painting in the pre-war Shōwa period was largely dominated by Yasui Sōtarō (1888–1955) and Umehara Ryūzaburō (1888–1986). These artists introduced the concepts of pure art and abstract painting to the Nihonga tradition (a style based on traditional Japanese art forms) and thus created a more interpretative version of that genre. Yasui Sōtarō was strongly influenced by the realistic styles of the French artists Jean-François Millet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Paul Cézanne; he incorporated clear outlines and vibrant colors in his portraits and landscapes, combining western realism with the softer touches of traditional Nihonga techniques. This trend was further developed by Leonard Foujita (also known as Fujita Tsuguharu) and the Nika Society to encompass surrealism. To promote these trends, the Independent Art Association was formed in 1930.

*Portrait of Chin-Jung (1934) by Yasui Sōtarō. The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.*
Yasui Sōtarō was strongly influenced by the realistic styles of the French artists Jean-François Millet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir and, in particular, Paul Cézanne. He incorporated clear outlines and vibrant colors in his portraits and landscapes, combining western realism with the softer touches of traditional Nihonga techniques.

By the early 20th century, European art forms were also introduced into Japanese architecture. Their marriage with traditional Japanese styles of architecture produced notable buildings like the Tokyo Train Station and the National Diet Building that still exist today.

![Tokyo Station](image)

**Tokyo Station**

Tokyo Station opened on December 20, 1914, and was heavily influenced by European architectural styles.

**Art in the Post-War Shōwa Period**

During World War II, government controls and censorship meant that only patriotic themes could be expressed, and many artists were recruited into the government propaganda effort. After the end of World War II in 1945, many artists began working in art forms derived from the international scene, moving away from local artistic developments into the mainstream of world art. Traditional Japanese conceptions endured, however, particularly in the use of modular space in architecture, certain spacing intervals in music and dance, a propensity for certain color combinations, and characteristic literary forms.

**24.4.3: Japanese Art after World War II**

After World War II, Japanese artists became preoccupied with the mechanisms of urban life and moved from abstraction to anime-influenced art.

**Learning Objective**

Describe the flourishing of painting, calligraphy, and printmaking after World War II
**Key Points**

- In the post-World War II period of Japanese history, the government-sponsored Japan Art Academy (Nihon Geijutsuin) was formed in 1947, containing both nihonga and yōga divisions.
- After World War II, painters, calligraphers, and printmakers flourished in the big cities, particularly Tokyo, and became preoccupied with the mechanisms of urban life, reflected in the flickering lights, neon colors, and frenetic pace of their abstractions.
- After the abstractions of the 1960s, the 1970s saw a return to realism strongly flavored by the "op" and "pop" art movements, embodied in the 1980s in the explosive works of Ushio Shinohara.
- By the late 1970s, the search for Japanese qualities and a national style caused many artists to reevaluate their artistic ideology and turn away from what some felt were the empty formulas of the West. Contemporary paintings began to make conscious use of traditional Japanese art.
- There are also a number of contemporary painters in Japan whose work is largely inspired by anime subcultures and other aspects of popular and youth culture, such as the work of Takashi Murakami.

**Key Terms**

Rinpa school

One of the major historical schools of Japanese painting, created in 17th-century Kyoto by Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637) and Tawaraya Sōtatsu (d. c. 1643).

Nitten

The annual Japan Art Academy Awards and the premier art exhibition in Japan.

**Japanese Art After World War II**

Welcoming the new post-World War II period of Japanese history, the government-sponsored Japan Art Academy (Nihon Geijutsuin) was formed in 1947. The Academy contained both nihonga (traditional Japanese) and yōga (European-influenced) divisions. Government sponsorship of art exhibitions had ended, but they were replaced by private exhibitions, such as the Nitten, on an even larger scale. Although the Nitten was initially the exhibition of the Japan Art Academy, since 1958 it has been run by a separate private corporation. Participation in the Nitten became almost a prerequisite for nomination to the Japan Art Academy.

The arts of the Edo and prewar periods (1603–1945) had been supported by merchants and urban people, but they were not as popular as the arts of the postwar period. After World War II, painters, calligraphers, and printmakers flourished in the big cities—particularly Tokyo—and became preoccupied with the mechanisms of urban life, reflected in the flickering lights, neon colors, and frenetic pace of their abstractions. Styles of the New York-Paris art world were fervently embraced. After the abstractions of the 1960s, the 1970s saw a return to realism strongly flavored by the "op" and "pop" art movements, embodied in the 1980s in the explosive works of Ushio Shinohara.

Many such outstanding avant-garde artists worked both in Japan and abroad, winning international prizes. Some of these artists felt more identified with the international school of art rather than anything specifically Japanese. By the late 1970s, the search for Japanese qualities and a national style caused many artists to reevaluate their artistic ideology and turn away from what some felt were the empty formulas of the West. Contemporary paintings within the modern idiom began to make conscious use of traditional
Mono-ha

Mono-ha is the name given to group of 20th century Japanese artists. The mono-ha artists explored the encounter between natural and industrial materials, such as stone, steel plates, glass, light bulbs, cotton, sponge, paper, wood, wire, rope, leather, oil, and water, arranging them in mostly unaltered, ephemeral states. The works focus as much on the interdependency of these various elements and the surrounding space as on the materials themselves. A number of mono-ha artists turned to painting to recapture traditional nuances in spatial arrangements, color harmonies, and lyricism.

Nihonga, Rinpa, and Kano Influence

Japanese-style, or nihonga painting continued in a pre-war fashion, updating traditional expressions while retaining their intrinsic character. Some artists within this style still painted on silk or paper with traditional colors and ink, while others used new materials, such as acrylics.

Many other older schools of art were still practiced, most notably those of the Edo and pre-war periods. For example, the decorative naturalism of the Rinpa school, characterized by brilliant, pure colors and bleeding washes, was reflected in the work of many artists of the postwar period in the 1980s art of Hikosaka Naoyoshi. The realism of Maruyama Ōkyo's School and the calligraphic and spontaneous Japanese style of the gentlemen-scholars were both widely practiced in the 1980s. At times, all of these schools (along with older ones, such as the Kano School ink traditions) were drawn on by contemporary artists in the Japanese style and in the modern idiom. Many Japanese-style painters were honored with awards and prizes as a result of renewed popular demand for Japanese-style art beginning in the 1970s. More and more, the international modern painters also drew on the Japanese schools as they turned away from Western styles in the 1980s. The tendency had been to synthesize East and West, and some artists such as Shinoda Toko had already leapt the gap between the two. Shinoda's bold sumi ink abstractions were inspired by traditional calligraphy but were realized as lyrical expressions of modern abstraction.

Anime Influence

There are also a number of contemporary painters in Japan whose work is largely inspired by anime subcultures and other aspects of popular and youth culture. Takashi Murakami is perhaps among the most famous and popular of these, along with the other artists in his Kaikai Kiki studio collective. His work centers on expressing issues and concerns of post-war Japanese society through seemingly innocuous forms. He draws heavily from anime and related styles but produces paintings and sculptures in media more traditionally associated with fine arts, intentionally blurring the lines between commercial, popular, and fine arts.

Takashi Murakami is perhaps the most famous and popular contemporary Japanese artist whose work is largely inspired by anime subcultures and other aspects of popular and youth culture.

Attributions

- Japanese Art in the Meiji Period
  - "Boundless." [http://www.boundless.com/](http://www.boundless.com/). Boundless Learning [CC BY-SA 3.0](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/).
- Japanese Art in the Showa Period
  - "Boundless." [http://www.boundless.com/](http://www.boundless.com/), Boundless Learning [CC BY-SA 3.0](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/).
  - "1280px-Tokyo_station05s3872.jpg." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>Japanese_art#/media/File:Tokyo_station05s3872.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>Japanese_art#/media/File:Tokyo_station05s3872.jpg), Wikipedia [CC BY-SA 2.5](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/).
- Japanese Art after World War II
  - "Boundless." [http://www.boundless.com/](http://www.boundless.com/), Boundless Learning [CC BY-SA 3.0](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/).