

Reading Craft, Writing Craft: Premodern Kyoto and Kenzan Ware

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For well over a decade, visual and material culture studies have progressively transformed our conceptions of the arts and letters of early modern East Asia. The loosening of traditional disciplinary boundaries has encouraged art historians, among others, to explore areas hitherto outside their domains. A static archive of major monuments has been replaced by a matrix of highly mobile themes and mutually enhancing media. The social and material aspect of books and reading, as theorized by Roger Chartier and D.F. McKenzie, has also emerged as a central element in the discourse. Studies of the social lives of texts and objects now reject simplistic revival or neoclassical positions in favor of situated reception and transformation of classical sources. The ever-increasing hard-copy and electronic databases in East Asian and other languages add another important dimension. Recent English-language titles that exemplify this type of border-crossing include Zeitlin and Liu, eds., *Writing and Materiality in China* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003), and Formanek and Linhart, eds., *Written Texts, Visual Texts: Woodblock-printed Media in Early Modern Japan* (Amsterdam, 2005).

With a few notable exceptions, however, such initiatives have yet to impact our understanding of premodern Japanese craft, a field still mired in ideas of “tradition” and locked into an antipodal relationship with “art.”¹ The impasse is especially detrimental to the study of premodern Kyoto production, an area rich in intertextuality. The creations of Ogata Kenzan (1663-1743) and the broader genre of Kenzan ware offer productive insights into the link between premodern print and crafts. Kyoto’s premier ceramic designer, Kenzan has been a focus of academic

1 Components of the art-craft binary include: a boundary line drawn between past and present, with crafts usually in the former category; art as individual and craft as collective; art as the world of the mind/spirit and craft as the world of the body/labor; art as urban and craft as rural; art as the theoretical “why” and craft as the empirical “what”.

research from the Taishō period. Scholarly pioneers in the field, especially Fukui Rikichirō, Aimi Kōu, and Kobayashi Taichirō compiled documentary evidence and worked toward a biography that was largely consolidated by 1949. Postwar scholars, supported by an increased access to objects and images, arranged Kenzan's work into a chronological frame and identified a canon. At the turn of this century Kenzan studies offered a sizable biographical literature and abundant observations about the style of his work, but aside from some rather general observations made by Kobayashi, there have been no studies dealing with the iconographic conventions or reception of Kenzan ware. Viewing the problem from the perspective of Bourdieu's cultural production, we have some notion of Kenzan's "habitus" but very little of the "field"—its constraints and possibilities—in which he operated.

For the past few years I have investigated the extra-ceramic sources and consumption environment of Kenzan ware and would like to relate some of the results here. By far the most important is the discovery of the sources of the poetic inscriptions that appear on Kenzan ceramics and paintings, but beyond that I would like to address the wider relationship of print culture to the Kenzan product. Ogata Kenzan himself was well read—and read about. His designs are manifested in a large population of objects whose chronology is now reasonably well understood; they possess an extremely broad thematic repertory. He inaugurated his enterprise in an age of accelerated information and informed consumption. Needless to say, Kenzan ware was not the only craft to be so situated; its explication will lead us to related phenomena in other ceramics, and in other media. As the cultural and moreover publishing center of the realm, Kyoto was a prime source of inspiration and dissemination.

Deploying the Courtly Aura

Ogata Kenzan was born into a merchant family that had reached the heights of prosperity in the post-Sekigahara recovery, fueled by bakufu funding and a burgeoning demand for the trappings of courtly refinement. The iconology of this expansion is conventionally explained as neoclassical: well-funded but politically disenfranchised patrons turned to the Heian and early Kamakura periods, for them a period of bygone imperial splendor. At the center of this "revival" was the court of Emperor Gomizuno-o (1596-1680; r. 1611-1629) and prominent families of the *machishū*, the upper stratum of Kyoto merchants. In the postwar era Hayashiya Tatsuburō took the lead in framing the social dynamics of this "Kan'ei culture,"

which saw the mixing of court, samurai, and merchant classes. That neoclassical structure resonated for contemporary audiences, for it was similar to modernist articulations of traditional culture as a timeless essence against a backdrop of an unstable present.

Countless publications and exhibitions saluted the material dimension of this Kan'ei mode, wherein skilled Kyoto producers injected courtly themes and symbols into a wide variety of objects and practices. Commonly cited manifestations include the architecture and gardens of Katsura and Shūgakuin, the calligraphy-painting collaborations of Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558-1637) and Tawaraya Sōtatsu (d. ca. 1643), the chanoyu of Kobori Enshū (1579-1647) and Kanamori Sōwa (1584/89-1656), and the preference for displaying Japanese poetic writings in their respective venues. Recent scholarship has foregrounded problems with the idea of revival and the concomitant assumption that courtly imagery had somehow disappeared in the late medieval era—its appropriation in linked verse and noh drama are two prominent examples of its vitality—but it is fair to portray the first half of the seventeenth century as a period of intensified interest and confidence in native traditions. Personages, themes, events, and places associated with Kyoto and its aristocratic heritage served as markers of pedigree and value, and craft industries addressed an ever-growing demand for goods that were so marked. The aura of courtly heritage was the first and most sustained ingredient of Kyoto craft appeal.

Kenzan's career bridges an early, elite-centered phase of courtly aura and its later emergence as an icon for mass consumption. His connection to the former is demonstrated by a recent discovery. A document called *Sanbōin hinamiki*, preserved in the Kunaichō Shoryōbu in Tokyo, reveals that in 1675 three Ogata brothers, named as Tōzaburō, Ichinojō (Kōrin), and Kanzaburō (Kenzan) acted in noh performances at Sanbōin, part of the Daigoji temple.² This encouraged me to re-search the Konishi archive, a group of documents handed down by Kōrin's ancestors, which yielded references to Kanzaburō (also written as Kanza) in other noh-related contexts. I concluded that the name was a pseudonym derived from the year of Kenzan's birth in Kanbun (*Kan*) 3 (*sa/za*).³ Rather than his conventional image as an introverted bibliophile, Kenzan was performing onstage in one of Kyoto's most

2 Igarashi Kōichi, "Sanbōin Kōken to Kōrin" (Sanbōin Kōken and Kōrin), *Kokka* 1271 (2001).

3 Richard Wilson and Ogasawara Saeko, "Kenzan yaki no hashira—bun no to, gasan yōshiki" (Kenzan Ware: Toward a Literary Basis), *Kenzan: Yūsui to fūga no sekai* (Miho Museum, 2004), p. 8.

prestigious salons. Sanbōin was not a randomly chosen venue. In addition to being a *monzeki* temple, it had been associated with noh from the time of Zeami, and enjoyed the favor of Hideyoshi, who sponsored the temple's renewal shortly before his death. The association of the Ogata with Sanbōin was mutually enhancing: the Ogata family business, the Kariganeya, benefited from the courtly venue, and the Sanbōin was undoubtedly remunerated. As is well known, the early Kyoto ceramic workshops, including that of Nonomura Ninsei, had built their reputations on similar liaisons.

Another new discovery, this time from archaeology, suggests that Kenzan also mobilized the courtly aura in opening his first workshop. From 2000-2004, our Excavation Group for the Hōzōji Narutaki Kenzan Kiln Site excavated the area behind Hōzōji, an Ōbaku Zen temple in Narutaki, Ukyō-ward, about two kilometers northwest of Ninnaji. This site, which is the location of Kenzan's first kiln (1699-1712), had been dug several times by private individuals and much of the site had been developed into a cemetery, but in addition to ceramic shards (Figure 1) and kiln tools, at lowest level of the site our excavation yielded a carefully made curving stairway, presumably part of an elaborate garden constructed to provide a fine view

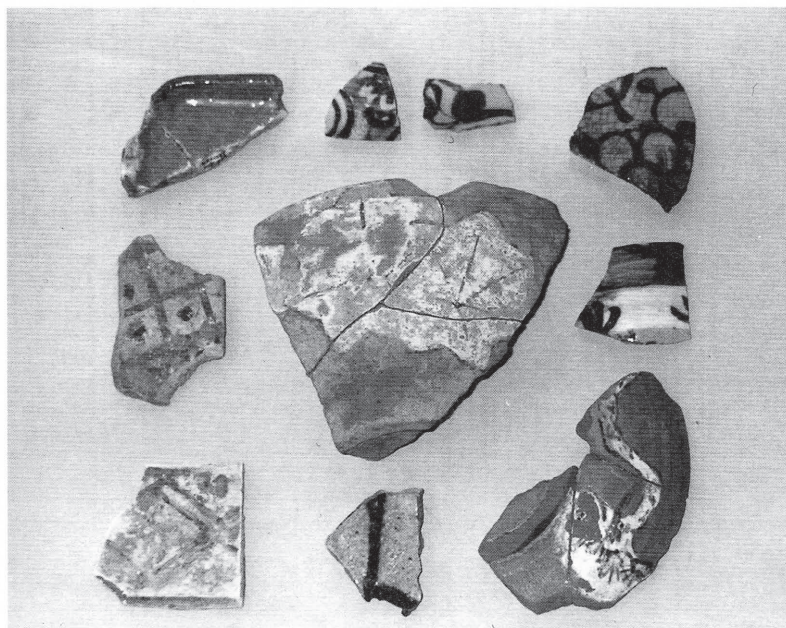


Fig.1 Pottery shards excavated from the Narutaki kiln site of Ogata Kenzan, 1699-1712. Hōzōji, Kyoto.

of the Kyoto basin (Figure 2). It is tempting to speculate that the garden was part of an attempt by Kenzan to recreate the image of a court-affiliated workshop (*goyō gama*) found in *monzeki* temples and detached palaces. Unfortunately, the number of accompanying artifacts is insufficient to prove whether the garden was constructed by court noble Nijō Tsunahira (1670-1732), from whom Kenzan purchased this land in 1694, Kenzan himself, or even later occupants of the site. However, other gestures point to a strategy of “courtly” image-making on Kenzan’s part.⁴ The timing of the opening of his Narutaki kiln coincides with the decline of Ninsei’s Omuro kiln in the same precinct and thus positions Kenzan as a de facto successor to a *monzeki* kiln. An aristocratic patronage relationship is evoked in Kenzan’s recorded gifts to court figures such as Nijō Tsunahira and the prince-abbot Kanryū (1662-1707) of Ninnaji. Finally, Kenzan impressed some of his Narutaki wares with small seals resembling those of other court-affiliated kilns in Kyoto.

The Ceramic Page

The courtly aura, while undoubtedly the anchor of Kyoto craft appeal, was neither immutable nor uncontested. Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716), a member of a Dutch

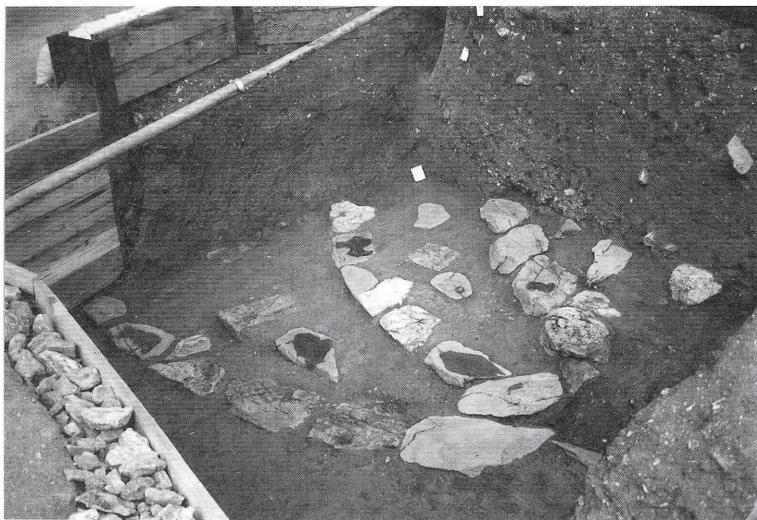


Fig. 2 Stone staircase, a garden feature excavated at the Narutaki kiln site of Ogata Kenzan. Probably constructed before 1699. Hōzōji, Kyoto.

4 Richard Wilson and Ogasawara Saeko, *Ogata Kenzan: Life and Complete Works*, vol. 3 (1992), pp. 107-114.

delegation passing through Kyoto in 1691, described a city in which nearly every house seemed to be engaged in a productive trade, making goods of the highest quality. Kyoto products were so famous that even imitations, if bearing some kind of Kyoto trademark, would sell.⁵ By the Genroku era, then, Kyoto had become not just an esteemed production center but also a brand label. Kaempfer was in effect summing up a century of image-building, which naturally owed a great deal to the particular forms of social interchange and fine quality of Kyoto products, but even more to the printed word in the form of vernacular novels (*kana-zōshi*) like *Chikusai* (1621-23) and city guides such as *Kyō suzume* (1665), which framed the city as a literal and figurative crossroads of culture and commerce. In the case of ceramics, one does not have to venture too far to find both literary and pictorial references to Kyoto ware. Some references are overtly promotional, such as the connoisseur's manual *Manpō zensho* (1694), but some are incidental, such as a Kyoto ware vignette in the 1688 textile design book *Yūzen hinagata*. Products made outside Kyoto in emulation of Kyoto ware—the imitations mentioned by Kaempfer—may have been inspired by printed books, such as a *furoshiki*-shaped jar illustrated in the 1690 *Jinrin kinmō zui* and its equivalent excavated from sector SK505 in a Genroku-era kiln/workshop site at Dōjima in Osaka.⁶

Reading and writing enhanced the reputation of Kyoto goods, but it also encouraged new strategies of decoration and deeper layers of signification. An increasingly literate populace now had the capacity to “read” objects. In ceramics, the painted decorations and shapes of mid-seventeenth century Omuro (Ninsei) wares can be seen as embodied *uta kotoba*, inviting patrons to link clay vessels to the classical literary imagination. Around the same time (1660s), the textile market became infatuated with the written word, as seen in the many Kanbun-style *kosode* that integrate poetic fragments from the *Hyakunin issū* or *Wakan rōeishū* into their designs. Indeed, by mid-century one may detect a vocabulary of poetic abbreviation that spread across printed books, fans of the *ōgi no sōshi* type, shells, *karuta*, lacquerware, and ceramics. We should also remember that as more people learned to read kanbun, more Chinese books (and Japanese *kabusebori* editions of same) entered the market, opening up a world of arts and letters hitherto known only to

5 Engelbert Kaempfer (trans. J.G. Scheuchzer), *The History of Japan*, vol. III (Glasgow, 1906), p. 21.

6 For the excavation, see Ōsaka-shi Bunkazai Kyōkai, eds., *Dōjima kurayashiki ato* (Ōsaka-shi Bunkazai Kyōkai, 1999), fig. 22 (no. 102), n.p.

Gozan monks and their elite patrons.

As Kaempfer suggests, for many the possession of, or access to traditional Kyoto symbols was sufficiently prestigious. But the ever quickening circulation of goods and information, coupled with a competitive business environment, encouraged consumers to crave something up-to-date, embodied in words such as *imayō* and *tōryū*. Literature created and sustained *imayō*, and one of its practical manifestations was, predictably, literary: the practice of writing on crafts. Thus Kaoru, a courtesan in Saikaku's *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* (The Life of an Amorous Man, 1682), “commissioned Kanō Yukinobu to paint a picture of autumn fields on white satin and had eight court nobles inscribe verses on it. The result was a picture of breathtaking beauty, far superior to an ordinary hanging scroll. But a top courtesan like Kaoru had no idea of putting it to such a trifling use. She had it made into a robe for herself, which shocked even veteran observers of the urban scene.”⁷ Another Saikaku subject, this time in *Kōshoku godai onna* (Five Women Who Loved Love, 1682) bore “On her left sleeve a hand-painted likeness of the Yoshida monk [*Tsurezuregusa* author Yoshida Kenkō], above the inscription, “To sit alone in the lamplight with a book spread out before you...”⁸ Writing and painting took on glossy appeal when they crossed boundaries.

By the Genroku era, then, Kyoto crafts were not only exploiting the courtly aura of Kyoto but also representing the city's newest forms of leisure and cultural production. Consumers demanded literary allusion in crafts, and writing on crafts was popularly represented as striking and fashionable. This helps us to understand a variety of Kenzan ware bearing painting (*ga*) and poetic inscriptions (*san*). This “gasan style,” a revolutionary development in Japanese ceramics, remained unstudied until our recent survey of all such inscribed Kenzan ware, which matched them with editions of Chinese and Japanese poetry that were circulating in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.⁹ We discovered that for kanshi, Ogata

7 Ihara Saikaku (trans. Hamada Kengi), *The Life of an Amorous Man* (Rutland and Tokyo, 1964), p. 185.

8 Ihara Saikaku (trans. W.T. De Bary), *Five Women Who Loved Love* (Rutland and Tokyo, 1956), pp. 119-122. This vignette was also illustrated by Nishikawa Sukenobu (1671-1751) in his 1740 *Ehon tsurezuregusa*, and appropriated by Kenzan himself in a late-life painting of Kenkō, now in the Umezawa Kinenkan, Tokyo.

9 Richard Wilson and Ogasawara Saeko, “Kenzan yaki—gasan yōshiki to shuten no subete” (Poetic Inscriptions on Kenzan Ware: Sources and Reception), *Humanities* 35 (2004), 1-47; Wilson and Ogasawara, “Kenzan yaki no hashira...” *Kenzan*, op. cit, pp. 8-15.

Kenzan chose excerpts from some of the most popular Chinese poetry anthologies of his day, all of them available in Japanese reprints. His overwhelming favorite was a Wanli-era (1573-1619) anthology entitled *Yuanji huofa* (Practical knacks and workable methods; henceforth referred to using the Japanese reading *Enki kappō*), alleged to have been compiled by the celebrated Ming poet and literatus Wang Shizhen (1526-1590). The book has twenty-four chapters of poetry divided into forty-four thematic categories ranging from the grand (the heavens) to the minute (insects). Selected poets include the Tang luminaries Tu Fu (712-70), Li Bo (701-62), and Bai Juyi (772-846), Sung poets Su Shi (1037-1101) and Huang Tingjian (1045-1105), and many Ming poets as well. *Enki kappō* appropriations can be seen, for example, on the renowned square dishes made jointly by Kōrin and Kenzan, now in the Fujita Museum (Figure 3).

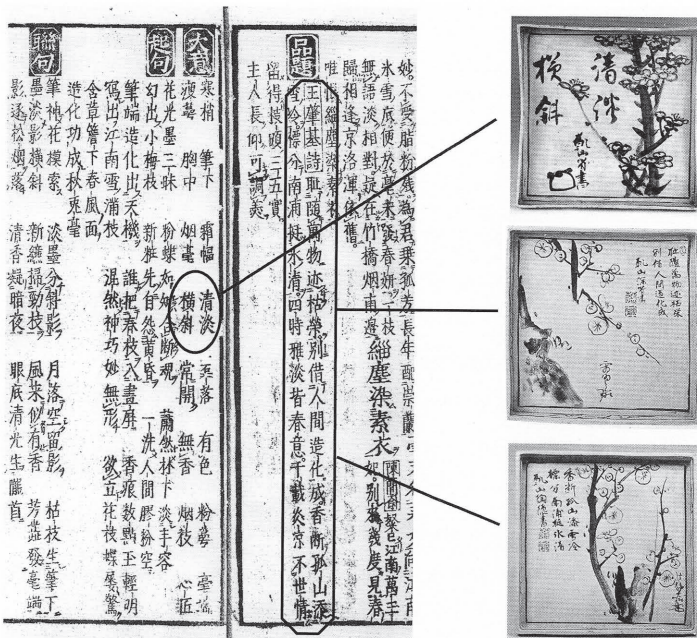


Fig. 3 Left: Page of poetry selections on the theme of “painted plum” from *Yuanji huofa*, late Ming dynasty. Upper right: Square dish with plum design, by Ogata Kenzan, 1711. Nezu Institute of Fine Arts. Middle right: Square dish with plum design, by Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, ca. 1710. Fujita Museum. Lower right: Square dish with plum design, by Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, ca. 1710. Fujita Museum.

Enki kappō is believed to have arrived in Japan in the Genna (1615-24) or Kan'ei (1624-44) periods and between the Meireki (1655-58) and Genroku (1688-1704) eras it was reprinted as many as twenty times.¹⁰ Its contents can be linked to both elite and popular literary movements. First, the name of Wang Shizhen and the poets of choice connect the anthology to the Ming-dynasty archaist (*kobunji*) movement, which gained popularity in Japan in the seventeenth century and was eventually supported by powerful government advisors such as Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728) and Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725). In other words, *Enki kappō* can be regarded as a canonical text. At the same time, *Enki kappō* was part of *imayō*. Excerpts from the anthology can be found in the pages of Saikaku (1643-93), dramatist Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724), and poets Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) and Yamaguchi Sodō (1642-1716).¹¹ *Enki kappō* thus links Kenzan ware to a popular literary horizon: in all likelihood the people who used Kenzan ware were also reading Saikaku and Bashō, attending Chikamatsu puppet plays, and chanting noh libretti. Just as Chikamatsu appropriated *Enki kappō*, he also appropriated Kenzan; the latter's name appears as part of a dealer's inventory in the 1713 puppet play *Ikutama shinjū*.

Kenzan also created a “Japanese-style” design, a ceramic variant of *uta-e*, inscribed with waka rather than kanshi. Our research uncovered that his major source was *Setsugyokushū*, an anthology by court poet Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (1455-1537). For his links to the Teika-generated “Kokin” lineage of poetic teachings and for his vast and accessible output, Sanetaka was a favorite of early modern audiences. Containing a total of 8,202 verses, *Setsugyokushū* was mass-produced in 1670 as an eighteen-volume set. Together with Emperor Gokashiwabara's *Hakugyokushū* (1669) and Shimo-Reizei Masatame's *Hekigyokushū* (1672), it was known as one of the “three jeweled anthologies” of the age. The numerous Edo-period editions available today suggest a vast circulation. The continuing popularity of the anthology in Kenzan's generation is evidenced in a series of handy digests such as *Sangyokushū ruidai* (Topical Selections from the Three Jeweled Anthologies, 1696), *Sangyoku ruiku* (Selected Lines from the Three Jeweled Anthologies, 1722).¹² Such cachet helps us

10 Nieda Tadashi, “*Enki kappō* ni tsuite” (Concerning *Enki kappō*), *Nihon Chūgoku Gakkai-hō* 27 (1975), p. 207.

11 In addition to Nieda, op. cit., see Takahashi Hiroshi, “Chikamatsu to *Enki kappō*” (Chikamatsu and *Enki kappō*), *Sugino Joshi Daigaku kiyō* 17 (1980), pp. 114-77, and Nakamura Shunjō, *Bashō jiten* (Bashō Dictionary), (Tokyo, 1988), pp. 286-89.

12 See Suzuki Ken'ichi, *Kinsei dōjō kadan no kenkyū* (Research on the Kinsei-era Court Poetry World) (Tokyo, 1996), p. 144.

to understand why Sanetaka's verses proliferate on Kenzan-ware rectilinear dishes (*kakuzara*), dishes in the shape of paper poem strips (*tanzaku-zara*), tea bowls such as the "Yugao" bowl in the Yamato Bunkakan (Figure 4), and many other objects. Furthermore, our survey revealed that the vast majority of inscriptions on paintings attributed to Kenzan are from the same source.¹³ For example, *Bush Clover*, a hanging scroll in the Hatakeyama Museum, bears a Sanetaka verse republished in the pocket-size and popular *Sangyokushū ruidai* of 1696, and may derive its composition from the 1737 pattern book *Otowa no taki*.

We are not suggesting that Kenzan was simply reviving the classics or facilitating a "trickle-down" of elite culture. Excerpts from *Enki kappō* and *Setsugyokushū* were already circulating in popular literature. The same observation can be made about the painted designs on Kenzan ware: they are not all derived from painting proper,

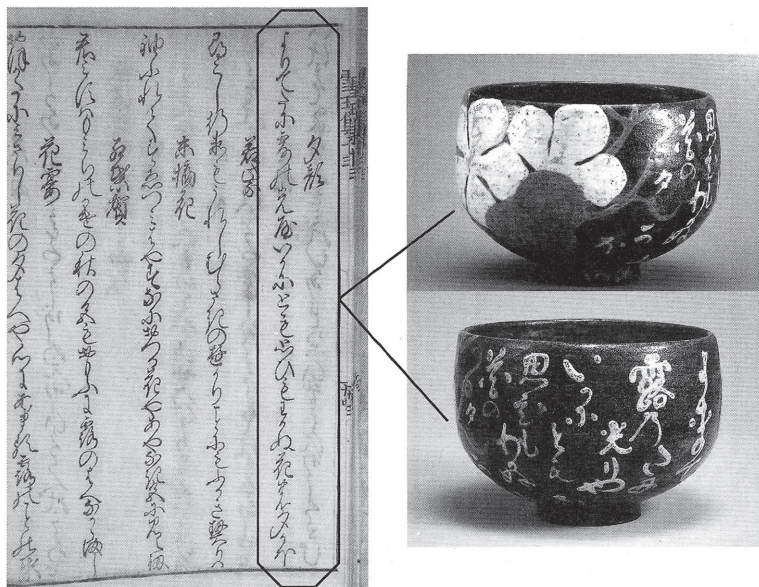


Fig. 4 Left: Page with poetry selection "Yugao" inspired by the *Tale of Genji*, in *Setsugyokushū*, print edition published 1670. Right: Tea bowl with design of "Yugao" by Ogata Kenzan, ca. 1740. Yamato Bunkakan.

13 They include *Flower Baskets* (Fukuoka City Museum), *Spring Willow* (Yamato Bunkakan), *Flowers and Grasses of the Four Seasons* (Idemitsu Museum), *Bush Clover* (Hatakeyama Kinenkan), *Cherry Blossoms* (Tokyo National Museum), *Ivy* (Metropolitan Museum of Art), and *Snow-laden Pine* (Freer Gallery).

but rather from images circulating in popular print. A square dish with a design of Song literatus Huang Tingjian (1045-1105) watching gulls, with painting by Ogata Kōrin (Tokyo National Museum), is adapted from a popular illustrated iconography of 1688 entitled *Ehon hōkan*. This particular dish lacks an inscription, but the picture alludes to a well-known verse which figures in the highly regarded set of thirty-six Chinese poetic immortals selected a generation before Kenzan by Kyoto literatus Ishikawa Jōzan (1583-1672).¹⁴

For a tea bowl decorated with a mountain hermitage, Kenzan appropriated designs from a 1688 poetry manual called *Shōshō hakkei shikashō*. Its compiler, nativist scholar Miyagawa Dōtatsu (Issui, ?-1701), matched printed images of the beloved “Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers” theme with respective verses by Chinese, Korean, and Japanese poets. The Kenzan piece borrows the illustration and two lines from one of the Xiao-Xiang quatrains, “Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting” (Figure 5):

The evening haze, cut out by the west wind;
Cassia trees, bathed in a vast expanse of spray—

The knowing user of this bowl would remember the next two lines, and possibly identify with the envious onlooker in the painted pavilion:

A fisherman’s flute, unmindful of a resentful guest,
Blows chill shadow straight through the rushes.

Suggestive plays were not limited to picture and verse. Ceramic form animates the verse, becoming what Chartier might call a device that organizes the “reading of writing.” An eight-sided dish decorated with a landscape (Figure 6) bears the following poem from *Jianzhai shiji* (Jp: Kansai shishū), an anthology of revered Song-dynasty literatus Chen Yuyi (1090-1138):

The Yangci River as far as the eye can see:
Those verdant hills—in what faraway district do they lie?

14 “I resent the existence of my empty fame—still not escaped from worldly entanglements! I dream I go off as a white seagull, over Jiangnan where water looks over the sky.” J. Chaves trans., in Chaves, et. al., *Shisendō: Hall of the Poetic Immortals* (New York, 1991), p. 74.



Fig. 5 Right: Pages with text and images of “Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting,” from *Shōshō hakkei shikashō*, 1688. Right: Tea bowl with design of “Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting” by Ogata Kenzan, ca. 1705. Nezu Institute of Fine Arts.



Fig. 6 Eight-sided dish with landscape design by Ogata Kenzan, ca. 1706. Private collection.

Ten thousand leagues of a traveler's impressions
Are compressed here into a single window:
Myriad trees, enveloped into a single dusk,
Solitary clouds, in the end never to return.
In all of this there are compelling lines of verse,
But they defeat all attempts at composition.

The vessel is a window just barely containing the world. The nuance is doubled by the choice of a polygonal vessel, echoing the traditional Chinese view of the world as eight-sided.

A Kenzan-ware handwarmer decorated with a landscape (Figure 7) reveals a similar strategy. The inscription, copied from the *Enki kappō*, is attributed to Ming-dynasty poet Zhang Ning (act. ca. 1440-1460):

In the Eastern country there is a high tower;
Before the tower flows a vast river.
Twilight flickers on Blue Sparrow mooring;
Shadows fall on White Egret Island.
Gazing afar, heaven's dome seems to extend downward;
The sky seems to be thrust up from the earth.
With breezes from all quarters, enjoying evening's beauty—
Time moves, but I am held here.

The spherical shape of the handwarmer becomes a meeting of heaven's dome and

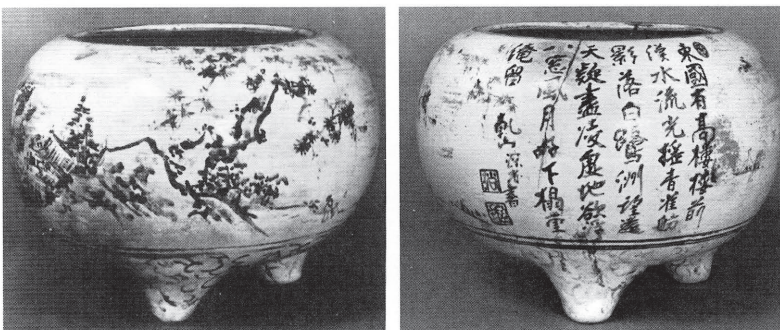


Fig. 7 Hand-warmer with landscape design by Ogata Kenzan, ca. 1712.
Osaka Municipal Museum of Art.

the thrust-up earth. The user of the vessel, “held here” by warmth of the coals, joins the poet in a pleasant lingering. (During the editing of this paper, I also discovered an additional layer of signification. “Eastern Country” is none other than a reference to Korea and the “vast river” depicts the Han River flowing through Seoul. The official Korean chronicle *Sejo sillok* (vol. 19, 1460) records that in 1490 Zhang Ning visited Seoul as part of a Chinese delegation. The group made an excursion to the Han River and climbed a tower there; Zhang wrote his impressions in a set of ten poems. A generation later, *Songjong sillok* (vol. 43, 1490) quotes those verses, including the one on the Kenzan-ware vessel, and relates how the Korean king was pleased with them. The verse was anthologized in later Korean collections as well. In other words, a Japanese ceramic designer had appropriated a Chinese poem that had become canonical in Korea!)

Now that we understand something of Kenzan’s relationship with printed material, his forsaking the Narutaki kiln in 1712 in favor of an urban address at Nijō-dori just west of Teramachi becomes more comprehensible. City guides of the period show that many of his neighbors were booksellers and publishers. Kenzan was still making ceramics, but now his business operated like that of the surrounding shops, assembling information and images, only in clay rather than paper.

Cuisine is Food in Print

In addition to broadcasting Kyoto products and providing ideas for ceramic decoration, the publishing industry of Kenzan’s time metaphorically filled the vessels with delicious and visually appealing food. Food studies, now a lively field all over the globe, has gone beyond questions of how people obtained, prepared, and consumed foods to embrace broader issues including classification systems of food, food literature, theories of taste, ideas of healthy food, and codes of etiquette and commensality. Those perspectives help us to understand the cuisine boom in Kenzan’s day. Together with the improved standard of urban living, printed literature played a large role in shaping a culinary imagination. Very similar to books on clothing and fashion, food publishing had both instructional and hallucinatory dimensions. The instructional aspect emerges in *ryōrisho* and *ryōribon*, of which many new editions appeared between 1680 and 1710.¹⁵ Titles may be charted in *Kokon shoseki dairin* (1675), a guide to books in print that features the earliest

15 Harada Nobuo, “Culinary Culture and its Transmission in the Late Edo Period,” *Written Texts, Visual Texts: Woodblock Printed Media in Early Modern Japan* (Amsterdam, 2005), p. 156.

appearance of “ryōri” as a book category; earlier (Kanbun-era) catalogues did not single out such books. A type of instructional manual called *chōhōki* shows a sensitivity toward table manners and an interest in classifying foods. The 1693 *Nan chōhōki*, for example, lists 250 kinds of snacks.

The other type of literature, exemplified by the *ukiyō-zōshi*, encourages readers to imagine a culinary “life well lived.” Saikaku’s *Yorozu no fumihōgu* of 1696 meticulously describes banquet planning for the merchant Nagasakiya. The many interior scenes found in works by Saikaku (Figure 8) and other *ukiyō-zōshi* show “zashiki” entertainments in which food and drink are consumed. Utensils in Kenzan’s inventory match this profile. Kenzan dishes, most commonly of the *mukōzuke* type, are recorded in elite entertainments during Kenzan’s lifetime.¹⁶ Kenzan ware was mentioned at least five times in *Kaiki*, the diary of Yamashina Dōan, attendant to aristocrat Konoe Iehiro (1667–1736), in 1725; Kenzan dishes also are recorded in the *Kondate futokoro nikki* in 1739. These descriptions assume

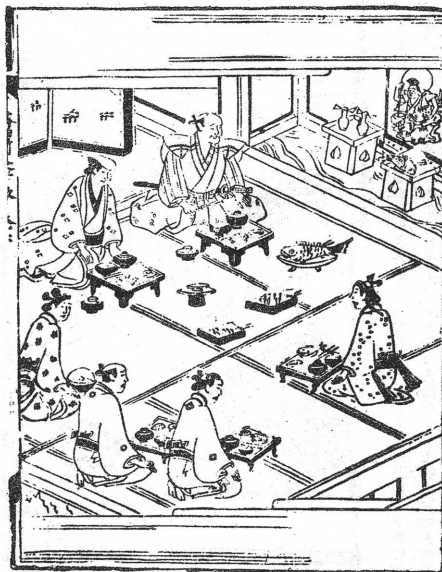


Fig. 8 Illustration from Ihara Saikaku, *Nihon eitaigura*, vol. 6 part 2, “Ebisu Festival.”

16 Matsushita Sakiko, “Kenzan no jidai no shokubunka” (Ogata Kenzan and Mid-Edo Period Food Culture), *Kenzan*, op. cit., pp. 221-224.

greater meaning when we consider that most other vessels are given only generic notations. Historians Tsutsumi Kōichi and Kumakura Isao have pointed out that the *mukōzuke*, as a word and concept, emerged in the late Genroku.¹⁷ It is no coincidence that the Kenzan workshop, opening 1699, made these dishes its chief product. Reconstructions of kiln furnishings excavated from the Narutaki workshop site show a preponderance of saggars (Figure 9) made to accommodate wide, low dishes of the *mukōzuke* size (Figure 10).¹⁸

In exhibitions and publications, craft objects are conventionally empty. And they are usually described in their empty state. Viewers/readers are not particularly encouraged to imagine how the objects were used. In the Shōwa era, the functional beauty of Kenzan was discovered by urban chefs and gourmets—one can see Kenzan-style ceramics handed down in fine Kyoto restaurants from the early Shōwa period—but for art historians and the general public they are passive objects, quite literally out of service. Thus we are compelled to reexamine how they were used. I received a valuable hint from master chef Takahashi Eiichi of Hyōtei, a *kaiseki*

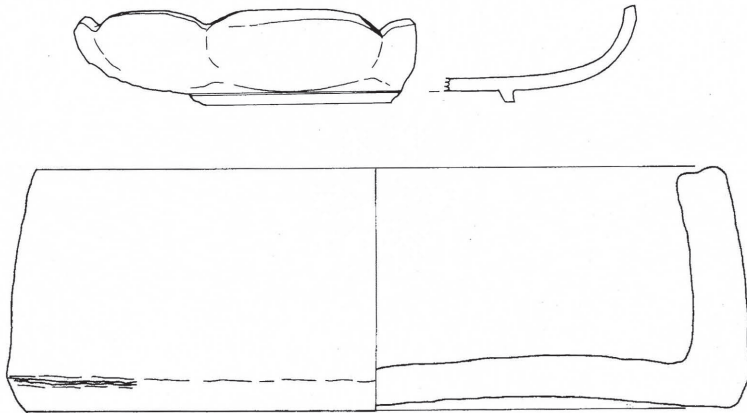


Fig. 9 Saggars fragment excavated from the Narutaki kiln site of Ogata Kenzan, 1699-1712, and measured diagram.

17 Kumakura Isao, “Chanoyu Cuisine in Ogata Kenzan’s Time,” *Appetizing Beauty: Kenzan and Seasonal Dishes* (Shiga, 1904), p. 134.

18 Wilson and Ogasawara, “Yōseki to iseki ni okeru Kenzan yaki” (Kenzan Ware: An Archaeological Perspective), *Takehaya III* (Tokyo, 2000), p. 240; a subsequent survey of the newly excavated saggars fragments from Narutaki confirmed this hypothesis.

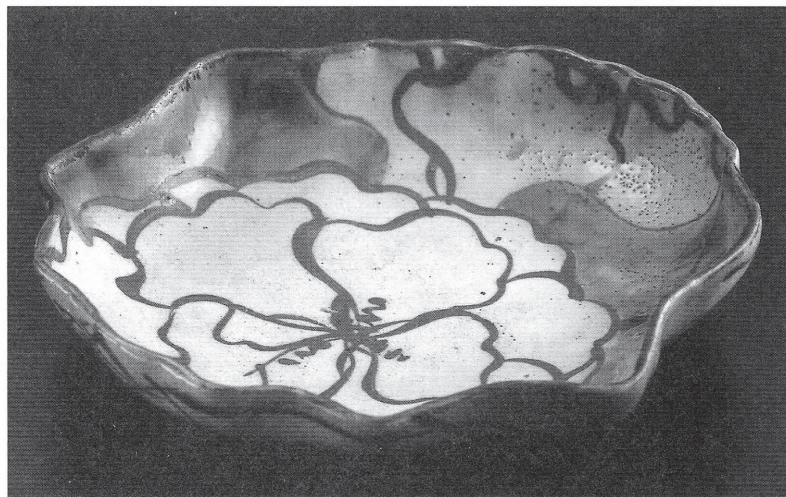


Fig.10 Serving dish with design of hollyhock by Ogata Kenzan. Miho Museum.

restaurant in east Kyoto.¹⁹ When I asked Mr. Takahashi about the appropriateness of piling food over the painting and poetry on Kenzan dishes, he opined that in such arrangement, the act of eating was also an act of revelation: consuming the food was tantamount to exposing theme. From that suggestion I could see that with Kenzan, cuisine was incorporated into the literary amusement of guessing, already familiar to users through pastimes like *kai-awase* and *karuta*. Many Kenzan-ware dishes feature poetic inscriptions on the verso, which invites users to guess the poetry, display their erudition by reciting it, and then confirm their guesses at the end of the meal.

We may also consider that reading the “complete” text was not a requirement (in fact the *Enki kappō* itself was a collection of couplets, and therefore Kenzan’s excerpts were already fragments). In Edo-period Japan, the process of reading itself had changed. In Kenzan’s day, popular books recycled and recombined images from many genres. Texts proper were now but a part of a multivariate work that regularly contained commentary and illustrations. The multiple-register format used in the popular genre of annotated classics such as *Ise monogatari eshō* (Illustrated Digest for *Tales of Ise*, 1693) demonstrate what Shang Wei has called an “ability to see and represent things in simultaneous but separate existences.”²⁰ A similar fragmentation

19 Takahashi’s arrangements are displayed in Takahashi Eiichi, ed., *Kaiseki ryōri—kiso to ōyo* (Kaiseki Cuisine: Fundamentals and Their Applications), (Tokyo, 1998).

20 Shang Wei, “Jin Ping Mei and Late Ming Print Culture,” in Zeitlin and Liu, eds., *Writing and Materiality in China* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 187-238.

and multiplicity of voices can be seen in dramatic and comic stage performances of the age, where a single voice could narrate, deliver dialogue, and make personal asides to the audience. The development of a “non-linear” reading, quickly taking in rich and diverse materials on a single page, is analogous to the experience of admiring and using and Kenzan’s multimedia *gasan* style. The early modern consumer was not tolerating hybridity and fragmentation—he or she was demanding it. Distraction had become an attraction.

Listed as a Souvenir

In 1712, Ogata Kenzan is mentioned in a municipal record called *Oyakusho muki taigai oboegaki*. Kenzan found the Narutaki location to be inconvenient, and that year moved to Chōjiyamachi on Nijō-dori, several blocks west of Teramachi. There he operated a “ceramics business” (*yakimono shōbai*) and rented kiln space at Awataguchi and Gojōzaka for his work. It was long believed that this move was driven by Kenzan’s advancing age and the decline of his artistic abilities, but the reverse is true: the print media had seized upon his product and made it popular. In 1715, Kenzan was listed as a Kyoto souvenir (*Yamashiro no miyage*) in the widely circulated encyclopedia *Wakan sansai zue*.²¹ His brother Kōrin, by the way, was publicized by the textile industry in numerous *hinagata* and his name had come to connote a style around the same time.

This level of popularity compels us to rethink the Kenzan operation. How do we resolve the idea of Kenzan the individual producer with Kenzan popular product? How did the workshop actually function? Another new archaeological discovery helps us to understand it. In 2001, an area just west of the Shōgoin temple in Sakyō-ku was under excavation by the Kyoto University Archaeology Center prior to construction of an addition to the university’s hospital (Figure 11). Studies of documents and heirloom pieces led me to believe that a Kenzan-related workshop was located there; in earlier publications, I had hypothesized a “Shōgoin workshop” started by Kenzan but carried on by his successor, Ogata Ihachi, into the middle of the eighteenth century.²² When I visited the site, I informed the (incredulous)

21 Terashima Ryōan, *Wakan sansai zue*, vol 22, typeset with annotations by Shimada Isao et. al., Heibonsha Tōyō Bunko 494:11 (1991), p. 392. The other ceramic products listed are Omuro, Kiyomizu, and Fukakusa.

22 See especially Wilson and Ogasawara, *Kenzan yaki nyūmon* (Introduction to Kenzan Ware), (Tokyo 1999), pp. 90-99.



Fig.11 Overall view of the Kyoto University Hospital site (looking east).
Courtesy Kyoto University Archaeology Center.

excavators that they should expect Kenzan ware to appear there. Within a few months the archeologists informed me that my predictions were correct: a group of pottery shards—glost kiln (*hongama*) wasters, to be precise—with the Kenzan mark had indeed been found together with kiln furniture. Among the excavated shards, there are rather clumsily made bowls and dishes which bear the characteristic personal signatures of Kenzan and Ihachi (upper part of Figure 12), but also very crisply made dishes of the *mukōzuke* type that were clearly the work of highly skilled professional potters, or *kijiya* (lower part of Figure 12). The latter group bore stereotypical, trademark-like “Kenzan” signatures. A few of the former and a lot of the latter also survive in museum and private collections. Based on those stylistic, technical, and numerical differences, a distribution of roles emerges: the head of the workshop (Kenzan I or II) filled special orders with his own idiosyncratic, personally-signed works, but the bulk of the operation was given over to outsourced, mass-produced works sold as a brand label. This setup reminds us of *couture* and *prêt à porter* (ready made) divisions of modern fashion houses.

It is also interesting that the same Shōgoin neighborhood has yielded evidence for the workshop of the late Edo-period potter Ōtagaki Rengetsu (1791-1875), who like Kenzan fused writing and ceramics, and also bridged the world of personal

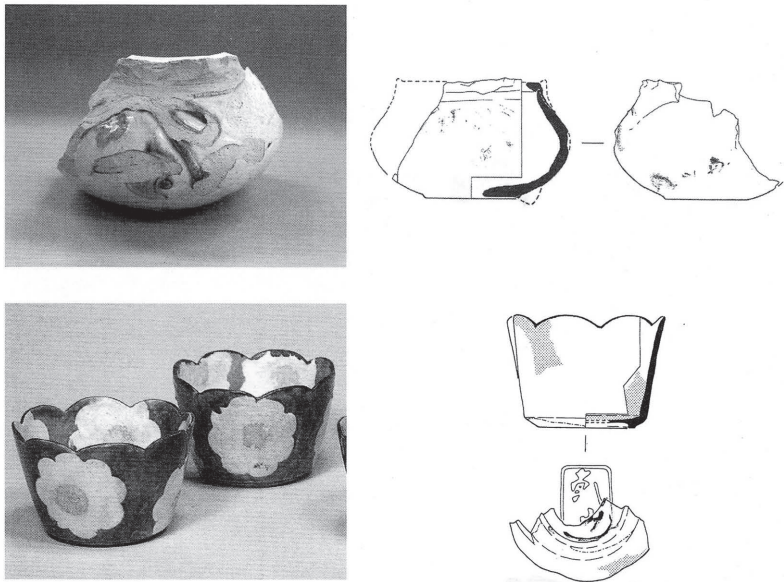


Fig.12 Upper: Vessel fragment excavated from the Kyoto University Hospital site and measured diagram. Lower right: measured diagram of vessel fragment excavated from the Kyoto University Hospital site. Lower left: Similar food vessel with design of camellia (private collection).

expression and mass production.²³ Rengetsu also shows us the drift in literary interests from classical waka, intimated by Ninsei, to kanshi, explored by Kenzan, and finally to personalized waka and haikai, the dominant form of literary expression in the late Edo period.

Writing Ceramics

Printed information enhanced a Kyoto courtly aura; it provided source material for decoration; and it enhanced the aesthetics of cuisine. From the eighteenth century, one could also learn to *make* pottery, including Kenzan or other Kyoto-style pottery, from books. At first glance, these volumes appear to be lists of recipes. But they are more than that. Beginning in sixteenth-century China, dilettantes had begun to take an interest in technical materials as part of a desire to possess specialist secrets and display knowledge as an end in itself. The types of technical books ranged over encyclopedias or compendia, illustrated depictions, instructional texts for practical

23 In addition to wares by Rengetsu, the 2001 excavation at Kyoto University Hospital also turned up wares by a Rengetsu disciple, Tamaki Ryōsai; it is also known that Kiyomizu Rokubei mass-produced wares in the Rengetsu style.

trades, and memoirs or notes from experts.

In seventeenth-century Japan the actual manufacture of ceramics, normally a specialized trade, was taken up by amateurs, beginning with tea masters who carved bowls (as well as bamboo tea scoops and flower vases) as a manifestation of personal taste. This spread into a broader tier of aspirants in the eighteenth century, fueled in good measure by the information boom. Let us consider the case of Kenzan. He received a handwritten recipe book (*densho*) from the heirs of the Ninsei workshop in 1699. Kenzan added his own observations in two handwritten manuals of 1737, *Tōji seihō* and *Tōkō hitsuyō*. We know from the dedicatory notes at the end of the text that both of these manuals were presented to amateurs. Kenzan's successor Ihachi produced his own pottery manual (known by various titles; the most common one is *Tōki mippōsho*) that circulated widely in manuscript copies. Kenzan's version is concerned with the inheritance (*sōden*) of various traditions, but the Ihachi manual is dedicated to making Kenzan style ceramics accessible to non-specialists. These manuals, along with countless others, swore their recipients to secrecy, but when we consider that that many of them were widely circulated, we may read that proscription as a form of value-adding. About the same time Kenzan was hand-copying his manuals, printed texts such as *Rakuyaki hinō* (Collected Raku ceramic secrets), published in 1736, began to enjoy wide circulation (Figure 13). Production had become a form of consumption, a familiar phenomenon in today's do-it-yourself craft world.

I have surveyed several dozen such pottery manuals as part of Nichibunken's Kyoto craft project, "The Past, Present, and Future of Traditional Japanese Crafts, with Special Reference to Kyoto and Its Surroundings." With a background in studio pottery, I am interested in them as evidence for the development of ceramics technology. But today's print-culture and material culture studies contribute additional perspectives. By giving informational form to loosely consolidated teachings, manualization changes the locus of control. The presence of a text can either preclude or transform the role of the master. At the same time, living teachers could be replaced by remote "ancestors" as sources of authority. This is part of a general pattern in Kinsei printed literature, evidenced in the idealization of Zeami in noh, Ikenobō in flower arranging, Dōgen in Zen, and Rikyū in tea.²⁴ Names like

24 See Eric C. Rath, *The Ethos of Noh: The Actors and Their Art* (Cambridge and London, 2004), pp. 159-70.

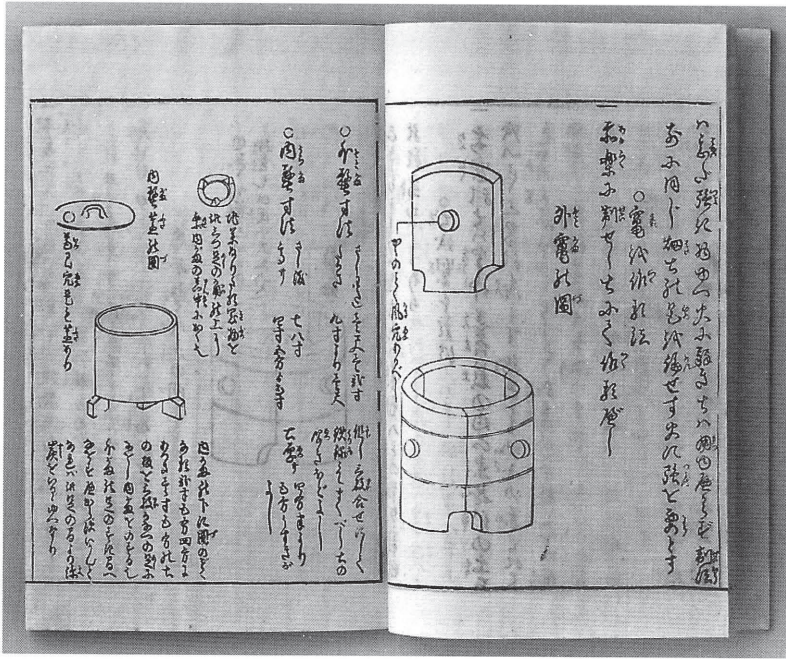


Fig.13 *Rakuyaki hinō* (Collected Raku Ceramic Secrets), published 1736. Private collection.

Kōetsu and Kenzan are often mentioned in the pottery manuals, where they serve as spiritual forerunners. This premodern identification of Kenzan as a “prince of amateur potters” would be upgraded by Bernard Leach and friends into a twentieth-century institution, the “artist-potter.”

It is also possible to see these manuals as an embodiment of tradition, for they became testaments for Kyoto and other craft industries that were compelled to account for (if not invent) themselves, both domestically and internationally, at the opening of the Meiji era. The 1872 *Tōjiki setsu*, compiled as part of an inventory of Kyoto products for presentation at the Vienna World’s Fair the following year, is a case in point. The historical diversity of local centers such as Awataguchi, Gojōzaka, Fushimi or Hataeda are represented as a unitary “Kyōyaki.”

Existence and Opposition

Two general observations about early modern Kyoto crafts have informed this paper. One is that they were occasionally *written upon*, which I initially understood as an extension of the literary world into three-dimensional objects. An investigation into

Kenzan's inscribed ceramics revealed more subtle relations between political trends, literary tradition, printed sources, and ceramic vessels. In the course of surveying recent and remote precedents for Kenzan's readable crafts, I considered the *ashide* style of lacquerware of the medieval period. In due course, I discovered that in 1893, the modern Kyoto crafts reformer Kamisaka Sekka (1866-1942) created a group called Ashide-kai as a vehicle to reinvest Kyoto crafts, specifically lacquerware, with writing. A reference to the inaugural meeting in the *Kyoto Art Society Magazine* (Kyōto bijutsu kyōkai zasshi) states that the project was modeled on Kōetsu, who himself was alleged to be a revivalist of the *ashide* style. However, after Sekka and his contemporaries encountered Art Nouveau, which was then rising in popularity worldwide, the interest in the literary thread diminished. Craft, in a sense, had turned into pure form. Sekka's conversion accelerated my growing realization of how thoroughly modernity has transformed our way of understanding (which became simply "looking at") premodern Japanese objects. The bias certainly holds for Kenzan studies; of the hundreds of essays, research articles, and books prior not a single one dealt seriously with the representational aspects of the décor, and only a few ventured to speculate on the function of the objects. Re-investigating the writing on ceramics and other crafts reminds us of our loss: the ability of crafts to evoke and provoke, have been replaced by a formally-inclined modern gaze. The occidental dimension of that loss can be seen in the habits of overseas Kenzan collectors in the Meiji: the number of inscribed vessels, which normally occupy a considerable share of the entire corpus, is disproportionately small.

The other perspective, very much connected to the first, is that premodern crafts were *written about* by contemporary producers, consumers, and promoters, and that leads us to the role of printed information in mediating all kinds of craft-related experience, ranging from cuisine to actual manufacture. For many years historians of craft have consulted premodern printed material, but chiefly to validate heirlooms in an orthodox art history (i.e., "this vessel appears in that book, which was published in that year"). Now, with more specialists interested in visual culture and the interface of art and print, the situation will undoubtedly change. I hope that my paper will contribute to that development.

The orthodox representation of premodern Japanese craft, as a part of the discourse of tradition in general, is based on an oppositional model. For over a century crafts have been offered as material evidence for a timeless, rural, naïve, elemental,

and communal society—a holistic and Arcadian “other scene” in opposition to a disordered and ever-changing present. Its fundamental premise notwithstanding, this portrait is patently inappropriate to Kyoto crafts, which were manufactured and consumed in a dynamic and informed urban environment. The marketing of the courtly image, the exploitation of expanded communication technology, development of cuisine, the creation of designer labels, and the cultivation of amateur makers—features that we have considered in this paper—suggest that the historical explication of Kyoto crafts should be extricated from the politics of nostalgia. I am not attempting to cast premodern Kyoto as an eternal present. But it is fair to conclude that the stereotypes created for “traditional Japanese crafts” are ill-suited to the work of Kyoto’s artisans and their audiences, and that much remains to be learned—and creatively mined—from Kyoto’s vast historical tapestry of words, images, and objects.