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## The Tea Ceremony and Collection : The Prehistory of Private Art Museums

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## The Tea Ceremony and Collection: The Prehistory of Private Art Museums

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### 1. POWERHOLDERS AND COLLECTIONS

Those with power collect treasures. They do so in order to ornament their selves, to show off their power, or to amass property. This is perhaps a universal tendency in human behavior. However, there are many differences in how this is actually manifest, both historically and regionally.

In Japan, too, there have been collections by the sovereign or by the hegemon who took his place. Since the time of the Imperial Household's collection of treasures at Shōsōin, there have been collections of what are known as "venerable treasures" (*gomotsu*). Outside the Imperial Household, there have also been the *Higashiyama gomotsu*, which were the treasures of the Ashikaga bakufu in the 15th century, and the *Ryūei gomotsu*, the treasures of the Tokugawa bakufu; thus the word *gomotsu* has come to designate the collections of the hegemon of each period. Leaving aside those at Shōsōin, these collections have for the most part been dispersed, or their ownership has changed; one cannot regard them as unchanging. The present situation of the treasures of the Imperial Household is unclear, but as a collection it is not representative of treasures in Japan.

Perhaps one of the reasons why collections have been so fluid is that, in the first place, it has been assumed that treasures in Japan should be used as room decoration or as implements in various arts, and not displayed to the general public. As a result, when compared to royal collections in various foreign countries such as the countries of western Europe, China, and India, the collections of the ruling authorities in Japan cannot escape giving a strikingly poor impression. This is because Japanese rulers have lacked the robes, jewels, and crowns with which others have decorated their own bodies so as to show off their ruling self solely through display. In the Japanese case, most treasures have been part of the fabric of everyday life, or art and craft objects used for decorating rooms; the majority of the remainder seems to have been

comprised of tea ceremony utensils. In other words, the collections of ruling authorities are intimately related to the nature of the ruling authority.

It is significant that ruling authority in Japan has been hidden away. For example, the emperor never appeared in front of the people. Even when it was necessary to appear, he never showed his face to people without social standing. For example, the painter Kanō Tan'yū was invited to the palace to paint a picture of Gomizuno-o (the 108th emperor, who reigned in the first half of the 17th century). However, the emperor sat behind a screen, with his face hidden; Kanō painted an impression of his clothes, according to the description of a monk standing nearby, and then withdrew. An imperial princess, daughter to the emperor, painted the face, thus completing the picture. As with the emperor, so with the shogun. Even though space was prepared for an audience, ordinary people did not in fact have an audience with the shogun. There is a description of an audience in Siebold's diary, when he visited Edo castle at the beginning of the 19th century with the head of the Dutch factory. The shogun passed by while he was prostrated on the ground, and thus he could not see his face. Thus Japanese rulers, for whom there was no need to ornament their own persons and so show off their power—indeed who one might say were indifferent to a discourse of “naked authority”—had little need of the jewels and dress of western European monarchs, who frequently displayed themselves in front of their people, and felt obliged to show off their splendor.

However, within this history of ruling authority in Japan, there did appear anomalous rulers who put themselves on show. This was solely under the exceptional circumstances of social turmoil, namely the period of Northern and Southern Courts and the Azuchi-Momoyama period. Although one cannot claim that the events described in the *Taiheiki* actually happened, the behavior of ostentatious daimyo like Sasaki Dōyo, who held a lavish cherry-blossom-viewing party at Oharano and flaunted a beautifully decorated procession on leaving the capital, was never witnessed among rulers during times of stability. Likewise, the portrait of Go-daigo was painted in a manner quite unlike that of generations of past emperors. 250 years later, the Azuchi-Momoyama hegemony Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi were extremely rare as powerholders who sought to display their wealth, and themselves. We can see one example of this in the tea ceremony which Toyotomi Hideyoshi threw at Kitano on Tenshō 15 (1587)/10/1.

The collecting of famous tea utensils, which spanned the age of both Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, was known as “hunting for famous pieces” (*meibutsu gari*). This was not plunder, but collecting by paying the highest price—although it is hard to deny that it came close to plunder. There were no other times apart from this brief period when ruling authorities themselves set about collecting. The famous pieces (tea utensils) collected under these two hegemony were displayed in front of daimyo and leading townsmen, even occasionally inside the court, and also in front of the people. The latter occasion was the great tea ceremony at Kitano. Permission was granted to tea masters throughout the country to set up tea rooms in the precincts of the Tenmangu shrine at Kitano in Kyoto. “Famous pieces of the

realm” (*tenka no meibutsu*) owned by Hideyoshi (and including a gold tea room) were put on display in the main sanctuary, and tea was prepared by four tea masters, including Hideyoshi himself (and using Hideyoshi’s own utensils), and served to the assembled tea masters.

Let us look in a little more detail at the details of this great tea ceremony. First, news of the event was announced about two months in advance. In the announcement, all tea masters, however poor, were asked to apply. It was mentioned that those who did not participate would not be allowed to make tea thereafter. In fact, roughly 800 people are said to have participated. A single tea room was nine feet wide (roughly 3 meters), and thus tea rooms were set up stretching a total of 2,400 meters. Besides displaying his famous pieces, Hideyoshi himself prepared tea; those who were to drink it were chosen by lottery. Further, he toured the 800 tea rooms, and is said to have lavished praise on the technique of one tea master in particular. This cultural performance was laid out for all to see.

The tea utensils which were displayed at the great Kitano tea ceremony were the “famous pieces of the realm”; they had significance not only within the narrow, enclosed circle of tea masters, but were recognized treasures, which by being thus displayed increased in exchange value. First, books were written passing judgment on what constituted a “famous piece of the realm.” One of these was *Yamanoue Sōji ki*, also known as *Chaki Meibutsu shū*, written by the Sakai tea master, Yamanoue Sōji, in 1588. This enumerated the famous pieces among tea utensils, attaching an explanation to each. It mentioned over 200 famous pieces, from those owned by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the greatest powerholder of the time, to those owned by townsmen in Sakai and Kyoto. It also included tea utensils such as canisters and cups (*chawan*), paintings by Yu Jian and Mu Xi, imported from China, and calligraphy by Xutang Zhiyu.

During the Tokugawa period (1603–1867), many famous pieces were collected in the treasure house of the Tokugawa shogun. There were known as the *Ryūei gomotsu*. In 1660 a catalogue was wood-block printed and published of the famous pieces owned by daimyo and powerful townsmen, including the *Ryūei gomotsu*. The book was called the *Ganka Meibutsu ki*, and mentioned the names of roughly 500 pieces. Being mentioned in this book guaranteed these pieces’ value as treasures, and so they were frequently exchanged as gifts. For example, there is a very famous *katatsuki* tea canister, known as the *Dōami katatsuki*. This was a *Ryūei gomotsu*, owned by Tokugawa Ieyasu, but Nanbu Toshinao, a daimyo in the Tohoku region, subsequently received it from Ieyasu. After Toshinao’s death, his family offered it as a bequest to the Tokugawa bakufu, but it was immediately returned, thus continuing as a Nanbu family treasure. When Toshinao’s son died, no heir had been chosen and a struggle arose in the family. Initially it seemed as if the family would be broken up, but once again the *Dōami katatsuki* was offered to the bakufu by the Nanbu family, and a nephew was allowed to inherit. The tea utensil, the *Dōami katatsuki*, was valued as the symbol of the trust of Ieyasu—the “divine lord” (*shinkun*)—and the bakufu, as the descendant of Ieyasu, could not simply destroy the family which

owned the *Dōami katatsuki*. This means two things. First, tea utensils, together with swords, had become a medium of symbolic exchange among the military houses. Second, the value of famous pieces was doubled by their having a story (a history) as well as being a thing. I will consider this question of an object's history again below.

The famous pieces in *Yamanoue Sōji ki* and *Ganka Meibutsu ki* were of course not listed as a record of national property; the books mentioned pieces which were well-known, rather than the collection of a particular family or individual. During this period, the idea of a family or individual collection had not yet taken root. It was from the second half of the 17th century that catalogs were created of the family possessions of daimyo who were famous tea masters. These catalogs were not printed, like *Ganka Meibutsu ki*, but there are many examples of their having been copied by devotees. For example, there are the *Enshū Kurachō* and the *Tsuchiya Kurachō*, catalogs of the objects owned by Kobori Enshū, a 17th century daimyo who was a famous garden designer and architect and had created a new style of tea ceremony, and by the daimyo Tsuchiya Masanao, a famous collector of tea utensils from the end of the 17th century into the 18th century. Both of these were copied by various people and thus disseminated. However, such collections were not merely the result of collecting by an individual collector; there are many cases where the objects collected by many generations of daimyo were brought together. Even the *Tsuchiya Kurachō*, for example, includes not only the objects collected by Tsuchiya Masanao himself, but also those obtained by his father. In other words, even when an individual daimyo was at the center of a collection's creation, it was not considered the collection of an individual, but rather the collection of a family. Thus the descendants who succeeded to the house also added to the collection; thus the collection of a daimyo house was created. A collection was not an individual's treasure, but the treasure of the house, which continued after his death.

Let me try to give a very general impression of daimyo collections. The catalog of objects owned by the Date family of Sendai was only drawn up in Meiji 22 (1889), but gives a rough impression of daimyo collections during the Bakumatsu period. In it, the objects listed as "treasures" are as follows. 198 paintings, pieces of calligraphy, and screens, 373 tea utensils, incense burners, and writing materials, 205 swords, 295 other pieces of weaponry, armor, and saddlery, 290 books, and 170 pieces of laquerware, musical instruments, and textiles, for a total of 1,531 objects. There were some 12,000 objects besides these treasures, 8,000 documents and poetry jottings, and over 10,000 books in several tens of thousands of volumes. It is clear that important daimyo had vast collections. The collection of the Ii family of Hikone was also vast, the catalogs alone coming to 201 volumes, and innumerable individual objects recorded in the catalogs. It included unusual objects such as a collection of noh masks and a catalog of clocks (229 pieces), but basically it was a collection that had come down to the family over the centuries. However, it has not yet been possible to find out which individual daimyo with what kind of interest collected which objects.

In contrast to this way of thinking of a collection, as belonging to the house, in

the latter half of the 18th century a daimyo appeared who emphasized his own collection as that of an individual. This was Matsudaira Fumai (1751–1818), the lord of Matsue castle, which faced the Japan Sea. Fumai planned a new collection of tea utensils, and over a period of some 25 years created a substantial collection. It was entirely composed of tea utensils, and was a collection of unusually high quality, with five of its total of 518 objects currently designated as Japanese National Treasures. In his will, Fumai told his children how to care for his collection of tea utensils. According to this, his two most highly prized objects were “treasures of the Japanese nation,” which transcended the bounds of the Matsudaira house, and he ordered that they should continue to treat them as reverentially as he had himself (stipulating that they should not be used at tea ceremonies). Further, Fumai ordered that even after his death they should not part with famous pieces which he himself had collected; his descendants could do with other pieces what they wished. Here one sees the development of a way of thinking about a collection as an expression of the collector himself, of his philosophy and sense of aesthetics. Fumai not only collected, but edited 18 volumes of the *Kokon Meibutsu Ruijū*, an illustrated catalog of famous pieces based around his own collection. This large catalog aimed to provide accurate illustrations and data for famous pieces; for those pieces owned by others where Fumai had not been able to see the real thing, he left the illustration page blank, explaining that when he was able to acquire an accurate illustration he would insert it when the catalog was reprinted. This kind of positivistic, scientific spirit was fostered in the context of forming such collections.

The collections mentioned above were all collections of famous tea utensils, and did not cover the whole variety of culture. However, by the latter half of the 18th century, the daimyos' finances were in ruins, the daimyo afflicted by chronic over-expenditure. Some daimyo managed to avoid this by encouraging production within their domains, and undertook research into products which could be sold for a profit in the central markets. As a result, the daimyo themselves began to take an interest in animals, plants, and minerals. This is one reason why the study of natural history progressed among the daimyo. Thus, from the latter half of the 18th century, the objects in the individual collections of daimyo began to diversify; natural history specimens began to be added, under the influence of the scientific spirit mentioned above. At the same time, the study of natural history also became popular among the people, and *bussankai* were held in Edo and elsewhere, at which rare objects were gathered from throughout the country and put on display.

One of the first daimyo to take such an interest in natural history, particularly animals and plants, was Hosokawa Shigekata (1720–1785). Shigekata is known for having brought the Kumamoto domain out of its economic crisis, but he also studied and made specimens of insects, bird, fish, and plants. For example, he faithfully recorded in illustrations the process through which a butterfly changed from a larva to a pupa and then an adult. Since a similar book of etchings had been published 50 years earlier in Europe, it is possible that he was influenced by it, but this remains unclear. He also left records on animals that had been brought from overseas,

including something described as a “korokoderu,” that is, a crocodile. The pictures of crabs and wolves in the book he edited are just as beautiful as the plates in Siebold’s *Nihon Dōbutsu shi*. Shigekata also made many pressings of leaves, and authored many books on plants.

A succession of daimyo with similar interests appeared between the 18th and 19th centuries. Matsudaira Yoritaka (1711–1771), the lord of Takamatsu castle (present-day Kagawa prefecture) produced an illustrated catalog of 2,000 varieties of marine life and birds, with the help of Hiraga Gennai, a scholar of natural history who was well versed in European scholarship. Satake Shozan (1748–85), the daimyo of Akita, himself painted European-style pictures and was very influential in introducing European painting technique into Japan; he also painted pictures of over 300 kinds of insects. When one looks at them, there are some which are copies of the pictures of Hosokawa Shigekata, mentioned above, making it clear that a network had been established so that daimyo who were interested in natural history could exchange information among themselves.

The interest in natural history was not restricted to animals and plants, but also extended to an interest in old objects. The politician Matsudaira Sadanobu (1758–1829), who directed the important political reform of the Tokugawa bakufu known as the Kansei reforms, was very interested in such scholarship, and edited the *Shūko Jisshu* (A collection of ten kinds of old things), a large illustrated catalogue in some 85 volumes. The “ten kinds” were bell inscriptions, tomb inscriptions, weapons, copperware, musical instruments, framed pictures, writing materials, seals, books, and paintings. When Sadanobu toured the regions he took with him the famous painter, Maruyama Ōkyo, asking him to make on-the-spot copies of paintings and objects, which he printed and published as sketches, using woodblocks. This work did not end just with research. Inevitably, he also collected objects. In his notes, Matsudaira Sadanobu records that “hearing that I was collecting useless objects, various people would present me with various things, like stones and tiles.” On the basis of such illustrated catalogues, there is little doubt that the daimyo collected in their storehouses large quantities of specimens ranging from plants and animals to antiquities, which now only exist in these catalogues.

The age in which Siebold arrived in Japan, in 1823, was one in which this kind of research into and collection of natural history had broadened and deepened still further. We should not forget that the period during which Siebold was creating his Japanese collection was also the period of men like Maeda Toshiyasu (1800–1859), the daimyo of Toyama domain, who had studied Linnaeus’ classification of plants, Kuroda Narikiyo (1795–1851), the daimyo of Hakata, who had discussions with Siebold, and Shimazu Shigehide of Kagoshima, who edited (but never finished) the *Seikei Zusetsu*, a great encyclopedia of some 100 volumes. Mizutani Toyobumi (1779–1883), who became friends and exchanged specimens with Siebold, was a mid-ranking samurai with a 200 koku stipend, who cultivated as many as 2000 varieties of plants in his own house. What is interesting about him is that he made close to 200 different accurate, life-sized models of the larva, pupa, and adult forms

of insects, as well as spiders, snails, and lizards, out of such materials as wood, wire, and cloth. These may be related in some way to the miniature models in the Siebold collection.

Between the 18th and 19th centuries, the scope of the daimyos' own interest expanded, supporting their collections, as shown above; what had been until then been collections focused on "famous pieces" of tea ceremony ware had become something much more diverse, ranging from plants and animals to antiquities. It is striking that this diversity of collections reflects the individuality of the daimyo who assembled them.

## 2. MODERN TEA COLLECTIONS

After the Meiji Restoration, the tea ceremony went into a rapid decline, from which it recovered thanks to the efforts of modern tea lovers. During the period of "civilization and enlightenment," people's attention turned to the new civilization of the West, and interest in traditional pursuits such as the tea ceremony almost disappeared. The tea lineages, which as a result of this had lost a whole generation of students, suffered a further blow with the downfall of the samurai class, who had been their former patrons. Such lineages, who had enjoyed a regular income from tea ceremony work, were plunged into poverty, given which they despaired of being able to sustain their family occupation. This period of decline lasted for roughly 20 to 30 years. Around the time when the Rokumeikan period came to a close, people's attention once again began to turn back towards the tea ceremony and noh, now seen as traditional national culture.

In April 1887 (Meiji 20), the Meiji Emperor visited the residence of the Foreign Minister, Inoue Kaoru. The official reason for the visit was a reception at a tea house which had just been built at the Inoue residence. This occasion, which could be called an imperial tea ceremony (*gyōkō chakai*), is known in cultural history rather as a day of imperial kabuki. For entertainment, there was a kabuki performance by Danjurō and Kikugorō on a stage which had been set up in the garden, the first time that kabuki had been performed for an imperial audience. The tea ceremony, hidden in its historical shadow, is hardly known. The authority of the emperor, however, put a halt to the decline of both kabuki and the tea ceremony, and they again began to attract people's attention. The tea ceremony did not revive through the efforts of the weakened tea lineages or by adherents of particular styles; lovers of the tea ceremony began to emerge from another quarter of society to revive the tradition. I will call these people modern tea lovers (*sukisha*).

The word, *sukisha* ("lover of," "enthusiast," "person of taste"), has a long history. *Sukisha* as I want to use it here, however, a term specific to the modern history of the tea ceremony. *Sukisha* here refers to men active in the worlds of politics, finance, law, medicine, and the like, with substantial financial resources, who took pleasure in the tea ceremony not as a profession but rather as a hobby, or enthusiasm. One could call them simply *sukisha*, but one might as well call them



modern *sukisha*, so as to distinguish this from the historical usage which equates tea lovers with tea masters. At the root of the word, to “like” (*suki*), one finds the sense of “an attachment to something.” Modern tea lovers shared a deep attachment to famous tea utensils. Thus even in the tea ceremony, the utensils were their main concern; questions of how one serves the tea and the spirit in which one does so were secondary. This is what distinguishes the tea practice of modern tea lovers.

Representative of such tea lovers is Inoue Kaoru (1835–1915), who planned the imperial tea ceremony attended by the Meiji Emperor, mentioned above. Inoue, who subsequently assumed the name Segai (“outside the world”) and was involved with the circulation of many famous pieces, did not initially have an interest in the tea ceremony. Rather, his interest developed from his general collecting of art and antiques. Masuda Takashi (tea name Don’ō, 1848–1938), considered the doyen of modern tea lovers, is also said to have begun his interest by being taken by the beauty of some lacquerware he was handling which was to be exhibited at an international exposition overseas (perhaps the 1873 Vienna exposition). One frequently sees mentioned in the memoirs of tea lovers two reasons why they collected utensils: first, to stop the flow of Japanese art overseas (in fact, some of them bought damaged Buddhas from Tōshōdaiji); and second, in imitation of wealthy men overseas, who had their own collection of culture in their house, and would show it to foreign guests. Perhaps, though, the most immediate reason was simply the charm of the utensils themselves.

It was Meiji 29 (1896) when Masuda Don’ō began the series of great tea ceremonies known as Daishikai, which continue to this day. This was nine years after the imperial tea ceremony mentioned above. The Daishikai are perhaps highly important in their significance for modern tea lovers’ activities of collection and exhibition. In Meiji 28, Masuda acquired a 16-character fragment of Kōbō Daishi’s calligraphy (now designated an Important Cultural Property), and took the occasion to hold a commemorative tea ceremony party. This took the form of a garden party, using a tea room in the grounds to prepare the tea, and combining this with an exhibit of famous pieces from his own collection, using a reception room known as the Ō-kyōkan. Initially 3 to 40 people would be invited to one such party. They proved popular, however, and soon expanded so that not just Don’ō, but friends who were tea lovers would exhibit their pieces and take charge of the tea room. As an example, let us look at the record of a Daishikai held in April of Taishō 4 (1915) [TAKAHASHI 1929].

Masuda Don’ō, of the Blue Cloud Pavilion, Goten’yama, Shinagawa, has held a Daishikai each year during the spring. Beginning in Meiji 29, there have already been 16 of these, and it has come to be counted as one of the annual events in the capital. Just when he was about to hold the 17th of these last April 12, the nation was plunged into mourning, and it was called off. This year, however, since the period of national mourning had ended and the happy occasion of the imperial accession ceremonies been determined, he decided to meet with like-minded people, set up a tea room in the shade of the cherry

blossoms, and without hosts or guests, celebrate wholeheartedly the general prosperity. He decided to change the plan from the ordinary Daishikai, and to hold a great tea ceremony at the Blue Cloud Pavilion, Goten'yama, on the 25th of the month.

The 25th of this month is a day which in all the history of tea deserves special mention, being the 330th anniversary of the great tea ceremony at Kitano, on Tenshō 13/10/1 (1585). The weather, which had been gloomy for several days, gradually improved and cleared up. The best season of the year, with green shade, thick grass, and flowering cherries, could not but move the hearts of the tea lovers. On the day, entering the gate of the Blue Cloud Pavilion in Goten'yama, straight ahead, in the Ōkyōkan, was the tea shelf of Inoue Segai, while on its right, in the Tarōan, were the famous pieces of Matsudaira Naosuke. To the southeast was displayed the Zengoan of Hara Sankei, and decorations of the Yūgetsutei commemorating the 13th anniversary of the death of the younger brother of our host, Matsuda Don'ō.

Apart from these, tea rooms were set up here and there as follows:

Ōkyōkan	Inoue Segai (Kaoru)
Tarōan and approach	Matsudaira Naosuke
Irakuan	Mitsui Shōrai (Hachirōjirō)
Yūgetsutei	Masuda Don'ō (Takashi)
Myokian	Magoshi Kasei-ō
Zengoan	Hara Sankei (Tomitarō)
Muian and Kanfutei	Hatano Kokei (Shōgorō)
	Okada Ukō (Heitarō)
Bōendai	Masuda Reisui (Eisaku)
Momiji tea stall	Toda Rochō (Yahichi)
Taiwan kan	Tarō Kaja (Masuda Tarō)
	Matsuo Kiyō (Chotarō)
Dosokuan	Ōki Rodō (Keiichirō)
temporary building 1	Kawasaki Kakuō (Kakutarō)
temporary building 2	Shimomura Saigyōan (Mitsukuri)
temporary building 3	Anonymous

[TAKAHASHI 1936]

As noted in this passage, tea rooms were set up for 15 individuals plus an unknown participant, and over 200 utensils were used and displayed. This desire for display and the delight in secrecy are contradictory, but the tea lovers seem to have been more vulnerable to the temptations of display, than to considerations of secrecy.

The bubble economy in Japan, caused by the First World War, which began in Taishō 3 (1914), brought about the appearance of an unprecedented market in tea utensils. This trend was reflected in a rapid increase in prices. There was intensifying social criticism of this kind of sudden jump in the value of tea utensils—a kind of criticism of the plutocracy. Around the time of the rash of secret society incidents, Takahashi Soan explained the significance of collecting tea utensils as follows.

There are some important points about tea utensils for which we would ask the understanding of the general public. Since people have been buying high-priced tea utensils in the market, there are those who think they are wasting their money and indulging in extravagance. However, since there is as yet an inadequate understanding of tea utensils themselves, unless one clears up this misunderstanding, one will cause much trouble for the practice of tea for a long time to come. Famous pieces circulate within the realm, and therefore regardless of who owns them, as long as they are in Japan, they are all national treasures. These are basically objects which the state should protect, and so in western countries, national art museums and galleries collect these and carefully preserve them. In times of national crisis when it is felt to be dangerous, national resources are expended in moving them to a safe zone. One can clearly see this in the examples of France and Belgium during the great European war. However in our country, besides the single Imperial Household Museum, there is nothing like a national art museum. Luckily, during the 300 years of the Tokugawa period, various daimyo houses shouldered the responsibility of their protection, and preserved them in comparative safety. However, after the Restoration, the daimyo let them go, and there was no one to replace them in protecting these objects except the business gentlemen — economic daimyo — who have emerged in the world recently. Since there are many famous tea utensils in our country, and it is extremely difficult for the state to protect these, there is no one other than the great business houses to preserve them instead of the state. The state should be deeply grateful to the great business houses which have shouldered this great responsibility. [TAKAHASHI 1936]

This argument may not be persuasive, but it expresses both expectations of the new museums, at the same time as a dissatisfaction in them — that is, a sense that western-style museums cannot adequately provide for the particular characteristics of tea utensils. (Takahashi Sōan considered announcing his candidacy for the House of Representatives on the platform of establishing a new national museum.)

One more piece of evidence which I would like to point to concerning the tea lovers is the building of the Kōyasan Reihōkan. It seems this was the first facility devoted to the public display of temple treasures, begun in Taishō 2 (1913). With the construction of the Kōyasan railway, Nezu Kaichirō, the head of the company, following discussions with Masuda Don'ō, the organizer of the Daishikai, which had long venerated the virtue of Kōbō Daishi, decided that tea lovers should collect donations and contribute to a treasure house on Kōyasan. There were over 150 National Treasures (according to the old designation) at Kōyasan, beginning with Buddhist images and altar equipment which Kōbō Daishi brought back to Japan from China. However some of these had not passed through official channels, and there were many issues concerning preservation. Moreover, with the opening of the railway and the coming of mass tourism, there were also concerns about unexpected accidents such as fires. Thus the construction of a strongly-built treasure house answered to both issues, preservation and display. With this in mind, donations were collected, and activity also began on the Kōyasan side, led by Saeki Yūjun. Soon,

Kuroita Katsumi, a professor of Japanese history at Tokyo Imperial University (now the University of Tokyo), and Ōe Shintarō were also involved, on questions of scholarship and architectural design respectively. One can see this predilection for displaying Buddhist art as an extension of the tea lovers' interest in the tea ceremony. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the collections of tea lovers was their early attention to and enthusiasm in reevaluating Buddhist art, which had been considered worthless during the anti-Buddhist movement at the beginning of the Meiji period, and thus the extension of their interests to both art and utensils.

The collections of modern tea lovers were extensive, but they were often sustained by an attachment to one object which they treasured above all. There are innumerable episodes which reveal the enthusiasm of the tea lovers for collecting utensils. Masuda Don'ō, the first president of Mitsui Bussan and founder of the Daishikai, is the subject of many of these episodes. One from late Meiji tells of a sutra, "Kako Genzai Inga kyō," from the Tempyō period (the early 8th century) which was among the papers discarded from Kōyasan. Such illustrated sutra are always mentioned as having been the origin of the history of picture scrolls. Don'ō strenuously urged Tamai Daikandō, the Nara utensil dealer who had discovered the piece, to show it to him. Don'ō snatched the paper from the protesting dealer, and without even properly looking at it, immediately put it away in his safe, declaring that he would take it. Masaki Naohiko, who subsequently heard the story, remarked as follows in Don'ō's memorial address. "At last he overcame Tamai and forced him to give in, putting away the scroll in his storehouse. At any rate, it was his enthusiasm that carried the day. Without this, there would have been no collecting. He was an extraordinary man" [MASAKI 1939].

This is what collecting is. Tea lovers, full of individuality, devoting themselves to collecting objects. If these individuals did not exist, therefore, the objects would be scattered. The collections which Inoue Segai, Masuda Don'ō, and Dan Takuma (1858–1932) assembled by spending vast sums have all been scattered. To expect this dispersal and still to allow it, is a kind of discernment, which is surely to the credit of the tea lovers.

A generation later, however, the collector Kobayashi Itsuō could not keep his collecting of beautiful objects confined within a world of individual taste.

When I reflect on how exceptional were the art treasures collected by our great predecessor, Masuda Don'ō, there is little need to explain how, given an age in which his appreciation of works of art and his ecstatic everyday life compelled him, by chance, to occupy the role of a pioneer. Large numbers of enthusiasts appeared, compelled by Masuda's education and influence. However Masuda and his circle could not free themselves from their unfortunate bias toward connoisseurship or allow their collections out into the public sphere [KOBAYASHI 1979].

Thus Itsuō cannot but criticize Don'ō. On the basis of this criticism, Kobayashi subsequently opened his own collection to the public as the Itsuō Museum.

Beginning with the Tokugawa Art Museum and the Nezu Art Museum in the prewar period, the greatest bequest of the tea lovers was the maintenance and public display of their collections in the form of art museums. What kind of influences gave rise to the idea for the first of these, the art museum of Seizan Nezu Kaichirō? While he was still alive, Nezu explained as follows:

I was known as being passionate about many old works of art, and so various people asked if they could come and take a look. There were quite a few foreigners among them; five or six hundred a year would come to the house. I considered this a kind of national diplomacy — it was quite an inconvenience, but I opened the collection to the public as much as possible, intending it to be a public service for the nation [NEZUŌ DENKI HENSANKAI 1961].

Since the Nezu collection was already famous, there were quite a few visitors even before it had become a museum; I expect that this was perhaps what was behind the establishment of the museum. However, Nezu may not yet have had a clear image of a museum in his head.

When I was with Mr. Nezu, I asked him, “You’ve bought so many utensils. What are you going to do with them?” He said, “I buy as much as I can. What about donating the good stuff to the state? I’ve certainly got no intention of leaving it to my children” [NEZUŌ DENKI HENSANKAI 1961].

Matsunaga Jian donated part of his postwar collection to the Tokyo National Museum. In the end, however, Nezu Seizan did not make a will donating his to the state. Instead, the collection was maintained as a private foundation and the site, known as the Nezu Museum, was presented to the public.

Since this time, many museums have come into being, including the Hakutsuru Museum (Kanō Hakkaku), the Fujita Museum (Fujita Kōsetsu), the Itsuō Museum (Kobayashi Itsuō), the Hatakeyama Memorial Museum (Hatakeyama Sokuō), the Matsunaga Memorial Museum (Matsunaga Jian), the Kōsetsu Museum (Murayama Gen’an), the Goto Museum (Gotō Keita), the Tekisui Museum (Yamaguchi Kichirobei). There are too many to list here. Thus the collections were not scattered, but rather opened to the masses. However, the famous pieces which used to rest in the hands of tea masters are now only gazed at in glass cases. The meaning of collections has fundamentally changed.

### 3. A RETURN TO COLLECTING

When collections whose compilation was driven by an individual sense of aesthetics and “attachment” are incorporated within the institution of the museum, born in the modern West, the way in which the objects are treated changes completely. The collection is taken apart by a research staff, classified by material — for example, painting, goldwork, ceramics, lacquerware, et al. — and

exhibited, “dead,” cut off from any way of appreciating how it was actually used, from a sense of touch and of its inherent qualities. Where does this contradiction come from?

A difference between the western concept of art and the Japanese concept of utensil gives rise to a difference in the nature of display, so that while museums exhibit Japanese art, they do not provide an exhibition space appropriate to the beauty of Japanese utensils. I do not have space to go into this in detail here, but if I were to say just a few words about the special characteristics of beauty in Japan, they would be as follows. The beauty with which Japanese works of art and craft are endowed, unlike Western works, is not a universal beauty, or value. To take an extreme example, a piece such as Ogata Kōrin’s screen of red and white plum blossoms, famous though it is, would surely provoke a sense of incongruity were it to be put on display during the fall. To whatever extent one can reveal the exquisite splendor the Inaba *tenmoku* tea bowl, a National Treasure, one cannot use it in the Taian tea room, another National Treasure. Why? On the one hand one has an object which is the perfect expression of a Chinese aesthetic, on the other a tea room which realizes the austere beauty of Japanese aesthetics. The value of an object begins to be revealed when it achieves a harmony between the various attributes of time, place, and person. In other words, before it is a work of art, it is a “utensil,” used in accordance with time, place, and rank. When one uses it as something other than a utensil, its value remains inadequately realized. The system of the museum, which aims only at exhibition and preservation, cannot but be in contradiction with this.

One more point. I would like to emphasize again the particular characteristics of Japanese utensils, namely, the interest inherent in the attributes of objects. Western institutions deny the relevance of the history—the tale (*monogatari*)—produced by the combination of the object (*mono*) and its stories (*katari*). But future museum exhibitions require the “display of tales.” By understanding Japanese utensils, one may be able to create the possibility of a new kind of exhibition.

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