

“bisexual” (p. 199). This is also the root of his observation regarding pre-Tokugawa nanshoku that there was a “tendency to feminize the younger partner” and that “[h]eterosexual desire was evident in the construction of sexual objects made up, coiffured, and dressed much like women.” (p. 56) Leupp thinks of beauty as necessarily feminine or masculine, but I think human beauty in pre-Tokugawa Japan was conceived in terms that were not based on gender. It is not so much that youths were feminized, as that what was considered beautiful was, essentially, gracefulness and vulnerability. The first was usually a function of social status and the second is typically a function of age.

Leupp accomplishes in *Male Colors* what he had set out to do. He definitively demonstrates that nanshoku was a unique cultural phenomenon, one that was widely accepted and practiced. It is, nevertheless, unfortunate that this book is so dependent on Western conceptual categories, because sexuality is an area in which Japanese culture is dramatically different from the West and has the potential for radically expanding our understanding of the nature and parameters of human experience. Although this work does not contain that vision, now that this field is fashionable rather than taboo, perhaps it will inspire others to take up that task. *Male Colors* is welcome for drawing attention to the fact that there is an abundance of data on the subject.

*Edo Craftsmen: Master Artisans of Old Tokyo*. Text by Thomas F. Judge, photographs by Tomita Hiroyuki  
NY: Weatherhill, 1994. Hardback edition, 144 pp., over 200 duotone (fine quality black and white)  
photographs, format: 8½” x 11”, \$34.95

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This book tells the compelling story of Japan’s vanishing breed of *shokunin*, artisans who produce fine handmade products in traditional styles, forms, and techniques. Much of the commentary on the twelve artisans chronicled here focuses on the painstaking fabrication processes involved. The exquisite photos of the artisans at work in their studios and statements by the artisans themselves draw the reader into their world, illuminating their motivations in pursuing professions that did not offer assurances of financial success or fame. More broadly, the book underscores how changes in lifestyle and technological advancements have fostered the transition from the early modern to the modern age.

The artisans highlighted here—a woodblock printer, metal carver, kimono tailor, crest (*mon*) printer, brush maker, Kabuki calligrapher, lacquerware maker, screen (*sudare*) maker, household shrine maker, cabinet maker, wood carver, and temple carpenter—all live and work in Tokyo, a city in which the plight of traditional culture is perhaps more dire than elsewhere in Japan. Rarely in the book does the reader sense the fate of other traditional crafts in Tokyo or elsewhere in Japan. In addition, because only male artisans are highlighted here, the important contribution of women to the history and preservation of traditional Japanese crafts is also unstated. Nevertheless, these artisan’s observations may be viewed as representative of the many challenges facing those who seek to preserve traditional crafts and customs.

These artisans fear that the public no longer appreciates or is capable of recognizing fine quality handmade products. Few, for example, can differentiate between factory produced die-cut metalwork and its hand carved counterpart, so there is dwindling interest in the higher priced handmade goods. Additionally, many of these products are becoming obsolete as customs change. For example, fifty years ago, four out of five families had Shinto shrines in their homes, while now the number is about two out of five. Other challenges involve the difficulties in obtaining necessary materials. For example, native cypress, necessary for temple construction, has become scarce; Southeast Asian teakwood is being used instead. Also, many craftsmen are forced to make their own tools or parts that would once have been supplied by specialists who have since gone out of business for lack of customers.

These artisans believe that for most contemporary Japanese, old ways and old objects are associated with poverty and discomfort. Despite the fact that training apprentices puts further strain on their time and income, they are committed to passing on their knowledge, more important to them than wealth, so most have been actively involved in training apprentices during the course of their careers. Yet finding apprentices with patience to learn and willingness to forgo potential for higher salaries is challenging. Some noted that women apprentices are increasing in number in traditionally male-dominated professions such as kimono tailoring.

Ranging in age from 46 to 88, with all but the youngest (the temple carpenter) born in prewar times, all these men learned their professions via the traditional apprenticeship system, which they believe superior to the education afforded at technical schools and more difficult than present-day apprenticeship practices. In the old system, for example, apprentices trained for ten or more years generally from their early teens, had two days off a month, and were required to do a year of "gratitude service" upon completion of their training prior to striking out on their own. They would learn the hard way, by trial and error, close observation of the master at work (generally with no verbal instructions but ample criticism), and progression of tasks from menial labor to more active involvement in execution. Nowadays, apprenticeships begin later due to compulsory education and are limited by law to five years with pay.

With few exceptions, these men did not come from long lines of families practicing their trades for generations, though the crafts they pursue are indeed centuries old. Most are second- or third- generation practitioners of a craft their fathers or grandfathers (or in some cases, other relatives or neighbors) took up during the Meiji period, and seem almost accidentally to have been thrust onto their career paths. Still, most seek to pass their shops or skills on to their sons or other relatives.

The artisans featured in this book distance themselves from artists, considering themselves professionals who make well-designed, high quality products that are (or were at one time) essential to the needs of society. Artists, they assert, are interested in originality, too often at the expense of quality, can be selective in acceptance of commissions and oblivious to deadlines. Although unstated in the text, these comments clearly apply to the definition of artists in modern Japanese society: in premodern times distinctions between "artists" and "artisans" were less defined. Ironically, although only some of the featured artisans sign their products, the high cost of their handiwork assures that their products are for elite consumers, not the plebeians who were their predecessors' original clients. This is especially evident in the patrons for the woodblock printer Nagao Naotarō. Once prints were art for the working class; now museums worldwide seek out Nagao to print from precious old blocks in their collections.

Beyond teaching us a great deal about the specific crafts and craftsmen featured, this book offers numerous insights into the conflicts occurring as change continues in Japanese society. These are insights which, no doubt, are paralleled in other societies throughout the world where the transformations of the industrial age confront older living cultures. The volume concludes with a

glossary of terms, both technical and cultural, appropriate for novice readers, and a short bibliography of English and Japanese language sources

Obviously this is a book aimed at general readers interested in traditional Japanese crafts, and at those who seek technical information on the production processes of these crafts, rather than at specialists of Japanese history and culture who would expect a more critical and well-researched text. Still, the perceptive (albeit nostalgic) tone of the commentary makes this much more than merely an annotated picture book or how-to craft manual. Thus, I think the book would be suitable as supplementary reading material in an introductory course on Japan

*Shisendo: Hall of the Poetry Immortals*, by J. Thomas Rimer, Jonathan Chaves, Stephen Addiss, Hiroyuki Suzuki, [Shūichi Katō]. New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1991. viii, 134 pp., 56 pp. black and white plates, 16 pp. color plates, no index. \$29.95.

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The Shisendō, or Hall of the Poetry Immortals, built by Ishikawa Jōzan in 1636, is one of the standard stops on the itinerary of every tourist to Kyōto, its unique charms acclaimed in every guidebook to the city. But it remains a perplexing place for foreign visitors, who can have little idea what to make of the rather cramped rustic structure with its exquisite small garden, both adorned with calligraphic plaques they can scarcely be expected to read or, when translated, to understand. Much like the literati life it represents, the Shisendō is over-inscribed, almost to the point of seeming to disappear entirely into text. One enters under a sign that announces the "Grotto of Small Possessions," advances down a path to the gate overwritten with the words "Ancient Plum Barrier" and on to the "Wasp's Waist," steps up into the "Hall of the Poetry Immortals" itself with its small room dubbed "Pursuit-of-Art Nest," which affords a view out over the garden with its "Ups-and-Downs Nest Gate." One might ascend the steps to the "Tower of Intoning Poetry at the Moon" to gaze out at the "Pavilion of the Lingering Moon." Even the famed deer-chaser (*shikaoi*), a small and humble bamboo water device in the depths of the garden, bears the elegant name of "archbishop" (*sōzu*). Where did these terms come from, one wonders, and what can they mean today?

Any lingering excuse for ignorance is now dispelled by this wonderful new book. It has been designed, in the spirit of the *bunjin* emphasis on the unity of the scholarly arts, with the intention of portraying Ishikawa Jōzan and his artistic creation in the round, examining in turn the life, the poet, the calligrapher, the designer and the landscape gardener. This approach was earlier used to