

Swarthmore College

Works

Art & Art History Faculty Works

Art & Art History

2013

Japan: 1400-1600

Tomoko Sakomura

Swarthmore College, tsakomu1@swarthmore.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-art>



Part of the Asian Art and Architecture Commons

Let us know how access to these works benefits you

Recommended Citation

Tomoko Sakomura. (2013). "Japan: 1400-1600". *History Of Design: Decorative Arts And Material Culture, 1400-2000*. 22-31.

<https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-art/124>

This work is brought to you for free by Swarthmore College Libraries' Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Art & Art History Faculty Works by an authorized administrator of Works. For more information, please contact myworks@swarthmore.edu.

To the present day, many Korean women esteem Lady Shin for so capably fulfilling her duties as a wife and mother while also achieving success as an artist. Like many upper-class women during the Goryeo and early Joseon periods, Lady Shin enjoyed greater social and economic freedom than her later Joseon counterparts. In line with prevailing customs, she continued to live in her parent's house for several years after marriage. She seems to have traveled freely and bequeathed her property equally among sons and daughters. Over the next generations, however, these practices would be overturned and women's freedoms curtailed as Korea adopted a more strictly Confucian, patrilinear social structure.

During the first two hundred years of Joseon rule, Korea experienced relative peace and political stability and signifi-

cant cultural achievement. While Ming China remained a wellspring of new artistic and intellectual currents, the early Joseon period also witnessed the development of important local innovations in thought and material culture. The adoption of Neo-Confucianism as state policy transformed the system of government, the composition and interests of the elite, and, more gradually, the daily lives of the Korean people, from marriage and funerary customs to the roles of women in society and the design and production of decorative arts. In forging this new path for their country, early Joseon rulers established the political, societal, and cultural norms that underpinned Korean social and material life through to the twentieth century.

LEE TALBOT

JAPAN

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries make up the second half of what scholars now refer to as the medieval period in Japan. It began with the eclipse of rule by the emperor and imperial court aristocracy in the western city of Kyoto and the rise of a new form of military government known as the *bakufu*, or shogunate, in the eastern city of Kamakura. The original shogunate gave way to the new line of Ashikaga shoguns, who returned the seat of shogunal governance to Kyoto and whose reign would be known as the Muromachi period (1336–1573) after the area from which they ruled.

The years 1400 to 1600 were marked by a steady devolution of power away from the emperor and shogun in Kyoto and toward the emerging domains of provincial warlords (daimyo). This process was accelerated by the Ōnin War (1467–77), which devastated the capital city of Kyoto and challenged the authority of the Ashikaga rule. Later historians designated the succeeding century of strife as Sengoku, the era of “warring states.”

Despite the instability and conflict, the Sengoku era was one of accelerating economic growth and an expansion of cultivated land. Improved transportation enabled commerce among different parts of Japan, and demands by its new daimyo class stimulated the growth of artisanal skills in many centers of production throughout the country. Kyoto culture spread as court aristocrats and priests, fleeing the battle-torn capital, took refuge with provincial warlords. Kyoto itself was rebuilt under the leadership of a newly energized merchant urban class. The expansion of commerce also had an increasingly international dimension, with overseas trade between Ming China, Joseon Korea, the Ryūkyū Kingdom (Okinawa), the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Siam (present-day Thailand) leading to the import into Japan of a rich diversity of luxury goods and other products, providing further stimulus to domestic productivity.

Trade was further energized by the arrival of Western missionaries and traders. Shipwrecked Portuguese traders reached Tanegashima (off the coast of Kagoshima prefecture in southern Japan) in 1543, and the Roman Catholic Jesuit

missionary Francis Xavier (1506–1552) arrived in Japan six years later. The port city of Sakai, near Osaka, was a major import center, and some of its successful merchants participated in the arts, particularly the practice of tea, or the tea ceremony as it is popularly known.

The increasing daimyo power in the provinces led to a new phase of military reconsolidation and political unification under three dynamic leaders. First, Oda Nobunaga (r. 1573–82) unseated the fifteenth and last Ashikaga shogun in 1573. The extraordinary rise to power of Nobunaga's successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (r. 1590–98), from peasant birth illustrates the “lower overcoming the higher” (*gekokujo*) of late medieval Japan. Nobunaga and Hideyoshi ushered in the great era of building castles and “castle towns” (*jōkamachi*), complete with new shrines, temples, and commoner quarters. This sustained period of urban development created demand for interior decoration in a wide variety of forms and media. The Momoyama period (1573–1615) was a time of remarkable achievements in decorative arts, design, and material culture. Tokugawa Ieyasu (r. 1603–5), who helped to unify Japan, established a shogunate in Edo (present-day Tokyo) that would govern for more than two and a half centuries.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, there were few distinctions between decorative and fine arts in Japan. Objects were considered components of cultural practices such as *kazari* (adornment), involving the production and orchestration of artifacts as ensembles tailored for specific occasions. Room partitions such as sliding door panels (*fusuma*) and folding screens (*byōbu*) provided opportunities for pictorial display, and renowned artists accepted commissions for them as well as for decorations for items such as folding fans (*ōgi*), writing desks, and saddles for the elite.

The objects themselves were made from multiple materials: the sheets of silk or paper of the hanging scroll (*kakemono*) and handscroll (*makimono*)—prominent formats for pictorial and calligraphic expression in both secular and religious realms—were affixed to textile mounts, fitted with rollers of wood and precious materials, and stored in custom-made



boxes. Producing such objects required the coordinated efforts of papermakers, textile makers, woodworkers, and mounters. Between 1400 and 1600, the intermingling of various media figures prominently in the design, manufacture, collecting, and display of objects and clothing. The extant objects, primary records, and scholarly research chiefly reflect elite material culture, but ordinary objects and the formal language of the everyday also can be seen, particularly in the context of tea culture, which brings together architecture, calligraphy, painting, ceramics, textiles, lacquerware, metalwork, and woodwork.

COLLECTING AND DISPLAY IN ELITE INTERIORS

Official and private trade among Japan and its neighbors China and Korea fostered a native–foreign or local–imported dialectic that shaped much of the material and visual culture in Japan, thus increasing the number of outside influences that informed local production for centuries. Beginning in the thirteenth century, the Zen temples in Kamakura and Kyoto attracted monks from China, and with them ideas and artifacts from the Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1279–1368) dynasties. With Ashikaga shogunal support, the Zen monasteries flourished as cultural centers. Artifacts came from a variety of places and times, but imported objects were prized and generally recognized under the broad designation *karamono* (literally “Chinese things”).

Fifteenth-century records indicate that *karamono* featured prominently in elite social events. For the annual votive flower display for the Star Festival (*tanabata*) in 1432 (held on the seventh day of the seventh month), flowers arranged in fifty Chinese bronze vases were delivered to the residence of the imperial prince Fushiminomiya Sadafusa. Two rooms—the residential quarters (*tsune gosho*) and guest hall (*kyakuden*)—were combined temporarily to form a reception room (*kaisho*) by opening or removing the sliding doors

between them. Against a backdrop of two pairs of folding screens, an impressive display of Chinese objects—seven hanging scroll paintings and tables arrayed with vases—transformed the room into a ceremonial space. This was the setting for the events of the day, which included a Buddhist ritual, a banquet, poetry composition and recitation, the judging of floral arrangements, and music. The open-plan *shinden*-style interiors had a central “sleeping hall” (*shinden*) that could be used as a ceremonial or living space depending on the decoration and placement of movable furnishings. Flexible interior decoration (*shitsurai*, or “furnishing”), such as movable shelves for storage and display, had been incorporated into *shinden*-style residences of the court aristocracy since Heian times (794–1185).

Standardization of the display of *karamono* developed in tandem with a type of residential architecture known as *shoin* that emerged from the *shinden* style, but with permanent fixtures. Central to this systemization of display were three generations of cultural advisers: Nōami (1397–1471), Geiami (1431–1485), and Sōami (d. 1525). They served the Ashikaga shoguns Yoshinori (r. 1429–41) and his son Yoshimasa (r. 1449–73) and oversaw the connoisseurship, appraisal, mounting, conservation, and storage of *karamono* in the shogunal collection, begun in the mid-fourteenth century. They were also charged with deploying that collection in displays of shogunal authority. Their knowledge was passed down through the *Kundaikan sōchōki* (Manual of the Attendant of the Shogunal Collection), written in the fifteenth century. For each fixture of the *shoin*-style structure—such as the fitted desk (*tsukeshoin*), staggered or uneven shelving (*chigaidana*), low shelves or boards for display of objects (*oshiita*), and display alcove (*tokonoma*)—the manual gives methods of arrangement, complete with annotated diagrams and evaluative descriptions of the objects to be used.

Chinese objects placed in context with identifying descriptions appear in another manual, *Mon'ami kadensho* (Mon'ami's Secret Flower Arrangement Teachings, fig. 1.21), thought to have been written by the flower arrangement

Fig. 1.21. Handscroll: *Mon'ami's Secret Flower Arrangement Teachings*, Japan, 1522 (1559 copy). Ink and color on paper; 1 x 19 ft. (.3 x 5.8 m). Kyushu National Museum, Japan (P2).

Fig. 1.24. Shoin-style tea table, Ashiya nagata, 15th century. Cast iron; 14.84 in. (37 cm). Tokyo National Museum, Important Cultural Property (E19918).

Fig. 1.22. Writing box (*suzuribako*), Japan, 16th century. Lacquer on wood, gold, silver; 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 2 in. (24.5 x 22.2 x 5 cm). Trustees of the British Museum (1974,0513.13.a–b).



Fig. 1.23. *Negoro* ware sake bottle, Japan, 16th–17th century. Lacquer on wood; 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 7 x 7 in. (33.5 x 17.9 x 17.9 cm). Trustees of the British Museum (1978,0421.1.a–b).



specialist Mon'ami (d. 1517). The image shown here illustrates the display alcove flanked by staggered shelves. Three blank scrolls serve as placeholders in the alcove, representing the display of a triptych. In front of the middle scroll are the “three implements” (*mitsugusoku*)—candlestick, incense burner, and flower vase—that denote the Buddhist origins of ritual flower offering and display. The implements are flanked by two vases with irises accompanied with the annotation “summer flowers.” There are two other groups of flowers with annotations: to the far right, an arrangement of plums in a white vase was captioned “spring flowers,” while the arrangement with chrysanthemums to the far left was “autumn flowers.” This manual was part of a larger effort to systematize the arts, including tea practice, in the mid-sixteenth century.

If *karamono* bespoke imported cultural authority, lacquer objects adorned with the *maki-e* (literally “sprinkled picture”) technique bespoke traditional refinement and wealth. The technique had been in use since at least the ninth century for the ornamentation of the Buddhist implements and furnishings of the imperial court aristocracy. It was an expensive and labor intensive process whereby thin layers of lacquer were gradually built up and decorated with sprinklings of metallic powder, or flecks of metal leaf, usually gold or silver. This meant that only wealthy patrons could afford *maki-e* objects, thus furthering its association with the elite upper classes. One example of sixteenth-century lacquerware, a writing box (*suzuribako*), is typical of the fusion of function and technique with subject matter, in this case the landscape of a noted poetic site (fig. 1.22). Its decoration combines densely speckled gold (*nashiji*, or pear skin) and a picture created with sprinkled relief (*takamaki-e*), a process in which lacquer mixed with charcoal powder is built up in relief and then dusted with gold or silver powder, used here to accentuate the forms of trees, rocks, shrine structures, shells, and waves.

Painterly gradations of density are achieved through manipulation of the particle size of the metal, the type of metal used, the choice of lacquer (translucent or tinted), and the surface texture. Through these means, in the writing box shown, the mountains recede into the distance, the waves undulate, pine needles are of a requisite sharpness, and the tree trunks are appropriately textured. Writing boxes, which held brushes, ink stick, water dropper, and inkstone, played a prominent role in poetry gatherings. Accordingly, they were often ornamented with literary themes evoking knowledge dating back to the perceived golden age of courtly culture in the Heian period. These themes range from *waka* poetry (Japanese courtly verse in thirty-one syllables) to such narrative texts as *Genji monogatari* (The Tale of Genji) and *Ise monogatari* (The Tales of Ise)—literary essentials of an elite education. Near the tree trunks on the box shown here, seven letters offer clues to a poem from the eighth imperial poetry anthology *Kin'yōshū* (1127), revealing that the scene on this writing box is Futamigaura Bay in present-day Mie prefecture.

The making of such lacquerware was a family trade, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Kōami and Igarashi families, who produced lacquered objects for the shogunal family, were especially prominent. Along with other artistic families, such as the Gotō metalworkers and the Kanō painters, they prospered into the seventeenth century.

Other lacquerware, made without *maki-e* decoration, includes *negoro* ware. *Negoroji*, a temple in Kii province (present-day Wakayama prefecture), was once the foremost producer of this monochromatic lacquer. They specialized in forms for monastic and ceremonial use, such as this sake vessel, which was employed on altars at Shinto shrines (fig. 1.23), but *negoro* lacquerware was also made for everyday domestic use. Layers of black and red lacquer were built up on a wooden base, and the resulting vessels are now prized for the subtle tonal effects created through extended use and handling.

TEA CULTURE AND THE PRODUCTION OF TASTE

Introduced from Song China through Zen temples in the late twelfth century, the preparation and consumption of powdered green tea (*matcha*) evolved into a highly formalized practice in sixteenth-century Japan. Previously, tea would have been made in a separate room and brought to guests in the reception room. By the sixteenth century, as residences came to include dedicated spaces for tea and as stand-alone tea houses were built, “tea” became an event performed in front of guests by their host. The practice became known as *chanoyu* (literally “hot water for tea”; in English it is often referred to as the tea ceremony). It reflected personal taste in the selection of utensils and the adornment of spaces for presenting tea to guests.

Because the practice required a number of vessels and utensils, it created a demand for a range of suitable objects. In place of the “sets” of *karamono* displayed in the fifteenth century, mixing of imported and locally made utensils as well as combinations of materials were preferred for *chanoyu*, including ceramics (tea bowls, tea caddies, fresh- and used-water containers), metal (kettles, vases, and lid rests), lacquer (tea and incense containers), and bamboo (baskets), tea whisks, tea scoops, and ladles. The choice of utensils for *chanoyu* was made by the host according to the season, time, place, guests, and occasion of the gathering. Over time, choreographed movements were established for the preparation of tea, and the kettle became the centerpiece for the arrangement of charcoal, ashes, and incense in the hearth, all of which were critical for the optimal boiling of water. Cast-iron kettles from Ashiya, a region in southern Japan (present-day Fukuoka prefecture) that had long produced metalwork for temples and shrines, became especially coveted by *chanoyu* enthusiasts (fig. 1.24). The design of pine trees at a shore on this kettle finds its counterpart in paintings of the period and also alludes to the sound of water boiling in the kettle, which is likened in *chanoyu* to wind blowing through pines.

In the sixteenth century, *chanoyu* flourished among the urban merchant elite in Kyoto and Sakai. Murata Jūkō (1423–1502), Takeno Jōō (1502–1555), and Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591) are celebrated practitioners and teachers associated with a philosophical approach that championed austerity, later known as *wabicha* (*wabi* tea) or tea of the *sōan* (thatched hut). The proponents of *wabi* tea embraced and promoted certain qualities, such as simplicity of form, wear associated with age, and “non-matching” implements. In doing so they moved away from the ideals of balance and perfection embodied by *karamono*. *Wabi* tea thus explored new aesthetic territory and encouraged the redefinition of conventional objects and the production of new ones. Tea records, kept by merchants, offer insights into the type and ownership of objects used in tea gatherings, often with commentary on a notable utensil, usually a tea jar, tea caddy, painting, or calligraphy.

Such records also provide a window onto the interactions and transactions among merchants, warriors, monks, and courtiers in the context of tea practice, demonstrating the significance of *chanoyu* for networking and the influence of

tea culture and tea practitioners in elite social life. The unprecedented mingling of social groups facilitated by *chanoyu* also contributed to what may be called the “art of value making” among late sixteenth-century tea practitioners, who excelled at appropriating objects not previously used in *chanoyu*. Humble “found objects” were elevated to the status of revered implements, demonstrating the transformative power of the connoisseurial selection by the tea masters. Rikyū famously adopted a well bucket as a vessel for fresh water, and some objects crafted or approved by Rikyū himself, such as bamboo baskets for flower arrangement (*tatehana*, *rikka*, *ikebana*) and bamboo tea scoops, were subsequently marked with his lacquered signature (*kaō*), imparting new value to the object. *Wabi* tea also promoted locally produced objects, such as utilitarian vessels made at the ceramic centers of Bizen, Shigaraki, Tanba, and Iga. A storage jar from Bizen features a dramatic flow of natural ash “glaze” that ran down its side during firing, an unplanned effect that almost overpowers the roughly combed geometric hatching around the shoulder of the vessel (fig. 1.25). Such seemingly spontaneous effects came to be appreciated aesthetically as “views” (*keshiki*), like a landscape, and were coveted by emergent tea aficionados.

Tea records from the 1580s mention both Japanese- and Korean-made tea bowls, marking a shift away from the earlier practice under the Ashikaga shoguns, which had been dominated by Chinese objects. A celebrated type of tea bowl specifically made for *chanoyu* from around the end of the sixteenth century is known as Raku, after the family of potters who made these wares and trace their lineage to the time of Rikyū. Raku bowls were and are individually constructed and fired in small updraft kilns (where the heat source comes from the bottom of the kiln). Though of a slightly later period, the bowl illustrated here, attributed to Sōnyū (1664–1716), of the fifth generation of the Raku family, captures the ideals

Fig. 1.24. *Shinnari*-type tea kettle, Ashiya region, 15th century. Cast iron; H. 6¾ in. (17 cm). Tokyo National Museum, Important Cultural Property (E19998).



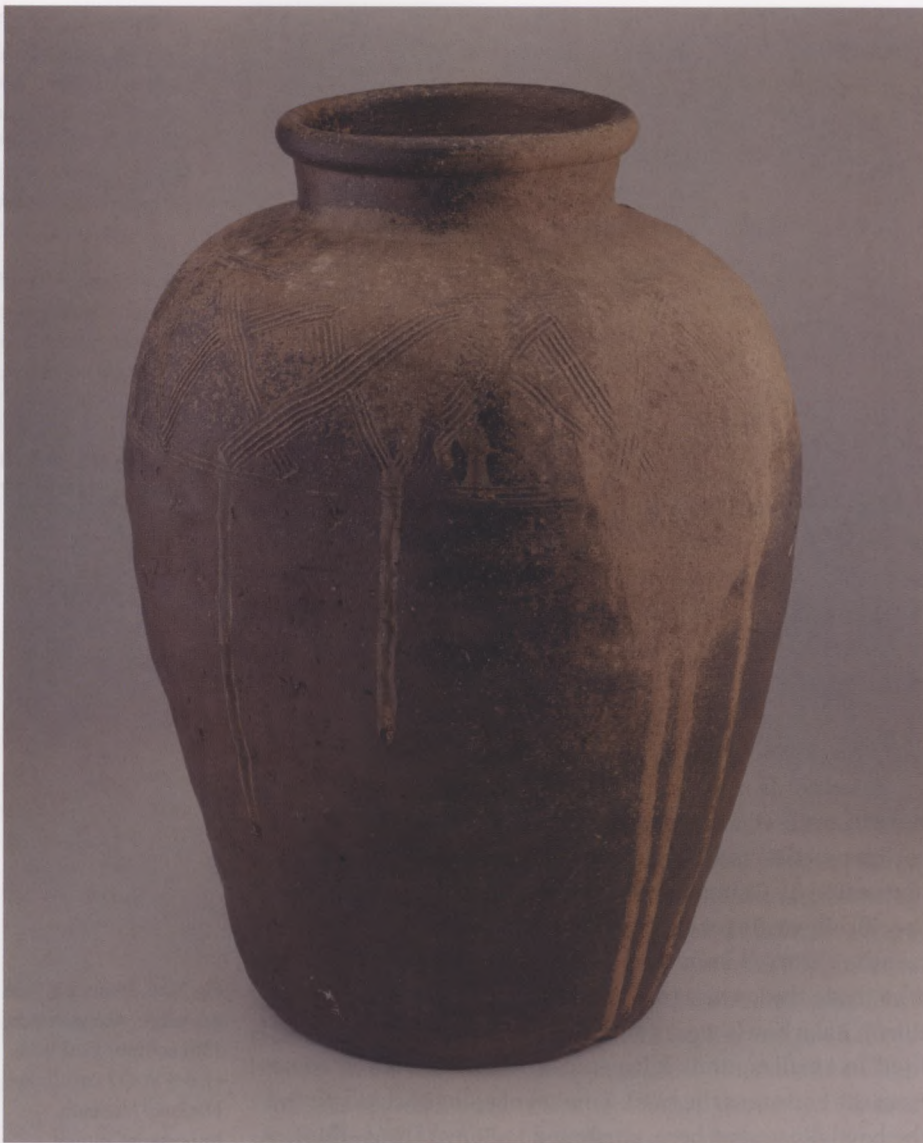


Fig. 1.25. Bizen ware storage jar, Imbe, 15th century. Stoneware; 20 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 14 $\frac{13}{16}$ x 14 $\frac{13}{16}$ in. (51 x 37.7 x 37.7 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC (F1998.25).

of the *wabi* aesthetic in its restrained and earthy hand-built form (fig. 1.26). The Raku lineage has continued for fifteen generations since and exemplifies the families of makers in Kyoto and beyond who have sustained the art of *chanoyu* over the centuries.

Recent archaeological discoveries along Kyoto's Sanjō Avenue document the great variety of local ceramics that were available in the capital by the end of the sixteenth century. The clustering of ceramics dealers was likely a result of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's redevelopment of the area in the 1590s, and documents from the 1620s identify it as the "precinct of pottery shops" (*Setomonoya-chō*). This name derives from the long-standing ceramics center of Seto (Owari province, now Aichi prefecture), which lent its name to the term *setomono* ("Seto things") as a common way to refer to ceramics. Excavated shards offer evidence of the quantity and variety of ceramic objects associated with tea culture that were sold along Sanjō Avenue, with each shop functioning as a key distributor for goods from particular locales, such as Seto and Karatsu (Hizen province, now Saga prefecture). A site in Nakanomachi yielded nearly 1,500 restorable tea utensils, the majority of which were new products of kilns in Mino province (now part of Gifu prefecture), a ceramics center since the

Fig. 1.26. Attributed to Raku Sōnyū. Tea bowl, Kyoto, 1691–1716. Earthenware; 3 x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (7.6 x 11.4 x 11.4 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London (240-1877).

seventh century that adopted glazed stoneware technology from Seto in the early fifteenth century. Indeed, it appears that Mino products were marketed in Kyoto as "Seto" in the shadow of that better-known site.

One distinctive type of stoneware produced in the Mino region was Yellow Seto (Kiseto), a yellow-glazed ware. The thin-walled pieces were incised with plant designs colored copper green and iron brown and modeled after metalware and Chinese ceramic vessel types. Shino ware, the first underglaze-decorated ceramic produced in Japan, featured a characteristic thick, semiopaque white feldspathic glaze tinged with red, layered over brush-painted designs of brown iron oxide. Development of these glazed stonewares in Mino depended on the advanced technology of the partly buried, single-chamber "great kiln" (*ōgama*), introduced in the early sixteenth century. Imported wares had substantial impact on ceramic development in Japan and on Kyoto's *karamonoya* (merchants of imported goods), who connected the ceramic centers in the provinces to the markets in the capital.

CROSSCURRENTS IN DESIGN

The late sixteenth century was an extremely creative period in the decorative arts in Japan, a time when innovative styles and designs emerged in textiles, lacquer, and ceramics. One exuberant design, known as *katami-gawari* (alternating sides), lent itself to various media. Its mix-and-match designs, materials, colors, and patterns created a dynamic and distinctive composite imagery.

An example of a *kosode* robe demonstrates the *katami-gawari* dynamic, with different ground colors and designs alternating left and right (fig. 1.27). A precursor of the modern *kimono*, the *kosode* (small sleeves) was named for the small wrist openings of the garment. Here, the panels with the light ground combine embroidered designs of seashells and paper strips for poetry (*tanzaku*) hanging from the branches of a weeping cherry. The section with red ground consists of two panels, wandering stripes (*tatewaku*) overlaid with bridge and iris (upper panel) and snow-laden willow branches accented with paulownia and arrowheads (lower panel). This robe was made with the *nuihaku* technique, characterized by a three-

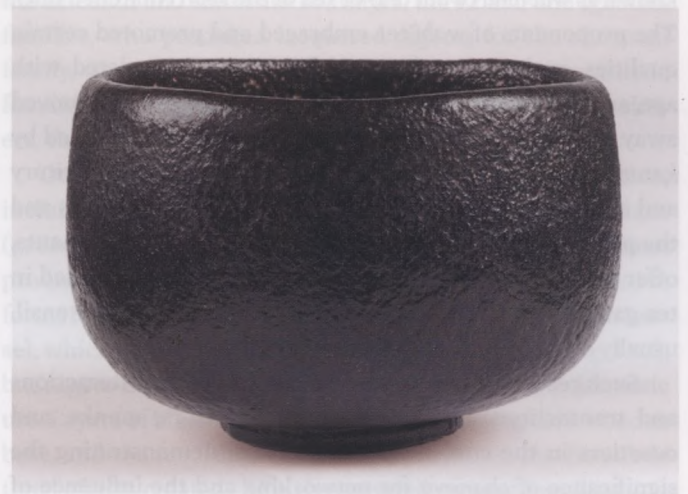




Fig. 1.27. Robe (*kosode*), Japan, 16th century. Embroidered silk, gold and silver foil; 54½ x 23¼ in. (137.6 x 59 cm). Tokyo National Museum, Important Cultural Property (12904).

dimensional effect of densely embroidered glossy silk stitches (*nu*) set against the unembroidered areas adorned with imprinted gold or silver foil (*haku*).

Novel methods of embroidery and dyeing flourished on *kosode*, as seen in this example, which was passed down in the collection of the Mōri family of warriors of Suō province (now Yamaguchi prefecture), as a costume for Noh (masked, musical drama). The stylized blossoms of the paulownia (a tree

native to Asia), embroidered on the red panels, may connect this *kosode* to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who was granted the use of this imperial crest by Emperor Goyōzei (r. 1586–1611) in 1586. Hideyoshi was an ardent patron and practitioner of Noh, even commissioning plays that celebrated his achievements.

Originally an undergarment worn by women at the court in Heian times, by the late sixteenth century, the *kosode* had evolved into outerwear for people at all levels of society and

Brooklyn Museum
(34.897)

Fig. 1.30. Onbe-style dishes,
Mino region, 1600–90.
Stoneware, each, 7¼ x
5¾ x 4¼ in. (18.8 x
14.5 x 11.5 cm). Victoria
and Albert Museum,
London (FE 73-1982
and FE 73A-1982).



Fig. 1.28. Wine ewer, Japan, c. 1596. Lacquer on wood, gold; 10 x 10½ x 7 in. (25.4 x 25.7 x 17.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1980.6).

was particularly favored by warriors and commoners. It was worn layered or as a part of an ensemble as dictated by class and occasion. In late sixteenth-century cityscapes of Kyoto, a genre known as *Rakuchū-rakugai zu* (scenes in and around the capital), for example, commoners wear *kosode* alone or with a layer of undergarment, loosely fastened at the waist with a thin sash. In a formal portrait, the thirteenth Ashikaga shogun Yoshiteru (r. 1546–65), dated 1577, wears a long-sleeved jacket and trouser set called *hitatare*, under which is a *kosode* of alternating designs in white and crimson. *Kosode* were also worn beneath *kataginu*, a sleeveless jacket that gained favor as warrior formalwear during the mid-sixteenth century. Yet despite the long history of the *kosode*, most surviving examples date from the end of the sixteenth century or later. Many of these are women's *kosode*, some of which were offered to temples after the owner's death where they might be reconfigured into altar cloths (*uchishiki*).

In the late sixteenth century, dyed and embroidered designs such as those on the *kosode* illustrated in figure 1.27 replaced woven patterns in the decoration of clothing created for the elite. Embroidery and dyeing not only allowed for more flexibility in the design of a pattern than weaving would allow, but also marked a significant departure from the attitude that woven designs were superior to dyed ornament. Some woven garments such as *karaori* ("Chinese weave") continued to enjoy a privileged status. In the Muromachi

period, *karaori* had been reserved for a select circle of officials around the shogun. In the fifteenth century, the Nishijin weaving district in Kyoto was the largest in Japan, but the devastation and disruption of the Ōnin War led to a shortage of new, quality clothing and courtiers purportedly shared garments in order to conduct court ceremonies. Many Kyoto weavers and dyers moved to Sakai, where they found patronage from regional warlords and moneyed merchants. They adopted new styles of weaving and embroidery, many derived from techniques imported from Ming China.

In lacquerware, the *katami-gawari* design strategy manifested itself in a new style of *maki-e* lacquer that emerged in the late sixteenth century and is known now as *Kōdaiji maki-e*. The name comes from the Zen temple *Kōdaiji*, built by Hideyoshi's wife, Nene (1548–1624). The ewer illustrated here displays three distinct traits of *Kōdaiji maki-e*, namely, the motifs of autumn flowers and grasses, bold application of family crests, and the use of *katami-gawari* (fig. 1.28). Here a dramatic zigzag border creates a contrast in color and design between chrysanthemum sprays on black lacquer and paulownia, the Toyotomi family crest, on the red- and gold-flecked *nashiji*.

In contrast to the sculptural relief of the writing box shown earlier (see fig. 1.22), the two-dimensional pictoriality of the *Kōdaiji* style is fresh and bold. The difference in effect largely comes from the "flat" sprinkled picture (*hiramaki-e*) technique, which dispensed with the drying time between layered relief applications. Chrysanthemum flowers and leaves are outlined with gold raised lines (*tsukegaki*, created by fine painted lines sprinkled with gold) and filled in with gold-flecked red *nashiji*. Needle drawing (*harigaki*)—finely engraved lines made with a pointed tool—delineates the veins of chrysanthemum leaves rendered in flat gold *maki-e*, as well as the paulownia leaves on the red-gold ground. Largely forgoing the use of preparatory designs on paper, these designs and patterns were drawn freehand or stenciled onto the lacquer surface. Hideyoshi is known to have included the emblematic chrysanthemum and paulownia crests on a range of objects and structures, rendering them in luxurious *maki-e* even on everyday dining wares and bath pails.

Flat *maki-e* technique was also used for export lacquer produced during this period, but with a radically different aesthetic sensibility. In lacquer goods for export, mother-of-pearl inlay and gold flat *maki-e* typically covered the entire surface of a black ground, as in the example of a missal stand with the Jesuit Christogram "IHS" that is now in the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. Roman Catholicism was introduced to Japan by the Jesuits in the mid-sixteenth century and propagated there until its official ban in 1614, after which it went underground. In the intervening years, *maki-e* artisans in Kyoto were commissioned to make a variety of objects for export, such as the portable cabinet (*barqueño*) of the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century illustrated here (fig. 1.29).

This type of export lacquer made to Western specifications is called *namban* (or *nanban*; literally "southern barbarian"), a term used to denote foreigners other than Chinese and Koreans and, by extension, items made for export. At first,



these were mostly religious furnishings commissioned by Jesuit missionaries for the Portuguese, although the items also were purchased by the Spanish, Dutch, and English. Such lacquer objects were likely produced from the 1580s until 1639, when trade with Portugal was suspended. Thereafter, trade was conducted with Dutch, English, and Chinese merchants through the port of Nagasaki. Along with domed coffers, this type of portable chest was popular with a stand often being custom-made at its destination. This example opens to reveal multiple drawers, each decorated with staple motifs in Japanese lacquer design, such as Chinese bell-flowers (*kikyō*) and *tachibana* citrus, while the interior of the door panels are adorned with bottle gourd flowers (*yūgao*). Applying these motifs to distinctly Western forms results in hybrid objects illustrative of global trade of the time.

A ceramic incarnation of *katami-gawari* appears in a style of Mino ceramics known as Oribe ware (produced around 1600–30), illustrated here by a set of dishes that juxtapose areas of glossy green glaze and geometric and plant motifs drawn with iron against a white ground (fig. 1.30). Oribe ware is renowned for innovative shapes, such as these molded in the shape of fletchings (the feathers attached to arrows), and for dynamic designs often contrasting a distinct copper-green glaze with loose freehand underglaze iron painting. This juxtaposition was enabled by the high temperatures achieved with the multichambered climbing kilns introduced in the Mino region during the Keichō era (1596–1615). The new kiln technology, brought from Korea to the Karatsu region in southern Japan, produced temperatures high enough to transform milky-white glazes to glossy, transparent coatings, thus allow-

Fig. 1.29. Portable cabinet (*barqueño*) made for the Portuguese export market, Japan, late 16th–early 17th century. Lacquer on wood, gold, mother-of-pearl inlay, metal fittings; 17¼ x 24½ x 13⅞ in. (43.8 x 62.2 x 34 cm). Brooklyn Museum (84.69.1).



Fig. 1.30. Mino ware Oribe-style dishes, Mino region, 1600–30. Stoneware; each, 2¼ x 5¾ x 4½ in. (5.8 x 14.5 x 11.5 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London (FE.73-1982 and FE.73A-1982).



Fig. 1.31. Pair of screens, Japan, 17th century. Ink, color, and gold on paper; 5 x 11 ft. (1.5 x 3.3 m). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC (F1965.22-23).

ing potters to use the colors of the clay and of decoration painted under the glaze.

Also prized is the improvisational quality of the painted decoration on Oribe ceramics. Sets of small dishes and other Oribe tableware survive in significant numbers, indicating their extensive use in elite dining, including the meals served during *chanoyu* gatherings. Icons of Oribe ware include dynamically distorted “clog-shaped” tea bowls that were favored by the tea master Furuta Oribe (1544–1615), whose name is intimately linked to this ware but whose involvement in its development is not altogether certain. Oribe was Rikyū’s disciple in *chanoyu*, but unlike his mentor, who preferred balanced shapes and the restrained aesthetic of *wabi*, Oribe cultivated and promoted distortion. Oribe ware was also in tune with fashions in the capital, appropriating motifs from

Kōdaiji *maki-e* and designs from the *tsujigahana* textiles (a form of resist-dyed textiles) that were being made there.

Oribe potters also supplied the market for whimsical and exotic pieces, including a candleholder in the shape of a man in European dress, resembling the pantaloons (*karusan*, from the Portuguese *calcao*) worn by merchants in screen paintings depicting *namban* (fig. 1.31). Figures on the left screen banquet aboard a *namban* carrack while others unload goods—lacquerware, textiles, ceramics, and exotic rocks, many of Chinese origin—as Jesuit and Franciscan monks look on. On the right screen, the carrack’s captain, shielded by a red umbrella, and his crew parade through town as locals catch a glimpse from their storefronts, through windows and curtains bearing their trademarks. These screens capture the Japanese fascination with *namban*, from their Christian faith to the practice of leashing dogs. *Namban* figures and motifs, such as the Cross, came to be featured in other forms of fine craft, including lacquer writing boxes and ceramics.

Imported wool felt (*rasha*, derived from the Portuguese *raxa*), presented by Portuguese merchants, became a status symbol among daimyo who sought to display their wealth and power. A campaign jacket (*jinbaori*; fig. 1.32)—a tunic worn over armor during battle—dynamically arranges two crossed sickles appliquéd over a bright vermilion *rasha*. Daimyo likely favored *rasha* for campaign jackets owing to its water-resistance and warmth. The curving hem shows European influence; garments like *kosode* had straight hems. The lining of white damask is embroidered with the Chinese character for “eternity,” perhaps reflecting the wishes of Hideyoshi’s nephew Kobayakawa Hideaki (1577–1602), the purported owner of this jacket. Such ostentatious jackets

Fig. 1.32. Campaign jacket (*jinbaori*), Japan, 16th century. Appliquéd wool felt (*rasha*); 30 7/8 x 20 1/2 in. (76.6 x 52 cm). Tokyo National Museum, Important Cultural Property (1393).





would stand out on a battlefield and no doubt create a wondrous visual statement when paired with sculptural “spectacular helmets” (*kawari kabuto*) and lavishly decorated swords and saddles. The commander’s need to be visible was prompted by new types of battles after the introduction of firearms from Europe in the late sixteenth century. The shift from close combat with swords and staff weapons to the use of matchlock firearms also led to a transformation in the style of armor, from the conventional *yoroï* (consisting of laced small plates of iron or leather) to sheet iron known as *tōsei gusoku* (literally “modern armor”).

The Ōnin War introduced an age of sparring between regional daimyo lords, and the years 1400 to 1600 were shaped by strife in Japan. Although unrest may have been the norm, alliances forged by courtiers fleeing the war, itinerant poets, and provincial lords fostered cultural networking. Just as residents worked together to rebuild the city of Kyoto, castle

towns around the country contributed to regional decorative arts and design. The decorative arts tied to the highly social arts of poetry, tea, incense, and Noh flourished as a result of their widening circles of appreciation. Cultural production was fueled by native court culture and imported Zen culture, as well as an awareness of the world beyond Asia. With coexisting methods and ideals for the display of cultural prowess and the enrichment of daily life, decorative art and design of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw a rich cross-fertilization of subjects and motifs from the courtly, warrior, and Zen milieus, between the capital in Kyoto and the provinces. Different occasions called for specific objects and effects, from the principled austerity of the *wabi* aesthetic to the ostentatious display of battle garments, yet a sense of integration and dynamism characterizes much of the decorative art and design of the era.

TOMOKO SAKOMURA