



# **EARLY MODERN JAPAN**

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## Editorial Offices Move

At its inception *Early Modern Japan* began as an informal newsletter, edited, prepared and published at the Department of History, Ohio State University. Shortly after its inception, *Oboegaki* (as it was then known) moved to the editorship of Mark Ravina of the Department of History, Emory University. For the past several years Mark has shepherded *Early Modern Japan*, editing, formatting, soliciting contributions, handling mailings, subscriptions, and all of the miscellaneous chores associated with getting any publication out. Although later joined by Lawrence Marceau as Book Review Editor, Mark has born the brunt of the work. We are sure we are not alone in expressing our gratitude for the time and effort that Mark has put into developing *Early Modern Japan* during this time.

Mark has, however, decided to turn his attention to new projects and consequently, the editorial offices and responsibilities for *Early Modern Japan* have returned to Ohio State University. Chief editorial responsibilities now rest with Philip C. Brown. Lawrence Marceau continues as Book Review Editor.

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## *Everyday Things in Pre-modern Japan: Two Views*

Susan B. Hanley, *Everything Things in Premodern Japan: The Hidden Legacy of Material Culture* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1997, xiv plus 213 pages. \$35.00

**Editor's Note:** Customary practice dictates that an academic journal devote only one review for each book received. That has also been the practice here at EMJ, however, we decided to include the two reviews that follow because we felt the differences in perspective that they offered would be of interest to our readers. We would be very interested in readers' reactions to this exploratory effort and we would be open to suggestions for other books that you feel might merit similar treatment.

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### Modernization Theory Redux?

Anne Walthall, University of California, Irvine

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Japanese people enjoyed a level of physical well-being comparable to Europe and the United States, or so argues Susan Hanley. Furthermore, this proposition holds whether the comparison is with these societies at similar stages of development or at the same point in time. Measured in terms of life expectancy (which is quantifiable) and comfort (a value judgment) rather than per capita income, physical well-being comprises such issues as quality of housing, bedding and clothing, sanitation, diet, and nutrition. Indeed, Japan did so well in these areas that it saw no need to make substantive changes in order to industrialize. This stability in terms of material culture is at least as important in explaining Japan's industrialization as the economic and commercial developments already so carefully analyzed by a number of historians.

With these claims, Hanley stakes out a field that, while already widely exploited in studies of the west, has been little explored in the case of Japan, especially in western languages, with the exception of her own work. Even though she draws considerably on what she has done before, her article in *The Cambridge History of Japan* has been largely reshaped, her essay on sanitation has been expanded, her demographic study has been condensed, and her discussion of the continuity in material culture across the nineteenth century has

been reformulated to fit within her stated aim of tracing the ways in which the standard of living and the level of physical well-being rose throughout the Tokugawa period and provided the essential platform for a smooth transition to an industrialized economy.

Unlike economic historians who end up frustrated in their efforts to measure levels of income owing to a lack of reliable data for premodern societies, Hanley focuses on evidence of consumption. She points to the importance of wartime advances in technology for the development of better housing, clothing and food, first during the Sengoku period, then the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars at the turn of the twentieth century. Following pacification in the first instance, the cutting and placing of foundation stones, originally developed as a technique to strengthen castle walls, gave rise to houses that were more symmetrical and sturdier than their predecessors. The *shoin* style characterized by built-in writing desks, *tokonoma*, wooden flooring, *tatami* and *shoji* spread first throughout the samurai class then the rest of the population, resulting in lighter, airier, cleaner and more comfortable dwellings. An increasing variety of consumer goods led by the spread of cotton for clothing and bedding created the need for chests, storehouses and closets. Nevertheless, the Japanese never developed the taste for wall-to-wall furnishings and elaborate clothing that characterized Victorian England for example, but used resources economically and flexibly. Not only did the variety of foods expand during the Tokugawa period (including meat), cooking methods changed from the single-pot stew to rice with side dishes. Food, clothing, sleeping arrangements, water supply, waste removal and bathing all contributed to better health. By limiting the size of their families, the Japanese were able to enjoy these benefits from one generation to the next.

Hanley admits that her evidence is sketchy, and given the newness of her field, this is not surprising. With the exception of the chapter on demography, much of the text synthesizes work by Japanese scholars. Indeed, one of the book's strengths is its ability to take evidence from a range of sources and blend it together into a seamless and coherent argument without getting bogged down in details. Scholars will be certain to quibble over her interpretations, as do I, but the fact remains that the book is well worth reading and certain to stimulate new avenues of inquiry.

It is my hope that subsequent studies of material culture in Tokugawa Japan will develop a

more stimulating conceptual framework than the modernization thesis that underpins this book. Hanley insists that she wants to counter the assumption that Tokugawa Japan was "backward," yet nowhere does she cite a source less than twenty years old that makes this claim. In many ways it is unfortunate that the richness of her data has been coerced into an argument that sees what contributed to Japan's eventual ability to industrialize as good and ignores everything else. Peasants built larger sturdier houses on foundation stones outfitted with *tokonoma*, *shoji*, and *oshiire* not so that their descendants could adapt to changing times in the late nineteenth century but to overawe their neighbors and impress their friends as well as make life more comfortable for themselves. For the wealthy peasants and rural entrepreneurs who could afford these accouterments, a house was not just a place to live but constituted social and cultural capital that, along with the writing of *waka*, the practice of tea ceremony and the performance of Noh, served as a marker of distinction in local society in ways that were not necessarily conducive to modern social relations. Rather than trying to convince economic historians that the level of physical well being is as worthy of consideration as income distribution, one approach to the study of material culture might be to draw on the recent work in cultural history being done by people such as Lynn Hunt and Robert Lumley.<sup>1</sup>

The commitment to the modernization thesis as a conceptual framework means that Hanley consistently looks to Europe and the United States as her point of reference. In her conclusion (p. 188) she raises the issue of comparing Japan's level of well-being with that of the rest of Asia, and China in particular, only to dismiss it owing to a paucity of data. Yet earlier in the book she suggests that China had developed more advanced building techniques for private residences than had Japan (pp. 29, 31). China, like Japan (and probably earlier) was the only country in Asia with enough interest in food to publish cookbooks (p. 83). Even though she praises Japan's lack of central heating for being resource efficient, heating the floor as in Korea or a raised bedding area as in China has to yield more physical comfort than huddling around a *kotatsu*. For some contemporary economic historians, especially those dealing in world history, the really

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<sup>1</sup> Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Robert Lumley, ed., *The Museum Time Machine: Putting Culture on Display* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988).

interesting issue is not whether and how Japan was like Europe, but the surprisingly numerous ways in which it resembled China. This is an area in which a student of comparative material cultures could make an out-standing contribution.

Hanley also remains tied to the same argument she made in 1977 regarding the prevalence of infanticide in the Japan and its role in slowing population growth. She is still convinced that fertility rates must have been significantly higher than the population registers show; therefore people must have been limiting the size of their families. Furthermore, this was done deliberately, not only through delaying age of marriage but also through abortion and infanticide. The aim was to improve the family's standard of living by eliminating those children who could not contribute to its economic well being over the long run. Yet disaggregating population levels by region shows that the considerable growth in western Japan has been masked by population declines in Tohoku as well as near cities (a point Hanley herself concedes). In an article too recent for Hanley to have incorporated it into her book, Laurel L. Cornell demonstrates that the assumptions demographers have made regarding maximum fertility rates are much too high for premodern societies.<sup>2</sup> Some years ago Ann Jannetta pointed out that smallpox, endemic during the Tokugawa period, can reduce male fertility by up to 50 percent.<sup>3</sup> Since smallpox is on the point of eradication world wide, using fertility rates in contemporary populations where it is presumably not present as a standard for measuring growth in past centuries is problematic. Furthermore, social practices such as working away from home need to be taken into account. No one can argue that infanticide was unknown in Tokugawa Japan. Whether it was performed as systematically as Hanley implies with the intent to improve not a family's chances of survival but its standard of living is more debatable and adds little to the book's basic argument.

There are other points that might be raised regarding the role of social pressure in limiting family size. I found it unconvincing to state on page 39 and elsewhere that commoners easily

circumvented sumptuary regulations regarding the size and furnishing of their dwellings (though no mention is made of the eaves, walls and gates that were the jealously guarded prerogative of the village elite and led to many a village dispute over status distinctions), yet on page 138 to argue that these same commoners accepted government regulation and social control when it came to the number of children they would raise. That implies that the Tokugawa system of governance was more effective in enforcing this social policy than present-day China. It can be argued, furthermore, that society frowned on large families only for those who could not afford them. Tokugawa Ienari (1773-1841) proudly had 55 children, and among the rural entrepreneurs of the Ina valley, raising seven, ten, or eleven children was not uncommon. Demographic studies need to take social status and well as economic class into account.

Given that this review is aimed at specialists of early modern Japan, I would like to pick at one nit regarding names. On page 86, Hanley refers to a Suzuki Makiyuki who wrote about the Nagano area in 1827. Having once made this same mistake myself, I assume she is referring to Suzuki Bokushi (1770-1842) whose ethnographic account of the snow country contains much information on material culture.<sup>4</sup> On page 113 she cites an article by Itô Kôichi, and then on page 119 another by Itô Yoshiichi. If I am not mistaken, they are one and the same person. With those exceptions and a typographical error or two, the book is remarkably well produced. It is compact and crammed with the kind of detail that can spice up a lecture. Because it is well written in easily accessible language, a more general audience might enjoy reading it for fun and profit.

### A Book for Believers?

Lee Butler, Brigham Young University

Dominated as it has been by economic materialists, the study of Tokugawa history in postwar Japan has been surprisingly narrow--at least up until the last decade or so. The dramatic shift toward social history that occurred in postwar scholarship produced in and about the

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<sup>2</sup> Laurel L. Cornell, "Infanticide in Early Modern Ja-pan? Demography, Culture and Population Growth," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55.1 (February 1996): 22-50.

<sup>3</sup> Ann Bowman Jannetta, *Epidemics and Mortality in Early Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 189.

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<sup>4</sup> Suzuki Bokushi, *Snow Country Tales: Life in the Oth-er Japan* trans. by Jeffrey Hunter with Rose Lesser (New York: Weatherhill, 1986); Anne Walthall, "Peri-pheries: Rural Culture in Tokugawa Japan" *Monu-menta Nipponica* 39.4 (Winter 1984): 371-392.

United States and Europe was unmatched in Japan. My experience as a research student at Tokyo University in the mid 80s appears to have been typical for the time. The graduate seminars and study groups I attended focused overwhelmingly on the economic factors that drive history. I can still recall extensive reading lists on two of these, Hideyoshi's cadastral surveys and the Bitchû hoe. What surprised me was the concentration on these at the exclusion of other issues.

Of course, work in other areas of Japanese history was being conducted. Intellectual history and religious history continued to be written, as were certain types of social history (much was carried out in terms of larger economic concerns, or merely as local history), and cultural history saw periods of vibrancy under scholars such as Nishiyama Matsunosuke and Hayashiya Tatsusaburô. But there is no denying the predominance of political and economic history. These were the fields where issues were most hotly contested and into which the best young scholars were encouraged to enter.

Not surprisingly, western scholarship on the Tokugawa era reflected this trend among Japanese scholars. While very few in the west shared the Japanese faith in interpretations of economic determinism, the subject of study was largely the same. Proponents of the modernization thesis did little to change this.

Recent years have seen a substantial weakening of the old paradigm within Japan. Younger scholars have begun to address issues that were considered lacking promise or simply irrelevant by older scholars. Several edited volumes on women and gender have appeared in the past decade, marginal groups in society have begun to attract attention, and new approaches to social and cultural studies have begun to appear. In the past, cultural studies tended to focus on individuals, "schools," and types. Interdisciplinary studies that addressed questions of power, politics, and society in the context of culture were rarely seen. Evidence of the shifts that have at last begun to occur in this area are apparent in the recently published twenty-one volume "comprehensive history" published by Iwanami Shoten (*Iwanami Kôza Nihon Tsûshi*, 1994-1995.) Included in the volumes on Tokugawa history are essays about "The Tools of Daily Life," "Warrior Residences," "The Formation of Regional Cultures," and "Characters (*moji*) and Women," among others. In contrast *Iwanami Kôza Nihon Rekishi* of 1975-77 included just two essays on cultural issues, one on *Genroku bunka* and the other on the performing arts among commoners.

Given this background, and the maturity of the field of Tokugawa historical studies in the west, we should not be surprised at the recent publication of works in English that are new in topic, approach, or methodology. To this group we can add Susan Hanley's *Everyday Things in Pre-modern Japan*, an analysis of material culture of the Tokugawa period.

Before addressing the Hanley volume, let me briefly describe material culture as defined by scholars of the United States. The term is commonly used in two ways. First, it describes objects of study, in other words those material items which are under investigation. Second, it describes a method or process. The following is a generally accepted definition of that process: "Material culture is the study through artifacts of the beliefs--values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions--of a particular community or society at a given time."<sup>1</sup> To historians of material culture, artifacts are "expressive forms" which reflect the people and society that shaped them. All human-made artifacts are thus viable subjects of study. Included are fine art, residential architecture, household furnishings, city landscapes, tools and other artifacts of work, children's toys, and so on. As suggested by this list, students of material culture are not solely historians. In fact, historians came rather late to the field. Among the other disciplines represented in the study of material culture are art history, cultural anthropology, architectural history, and folk-life studies. Regardless of the subject of study, however, one aspect of material culture studies seems constant, and that is the effort to make sense of a people's attitudes and behavior. Understanding culture, in short, is the ultimate goal.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," in *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, Robert Blair St. George, ed., (Northeastern University Press, 1988), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Besides the Prown essay noted in the preceding footnote, useful discussions of the field of material culture, from which I have drawn, include the chapter by Thomas J. Schlereth, "Material Culture and Cultural Research," in *Material Culture, A Research Guide*, ed. Thomas J. Schlereth, (University of Kansas, 1985); and another essay by Schlereth, "Material Culture or Material Life? Discipline or Field? Theory or Method?" in Schlereth's collection of essays, *Cultural History and Material Culture: Everyday Life, Landscapes, Museums*, (UMI, 1990).

The stress on the culture of material culture runs through Schlereth's work and is repeated frequently by others. See for example Peirce F. Lewis's discussion of cultural meaning within landscapes in his "Axioms

Material culture offers new and tempting means to understand history. Although it seems excessive to claim as some do that artifacts are invariably truer sources than written ones, there is no denying the power of three-dimensional sources. Artifacts have the power to relay "nonverbal" understanding. For example, as a means of understanding merchant life in eighteenth- or nineteenth-century Kyoto there is no substitute for spending a day or week in a *machiya* or "city residence" dating from the era.

As Thomas Schlereth, the dean of American material culture studies, has noted, the field is not without its pitfalls. Just as with written sources, many objects of material culture have not survived the decades or centuries. And not all that have survived are readily verifiable as to time, owner, or significance. Other problems appear at the interpretation end: as tangible objects, artifacts have a tendency to overwhelm us, and we then have a tendency to exaggerate their importance. Part of the difficulty is that the material record is largely a record of successes. This of course was not the whole story. A related problem is what Schlereth describes as "progressive determinism," which "often sees the American past as one material success after another in an ever-upward ascent of increased goods and services for all the nation's citizens." Such a position was common among the "consensus" historians of the fifties and sixties, but has since been pushed aside for narrower, less grandiose studies.<sup>3</sup>

In *Everyday Things in Premodern Japan*, Susan Hanley sets out to make sense of the "physical well being" of the "average Japanese" during the Tokugawa era. Material culture sources are her evidence, and her contention is that physical well-being improved throughout the period, resulting in a populace that differed little in that regard from their European and American counterparts. In short, the Japanese people were well prepared to be the base upon which modern industrialization could take place.

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for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene," pp. 174-182, in *Material Culture Studies in America*, Thomas J. Schlereth, ed. (The American Association for State and Local History, 1982).

For an enlightening discussion of one scholar's experience with the field of material culture, and of its significance, see Roger Daniels, "The Reeducation of a Historian: Learning About Material Culture the Hard Way," *The History Teacher* 29:2 (February 1996), pp. 217-222.

<sup>3</sup> Schlereth, "Material Culture and Cultural Research," pp. 14-18.

Hanley begins by providing her own definition of material culture. She interprets it as "the physical objects that people use or consume in their everyday lives, most of which are either made or else natural objects put to use by people" (p. 12). Thus she includes not only artifacts shaped by human hands but natural ones as well. This suggests something that becomes increasingly evident in the book: that the author is interested primarily in the material life of Japanese people not in their material culture, as it is commonly defined. There is little or no effort to understand why Tokugawa Japanese did as they did, what beliefs or attitudes were reflected in changing (or constant) patterns of material culture, or how narrower questions of social class and mobility found expression in material culture.

So, how well does the author accomplish what she attempts? The book is divided into eight chapters, the first and last being introduction and conclusion. The inner chapters are entitled "Housing and Furnishings," "A Resource-Efficient Culture," "A Healthful Lifestyle," "Urban Sanitation and Physical Well-Being," "Demographic Patterns and Well-Being," and "Stability in Transition: From the Tokugawa Period to the Meiji Period." Of these, I found those on housing and urban sanitation to be the most interesting and convincing. Both are subjects that have received the attention of Japanese scholars, allowing Hanley to draw upon their work. As the author notes, there is considerable evidence that housing did improve for many Japanese during the period, along with the amount of goods they consumed--or put in their warehouses. The only difficulty with the argument concerns questions of distribution and extent, matters to which existing evidence fails to speak. On urban sanitation, Hanley appears to stand on firmer ground, at least in her discussions of Edo. Previous work in English on the water supply of Edo and the disposal of its human waste suggests the importance of the subjects and the efficiency of the systems. It may indeed have been the case that in the late nineteenth century citizens of the largest cities in Japan enjoyed cleaner water and cleaner streets than did the citizens of London, Paris, and New York.

Despite their strengths, these two chapters exhibit a weakness that pervades the book: they cover a vast amount of time and territory in a limited number of pages, and are built upon thin evidence. While there is no question that the material culture of Tokugawa Japan has not been preserved as well as that of colonial America and the United States during corresponding centuries,

surely more exists as evidence than what is referred to in this volume. This raises another issue. Choosing to argue that the physical well-being of the Japanese people as a whole improved during the Tokugawa era, Hanley is at pains to find evidence produced among lower classes in society. The difficulty is that the lower one reaches, the fewer the material sources. Just as with written sources, those individuals most likely to leave behind artifacts that survive centuries are of the middle and upper classes. Perhaps the evidence appears thin in this book because it is thin. In any event, the problem remains. Hanley's contentions are large while her evidence is small.

A similar difficulty of scale is apparent in the author's decision to direct her analysis toward the "average Japanese" (used for example on p. 43, and implied throughout the book). Just who or what was the "average Japanese"? Did social and economic distinctions not matter in this context? And what of regional distinctions? If in fact questions of material life were as generally uniform as Hanley suggests, we need evidence of that. As it stands, the author presents isolated examples, and in the process readily jumps from one region to another and from one social and economic class to another. Where those lines blur, as they no doubt did, the argument needs to reflect that.

The most problematic of the chapters is that which describes Tokugawa society as "A Resource-Efficient Culture." In every social and cultural habit of the Japanese, Hanley is able to find something that saved time or money or trees or energy or pain or lives. Some examples: 1) The lack of furnishings in Japanese homes was economical. It saved space and money. Even the wealthy enjoyed "luxury in austerity." Evidence of this extended to their culture as seen in the art of flower arranging, in which but one flower was used (pp. 56-59). 2) "In order to save on fuel, the Japanese developed methods of providing heat using the principle of heating the body rather than the air in the room." These included the hibachi, *anka* (a container for hot charcoal which could be placed within one's bedding), and the *kotatsu* (pp. 60-63). 3) Clothing, in the form of the *kosode*, saved cloth, since none was wasted regardless of the size of the wearer. Also, it didn't need ironing (pp. 68-71). 4) "The Japanese also invented a . . . resource-efficient type of towel, known as the *tenugui*." It was "just a rectangular piece of cloth," but could be used for everything from a washcloth to a handkerchief for wiping away perspiration to a rag (pp. 71-72). 5) Other things

that saved resources: Straw footwear (True, it didn't last long, "but then, one didn't get bunions or corns from a bad fit" as with boots), a lack of shame about nakedness, tea cups without handles, wooden chopsticks (no waste of metals for spoons and forks), and loincloths (73-75).

To these I respond: What about all of the stuff bought and put in the warehouses? And what about the numerous kimono that many women owned? Even if their style of clothing required less cloth than western clothing, is this evidence that they actually consumed less? Is it possible that with their simple arrangements Japanese consumed more flowers than did westerners with their huge bouquets because the latter were only occasional items while the former were daily ones (an absurd question in response to an absurd statement)? As for saving fuel, while Japanese methods of heating may have been efficient, were the people physically better off by being cold? And what about the threat of fire? As is well known, these items that were efficient at producing small amounts of heat were also very effective at destroying cities. How do issues like this fit into the picture of "physical well-being"?

As should be apparent by now, this volume takes us back to the world and debates of the "modernization thesis." I admit that I stand on different ground than does the author. Where she remains committed to finding out that the overall conditions of life were improving for Japanese during the Tokugawa period, I am interested in the types of lives that the Japanese lived, the complexity of their society and beliefs, the cultures they created and shaped, and the meanings they brought to their existence. In the final analysis, *Everyday Things in Premodern Japan* is a book for believers, those who are already converted. For the rest of us, the material culture of Tokugawa Japan remains one of numerous rich fields that have just begun to be explored.



## *Art of Edo Japan: the Artist and the City 1615-1868*

Christine Guth, New York: Perspectives Series, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996. Paperback, 176pp., 114 illustrations (most in color), three maps, glossary, and timeline. \$16.95

### **Making Edo Art Understandable**

Patricia J. Graham, University of Kansas

The diversity and high craftsmanship that characterize the art of the Edo period reflect the era's sophistication, political developments, intellectual concerns, and affluence. How to provide an engaging overview of this complex topic, while situating the art within both its social and art historical contexts and presenting the necessary issues in a comprehensible manner, is a formidable challenge that is well met by the author of this volume. Christine Guth manages to make the art understandable to non-specialists, the book's principal intended audience, while simultaneously providing knowledgeable readers with fresh insights about the place of art in Edo society. Her approach is to place the art within the realm of the burgeoning urbanism that is a defining characteristic of the period. She emphasizes art produced in Japan's major urban centers of Kyoto, Edo, Osaka, and Nagasaki, but without ignoring itinerant, rural, and provincial developments. Within this framework, Guth is able to address many of the cultural and political issues that affected patronage and participation in the arts during this time: a prolonged period of peace under the domination of a warrior bureaucracy; a new appreciation for art by the general populace in addition to continued patronage by elites; the growing importance of a commercial market economy and concurrent changing patterns in distribution of wealth; a blurring of class distinctions despite government efforts to the contrary; sharp cultural distinctions and rivalries for cultural supremacy between Kyoto and Edo; increasing access to knowledge of the cultural and scientific achievements of both the West and of China; rising regional cultural distinctions; and conversely, a simultaneous emerging of an integrated national cultural heritage.

The most common means of categorizing and studying this art has been to divide it by media or by studies of various artistic lineages and the lives of particular artists. Writers have also dealt with the art in terms of broad themes such as the tea ceremony, the world of the pleasure quarters, and patronage as represented by collections of notable families such as the Tokugawa. In most cases,

these approaches have tended to obscure the social relevance of the arts. As a result, we know more about techniques of production, chronological development of artists' styles, patronage of individual artists, and intellectual concerns of the artists themselves than we do of the relationship of the arts to Edo society. Instead of surveying the art scene of the Edo period by these familiar methods, Guth proposes a different approach, one which "takes as its premise that a strong sense of urban and regional identity is one of the distinguishing features of Edo culture" (p. 19). By examining art in this context, she is able to link developments in the world of art more closely to the society with which it was associated.

The discipline of art history, as developed in the West in the nineteenth century, dictated divisions of art into categories of "fine" and "decorative" (sometimes termed "applied"), with higher status conferred upon the fine arts (painting, sculpture, and architecture). These biases are more relevant to distinctions among various types of Western art, especially that produced since the Renaissance, than to the art of non-Western civilizations such as Japan, where, as Guth points out, no distinctions existed between fine and decorative arts or craftmakers and artists. Still, the way we think about Japanese art is colored by these convictions, which create artificial divisions among the products of artistic creation in Japan. Now appreciated for its intrinsic aesthetic beauty, much of Japanese art originally fulfilled functional roles in daily and ritual life. Calligraphers and painters, for example, sometimes wielded their brushes to decorate lacquers, ceramics, or even clothing. The status of many crafts was enhanced by their necessity in official decor, gift giving, and the tea ceremony. Yet painters and calligraphers were accorded somewhat higher status, as their products were capable of transmitting the "spirit" of both the subject they portrayed and their own inner natures through their brush. This reasoning followed the dictates of Chinese literati thought, a powerful influence among Edo period artists and intellectuals. Although Guth introduces a diverse range of Edo period arts, she nevertheless aims to reach an audience steeped in Western art historical preferences by emphasizing the work of the era's painters and print designers, who "both shaped and mirrored the dominant trends in the vibrant cultural life of the city" (p. 19).

After a lengthy introduction titled "Mapping the Artistic Landscape," in which the major themes and issues outlined above are set forth, Guth makes some general conceptualizations

about urban culture and the artist's relationship to the urban environment in chapter one, "The Artist and the City." She offers a succinct profile of urban development in Japan, beginning with the emergence of the castle town, and describes the growing importance of leisure activities and conspicuous consumption as essential components of urban culture. Patronage and practice of the arts had become, by the Edo period, a cultural activity of all members of society, unlike previously, when it had been the private domain of the elite. Guth points out that most urban artists belonged to the *shokumin* class, and worked as members of established ateliers, determined by hereditary or artistic inclination. However, she does acknowledge that some artists were samurai, aristocrats, and Buddhist or Shinto priests.

Guth's first chapter on the art world of a particular city is chapter two, "Kyoto Artists," which introduces that city's major artists and painting movements. She notes that Kyoto possessed a venerable artistic heritage associated with the production of high-class luxury goods and artistic patronage by the imperial family. She writes that, in the Edo period, the city became a haven for talented and eccentric artists, as the shogunal presence in the city was minimal (p. 51). Her discussion of Kyoto arts begins with older, well-established Kano and Tosa painting schools patronized by the court and shogunate, then moves on to newly-founded, more creative painting traditions. She first discusses the Rinpa movement, which she ties to the revival of fine craft production in the seventeenth century and close association with courtly traditions.

Next, she introduces literati painting, commenting on its appeal across class lines, and focusing discussion on its two dominant figures in eighteenth-century Kyoto, Ike Taiga and Yosa Buson, both of whom she considers further in chapter five (as itinerant artists). After their deaths in 1776 and 1783 respectively, Guth notes the lack of strong leadership in this movement until Rai San'yō settled in Kyoto in 1811. She describes San'yō and his followers as more "doctrinaire" in their attempts to emulate faithfully Chinese literati painting, which she ties to their desire to emulate the bohemian, reclusive lifestyle of Chinese scholar-painters (p. 72). In this context, she introduces one artist, Uragami Gyokudō, who exemplifies this model. Yet this discussion seems slightly out of place, for Gyokudō is actually one generation older than San'yō, and, as Guth indicates, his accomplishments are reflective of the generation of literati artists following Taiga and Buson. Introduced next is Aoki Mokubei, both a

literati painter and potter who specialized in Chinese-influenced porcelain styles, whose pottery is illustrated by a traditionally Japanese square-shaped tiered food box decorated with Chinese-style designs (fig. 46). However, her caption to this plate erroneously describes the piece as being used in the *sencha* (steeped tea) ceremony for which Mokubei designed numerous utensils. Both of these inaccuracies in the text point to the difficulty of the author's thematic approach to the subject matter: in order to maintain the clarity of the themes, specific details may sometimes be misplaced or misrepresented. Guth's section on literati painters closes with mention of the movement's admission of women into the ranks of literati artists, an unusually egalitarian attitude for the times.

Guth follows with a discussion of the Maruyama-Shijō school of painting, whose founder, Maruyama Ōkyo, she describes as the first to recognize the potential for incorporating Western techniques and styles. After discussion of Matsu-mura Goshun, founder of the Shijō school, Guth concludes her discussion of these artists with a description of Kyoto's first public art exhibition in 1792, at which Maruyama-Shijō artists participated. Organized by Minagawa Kien, a prominent Confucian scholar and literati painter, the public was invited to purchase paintings and calligraphies by well-known artists from all over Japan. Guth asserts that this new means of reaching patrons led to the emergence of individual and eccentric artists who were able to bypass the traditional constraints of the atelier system. While this was indeed a significant development, Guth's subsequent examination of artists she defines as "individualists" (Itō Jakuchū, Soga Shōhaku, and Nagasawa Rosetsu) again seems out of place, as all were active and popular long before Kyoto's 1792 exhibition. The chapter ends with artists of the Yamatoe revival, introduced appropriately in the context of the 1788 rebuilding of the imperial palace, an event that marked a resurgence of interest in antiquarianism glorifying the imperial heritage.

Chapter three is devoted to artists active in Edo, a city dominated but not constrained by the shogunal presence. Agreeing with the view that the creative energies of Edo's inhabitants were most evident in the production of woodblock prints, the author discusses their development at great length, though she first introduces Kano artists and others officially patronized by the samurai class.

Prints are described as inexpensive, about the same price as a bowl of noodles (p. 99), capable

of being produced quickly, and reflective of latest fashions. They were, however, repeatedly the target of censorship in connection with government crackdowns on conspicuous consumption (their luxurious appearance), censoring of immoral behavior (encouraged by their subject-matter), or unflattering commentary on contemporary politics. Guth associates the rise in landscape, bird-and-flower, and historical subjects in the nineteenth century with responses to government intervention, with the fact that the increasing number of tourists in Edo desired subjects of easy comprehension and familiarity (such as prints depicting famous places in Edo and their home provinces), and with city dwellers' nostalgia for rural life. The growing popularity of prints is described as responsible for the large numbers of printmakers active in the nineteenth century as well as for the new practice of issuing prints in increasingly large series.

Guth devotes the last, short section of the chapter to Edo Rinpa and Bunjinga, which, from her sub-heading, appears to be centered on Sakai Hôitsu (Rinpa) and Tani Bunchô (*bunjinga*). Though she discusses Bunchô at some length, she does not illustrate or make mention of any of his paintings in this chapter (she does refer, among other things, to his friendship with Kimura Kenkadô of Osaka, whose portrait by Bunchô she illustrates in chapter four). Instead she illustrates and discusses a portrait by his follower, Watanabe Kazan. Both Bunchô and Kazan she describes as characteristic of Edo literati in their artistic eclecticism, their devotion to art as a means of self-expression, as well as their considering art as "part of a rational quest for historical and empirical knowledge that might contribute to a national political and social reform" (p. 125).

Chapter four covers, in lesser depth than the preceding chapters, artists of Osaka and Nagasaki, the two most important artistic centers following Kyoto and Edo. Guth describes the cultural ambiance of Osaka, dominated by merchants, as most concerned with accumulation of luxurious material possessions, but does point out that some residents there, under the influence of the Kaitokudô Confucian academy, sought to create a more intellectual climate. Osaka artists and art movements introduced include painters of diverse stylistic inclinations including literati, Kano, and Maruyama-Shijô schools; a thriving ukiyoe print market, tied to the local Kabuki theater; and a booming publishing industry that rivaled Edo's.

Guth divides artists of Nagasaki, "the window on the world," into two groups, distinguished by Chinese or Dutch influences. Her section on

Chinese-influenced artists begins with emigrant Chinese "Monk-Artists of the Ôbaku Sect," whose influence Guth sees as strongest in portraiture and calligraphy. One of these monks, Itsunen, is described as an influential painter, and indeed he is considered as one of the founders of the loosely organized "Nagasaki school," whose adherents emphasized fidelity to Ming and Qing academic painting traditions. However, Guth separately discusses Nagasaki school painting in a section titled "Visiting Chinese Artists and their Pupils," without mentioning Itsunen. In this case, her organizational framework seems too rigid. Turning to Western-influenced painters, Guth concisely profiles Japanese interest in depictions of foreigners and Western-style painting from the sixteenth century. She then describes the naive woodblock prints of exotic foreigners issued by Nagasaki publishers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, before finally turning to the more sophisticated achievements of artists such as Hiraga Gennai, Odano Naotaka, Shiba Kôkan, and Kawahara Keiga.

The book's final chapter, "Itinerant, Provincial, and Rural Artists," opens with a description of the nationwide network of roads that ensured a steady flow of culture to and from the major cities and of the people who traveled upon them. Turning to a discussion of the art in Japan's far-flung regions, Guth begins with a look at "Itinerant Monk-Artists and Pilgrimage Art." In this context she introduces three monk-artists, Enkû and Mokujiiki, known for their wood sculptures, and Hakuin, an important Zen prelate famous for his powerful Zen-inspired paintings and calligraphies, and closes the section with popular religious art (Ôtsue and mandalas associated with the new national pilgrimage destination at Ise). Next she surveys poet and literati painters, some familiar from previous chapters, and others, such as Tanomura Chikuden, introduced here for the first time. Using the experience of travel as a focus, Guth is able to address two very different types of literati paintings inspired by artists' wanderings--*haiga* and "true view" pictures--and discuss how these painters supported themselves on the road (by offering instruction in scholarly arts and producing artworks on demand in exchange for food and lodging). In the book's final section, Guth very briefly introduces some of the major crafts--lacquer, textiles, and ceramics--that were successful cash industries in the various provinces.

This well-focused introduction to the art of the Edo period provides a surprising amount of information considering its brevity. It is accurate

in its broad assertions and well written for easy comprehension by the layperson. Yet in places linkages among ideas are not clearly stated or adequately addressed, an inevitable result of the book's broad nature. For example, in various places in her introduction, Guth outlines a number of reasons for the new emphasis on cultural pursuits during the Edo period. Although many of these stemmed directly from the influence of Confucianism on all members of Edo society, she does not mention this unifying ideology until rather late in the chapter. Similarly, although Guth acknowledges Japanese literati artists' indebtedness to Chinese literati ideals, nowhere does she mention Daoist thought as an important aspect of the literati proclivity for self-cultivation, wanderlust, and reclusion. Elsewhere, she describes both literati painters and those of the Maruyama-Shijō school as sharing an interest in the natural sciences (p. 80), although she does not introduce literati artists in this context until later chapters. This type of problem occasionally plagues discussion of other artists and movements also, as their commentary is split between several relevant chapters.

Guth admits that an introductory text such as this cannot adequately address all aspects of the relevant artistic issues of this long era. Yet the clarity and organization of her text prove that a short volume can nevertheless successfully convey the sense of how the period's artists related to the environment in which they lived, traveled, and worked. Still, as only the most famous artists are represented, and usually by a single artwork, this book does not provide insight into the scope of any individual artist's accomplishments. Most Edo-period artists were famous for their eclecticism. Some, as she mentions, switched styles midway through their careers or to meet the requirements of a particular commission, and many consorted with others of differing aesthetic inclinations. Although Guth occasionally addresses these issues, some of these points may confuse the novice reader, as they lack adequate amplification and illustration. Among such instances are remarks on the "stylistic pluralism" of the Kano and Tosa/Sumiyoshi school painters (p. 58); the discussion of Goshun as Ōkyo's heir even though the illustration of his work is an early literati-style painting under the influence of his first mentor, Buson, as she mentions in the plate caption (p. 79); and evocative descriptions of paintings in styles not illustrated (as in the discussion of Buson on p. 71, Bunchō on p. 124, and Taiga on pp. 160-161). Additionally, while the brevity of the text is an asset for a basic work such as this, I

do think that, despite its cogently written introduction and first chapter, more concluding remarks would have been useful at the end of each chapter and at the volume's end.

Still, this book succeeds as a brief and reasonably priced overview of Edo art. Most publications on the subject are far more lavish (and expensive), specialized volumes. Many are exhibition catalogues which, by their nature, are subjective and, with few exceptions, limited in scope. The illustrations here are superb and well selected from a broad range of collections worldwide. Most include extended captions complementing discussions in the body of the text. The concise, well-organized timeline also adds to the book's usability as a textbook in introductory classes on Early Modern art or history, as do the books and articles listed in the bibliography. These are all materials in Western languages, mainly references to art, with a few basic history and literature sources cited, though specialists might question obvious omissions. Despite the criticisms noted above, this easily readable book should serve well as a basic textbook in the college classroom for students not actively involved with the discipline of art history who might otherwise shy away from examination of this important material evidence of Japanese civilization of the Early Modern period. The book should amply meet the needs of collectors or students of Edo art as well, as it provides a solid framework for understanding the place of art in Edo society.

**Book Notice: *Archive Science and Modern Society***

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Andō Masahito (安藤正人) 『記録史科学と現代—アーカイブズの科学をめざして』

Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1998. 352 pp., 18 pp. Index and English Abstract, 8 tables, 34 charts. ¥7,600.

At first glance the formal English title provided by this book's author seems to have little to do with the general purposes of *Early Modern Japan*. Our temporal focus is not modern. Our readership is not composed of archivists. Very few early modern scholars outside of East Asia make any use at all of manuscript materials, much less make consistent use of them. Printed collections like *Dai Nihon Shiryō*, collected works, *shiryō-hen* from prefectural or local histories and the like make up the

vast bulk materials upon which Western scholars construct their analyses of early modern Japanese history.

Yet even for scholars who rely exclusively on printed source materials (and this includes a growing number of Japanese scholars, too), the state of archival work in Japan has significant implications. Perhaps some reader will recall better than I the source of a story that has some wag claiming that the Great Kanto Earthquake and World War Two made the study of early modern Japanese history possible – their combined effect was to reduce the number of available documents to proportions that historians could grasp!

Whatever the story's source, and even if one assumes it to be apochryphal, personal experience has taught me that its premise is demonstrably false. While one might well argue that certain classes of documents shrank – notably those centralized in Edo/Tokyo and major urban areas – hundreds of thousands of documents remain, unprinted and uncatalogued. While many of these are documents held by descendants of village elites, there are also instances in which domain Elder's and even daimyo families keep documents shielded from public view.

The postwar boom in local histories routinely leads to the unearthing of new treasures. In the course of compiling materials for study, long-established local families are contacted to search out documents. Usually, families are forthcoming, allowing their documents to be cataloged (at least cursorily), read (at least those documents unlikely to raise touchy community issues or cause personal embarrassment), and even duplicated. Permission may well be granted to publish some or all of these documents in the large volumes of documents that frequently are part of prefectural histories and sometimes make up city, town and village histories.

All of this activity conveys a sense of tremendous energy directly toward uncovering new materials, cataloging them, and preserving them, yet such impressions are misleading. Even assuming complete cooperation from document holders, the handling and disposal of these treasures is far from certain. Indexes and classification of documents varies from superb to shoddy. Documents gathered may simply be returned to their owners uncopied, and copies of manuscript materials – poetry, tax records, maps, etc. – may simply be discarded. Even if retained by the editorial offices or the local education committee, the issue of proper storage and control of access often is not systematically addressed.

I do not wish to suggest that the situation is

entirely bleak. It is not. A number of localities where I have sought documents do a great deal to “get things right.” There are some very well organized volunteer efforts drawing participants from around Japan to “camps” specifically to catalog collections under the supervision of trained archival specialists. Princely sums are spent on new prefectural and other archives (*monjokan*) – marvels of controlled, high-tech environmental management and antisepsis (though many institutions lack staff to catalog their collections).

What I wish to stress is that there is tremendous room for improvement – not a surprising development in a context in which the archivists' profession is still very much in its infancy. Although efforts at classification pre-date the enactment of the Public Archives Law of Japan (1986), that legislation has done much to stimulate activity in the field. About a dozen prefectural archives have been constructed since its passage, and other prefectures have set up their own archive services. Despite this progress since, Andô still characterizes the Japanese situation as that of a developing country.

It is in this context that small groups of historians, librarians, and diplomatics specialists escalated efforts to promote more systematic thinking about the preservation and classification of documents and the legislation that might effectively support such programs. These groups and their successors continue to work for the development of professional archival standards and training programs as an essential part of that agenda.

Indeed, Andô's purpose in writing this work is to further professionalization: “[A] new archive science should be established as an autonomous discipline by integrating historical source studies and studies on archives administration. The present book is a part of the author's attempt to create a new archive science (“Abstract” p. 11).”

Developments in this direction have been part of broader corollary developments within the field. One is an increased concern, led by people such as Amino Yoshihiko, that valuable historical remains and documents are being destroyed by a combination of extensive land development and social change. In addition, recent emphases within the general field of archival studies have shifted from a focus on individual items to trying to understand the integrity of an entire archive and the nature of an organization's record keeping. Both of these developments contribute to a heightened sense of urgency and a feeling that archivists have a specialized mission.

Reflecting the increased concern to develop

sound professional standards, a growing number of individuals have a variety of new professional organizations, professional journals. Andô calls particular attention to articles that have appeared in 『記録と史料』, the *Journal of the Japan Society of Archives Institutions*, and the research publications of numerous archives institutions that have begun publication in the past ten years.

Chapter 1 “A Challenge to Archive Sciences” (「記録史料科学の課題」) argues that the field should be divided into two broad fields: archival sciences and archives administration. The majority of this chapter reviews recent studies of 1) the structural analysis of record groups, 2) arrangement and description of records, 3) archival survey, and issues of standardization and information systems, touching on the international context in the second and fourth subject areas.

Chapter 2, “Understanding Archival Structure: The Case Study of the Satô Family Papers of Iwade Village in Echigo Province” (「記録史料群の構造的認識——越後国岩手村佐藤家文書を事例」) explores Andô’s experience in cataloging a major collection (11,000-plus items) from the area of modern Niigata prefecture. This analysis in part reflects changes in Andô’s thinking about principles of archival classification over the many years he was engaged in compiling the four volumes of indexes to the collection. The classification scheme that results clearly reflects both divisions of time and function of the different categories of documents: 1) Tokugawa-era village group (大肝入) functions, 2) Tokugawa-era official village records, 3) Iwade village modern (Meiji and later) official records, and 4) private Satô family records.

Chapter 3 explores “Theory and Method in Archival Surveys” (「記録史料調査の論理と方法」). The first section defines Andô’s view of what a survey should accomplish. In his view, an important component of this work is careful re-cording of the original condition and order in which the materials were found, compiling an outline description of the number and kinds of materials, and designing a program for processing the record group. Two examples from Ibaragi and Shimane prefectures are examined.

Chapter 4, “Arrangement and Description of Archives” (「記録史料の編成と目録記述」), tackles three different objectives. It begins with a general theory of archival description. Andô argues that although attention has focused on this problem since the introduction of Western principles in the 1980s, such principles are not yet common knowledge among Japanese specialists.

Through elaboration of basic principles, Andô suggests the need for an integrated archival processing scheme. His discussion focuses on production of a catalog that reflects the collection’s structure and is of maximum use to potential users. The second section explores international descriptive standards, particularly those of the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain. The final section looks more closely at two experiments in archival description at both “macro” and “micro” levels.

“The Present Situation in Appraisal Theory” (「記録評価選別論の現在」), Chapter 5, commences with a review of the history of appraisal theory – the principles for evaluating which of the myriad documents, maps, video tapes, floppy disks, etc. should be retained, catalogued and stored – in Europe and then explores the influence of more recent work in the West. He concludes that new developments in this area have a broad potential impact on the development of future archival systems and the archival profession in Japan.

The final chapter, “Archives in Modern Society” (「現代アーカイブズ論」), looks at The Public Archives Law of Japan (1987) which formally recognized public records of historical importance as the “people’s common property”, and the draft of a Freedom of Information Bill. He finds both wanting. In particular, he suggests the need for legislation covering private archives and calls for the establishment of formal programs of record management in all government agencies. In the case of the Freedom of Information bill, there is no provision for records management of any sort. The last section looks at the preservation of Western court records as a model for Japan, especially in light of the 1992 decision by Japan’s Supreme Court to destroy all original records of civil cases accumulated by the Supreme Court and District Courts over five decades.

As some of the examples Andô discusses in his final chapter suggest, archival practice in Japan is sometimes considerably different from the practices found in the U.S. and Europe. Such practices are not always favorable to the preservation of re-cords valuable to historians. Students of early modern Japan have a vested interest in activities designed to protect Japan’s cultural, social and political legacies by defining professional standards of archival judgement and the implementation of laws, administrative procedures, and practices.



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