Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716) and the Possibilities of Painting in Early Modern Japan

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Abstract

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This dissertation investigates the work of Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716), one of the most idiosyncratic artists of Japan’s early modern period. By employing aspects of literature and theater, as well as a focus on Kōrin’s experimentations with the effects of style, materials, and artistic media, I elucidate how his oeuvre is characterized by a continuous strive to test the faculties of painting. Following a chronological approach, the four chapters of the dissertation trace Kōrin’s life and work from his early steps as a painter to the collaboration with his brother Kenzan (1663–1743) during his final years. The chapters are framed by an introduction, a conclusion, and an appendix. The first chapter focusses on Kōrin’s earliest works: two hanging scrolls depicting the medieval poet Sōgi (1421–1502) and Hotei Playing Kemari, as well as a pair of screens entitled Poetic Meanings of the Twelve Months. These works reveal Kōrin’s intellectual indebtedness to late medieval culture and the imperial court. Kōrin’s initial engagement in the arts occurred alongside his first confrontation with medieval ink modes, which laid the foundations for Kōrin’s lifelong understanding of that material. Numerous contemporary sources testify to Kōrin’s passion for the Noh theater. This little-studied, formative period of Kōrin’s life established his aesthetic sensibilities and is thus critical for understanding his art, a connection examined in the second chapter. Kōrin’s perennial engagement with Noh put him in contact with high-level aristocrats, such as the Nijō family, as well as upper-tier clergy at the temples Daigoji and Nishi Honganji. The theater also provides a possible reading of key
works by Kōrin, such as his screen painting *Irises*. The third and fourth chapters explore Kōrin’s diversified dialogue with the material qualities of ink. The third chapter surveys his appropriation of a particular technique, *tarashikomi*, first championed by Tawaraya Sōtatsu (d. ca. 1640). I propose that Kōrin turned to *tarashikomi* as he prepared to leave his native Kyoto for Edo, where he was active for around five years. The chapter argues that Kōrin used *tarashikomi*, a painting method associated with Kyoto culture, to solicit clients in the shogunal capital of Edo. The last chapter is devoted to Kōrin’s collaboration with Kenzan. From the 1710s onward, the brothers created numerous examples of *sabi-e*, works in iron oxide on square ceramic vessels that emulate the techniques and visuality of paintings in ink. This unprecedented expansion of the boundaries of one medium to envelop another resulted in approximations of traditional ink paintings in ceramics. In the process, Kōrin expanded the paradigm of ink to include an entirely new material component. The appendix includes the first complete English-language translation of the collection of extant Edo-period letters and other documents by and about Kōrin that are contained in the Konishi Archives, held at the Kyoto National Museum, the Osaka Municipal Museum, and various other collections in Japan.
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Conventions

Throughout this dissertation, Japanese and Chinese names have been listed family name first, followed by the given name. I have largely omitted Japanese characters throughout the thesis, except for seals, signatures, and when their inclusion was necessary to illustrate relationships between different characters. A glossary provides a list of names and terms with their Japanese equivalents. Dates have been written in the format year/month/day (for example, 1701/02/27). In order to adhere to the chronology and consistency of the Konishi Archives, all translations from the Archives that are quoted in the main text of the dissertation are also included at full length in the appendix. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.
Introduction: Between Life and Art

Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716) never ceased to test the possibilities of painting. Kōrin’s work encompasses the full range of the early modern arts, and he constantly looked for new ways to transfer the faculties of one medium to another. The artist was also a highly educated devotee of the literary arts and the Noh theater, an education that informed his art-making. Initially trained by a Kano-school artist, Kōrin quickly departed from the idiosyncrasies of scholastic painting. By embracing an extensive variety of techniques and genres, he perfected a painting style that captivates by way of its fusion of simplicity and sumptuousness. Kōrin’s sophisticated synergy of cultural acumen and artistic capacity resulted in paintings that pair elaborate intellectual concepts with visual allure, a quality that has managed to enthrall his audiences to this day.

Kōrin’s short career of less than three decades left a profound footprint in the history of Japanese art. This influence was felt already in his own time and continued centuries after. Although Kōrin’s artworks were made for a limited circle of aristocrats, upper-tier samurai, and affluent townsmen, his persona and oeuvre influenced a broad spectrum of his contemporaries. Painters like Ōoka Shunboku (1680–1763) included Kōrin in his model book Ehon tekagami (Picture Book Mirror; 1720) and aligned him with such prominent painters as Kano Tan’yū (1602–1674) in his personal manual Gadō jitsuroku (True Record of the Way of Painting; compiled 1735–1751); with Kōrin ehon michi shirube (Illustrated Guide to Kōrin; 1735) the designer of textile patterns Nonomura Chūbei (dates unknown) afforded Kōrin a prominent role by devoting an entire publication to his interpretation of Kōrin’s work. Later, Sakai Hōitsu (1761–1828) and his espousal of Kōrin’s style laid the foundation for the artist’s popularity in the modern age. Contemporary Japanese scholarship and Kōrin’s public reception have embraced the
painter as an established component of the country’s cultural patrimony. This way, history has turned him into a larger-than-life figure.

At the example of Kōrin, this dissertation examines the materials and processes, as well as the potentials and limits of painting in late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Japan. At the core of this study lies the central question of how early modern artists approached the making of art, a question to which Kōrin’s work offers an answer. The thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach, one that combines the study of painting, lacquer, textiles, and pottery. By focussing on key works produced during defining stages of Kōrin’s life, I elucidate his oeuvre as an interconnected amalgam of various aspects of cultural meaning that transcend the material definition of early modern artworks. At the heart of my research lies my belief that material versatility and Kōrin’s profound education in the literary and performing arts formed the backbones of his artistry. These aspects offered Kōrin a new set of expressions that impacted the course of early modern Japanese art-making. By providing a chronology from Kōrin’s earliest successes as a painter to his last artistic innovation in ceramic paintings, I analyze how Kōrin’s career took shape through his constant struggle with circumstance, expectations, and his drive to paint.

**Kariganeya Ichinojō**

Kōrin was born the offspring of a prominent Kyoto family. Their business, the Kariganeya, led by Kōrin’s father, Ogata Sōken (d. 1687), was the exclusive garment supplier to
empress Tōfukumon’in (1607–1678) and her household. Although the contract, along with the substantial income, expired with the death of the empress, the Kariganeya’s name and that of the Ogata continued to resound in Japan’s two main cultural centers, Kyoto and Edo. Sōken was able to supply his three sons with a thorough training in the arts of literature, theater, and painting, an education suited to the offspring of Kyoto’s upper-tier bourgeoisie. He made sure to insert Kōrin into his social circles that encompassed high-ranking aristocrats, merchants, and theater professionals. Sōken, it seems, educated his sons in beauty, rather than business matters.

In his will, Sōken bequeathed the failing Karigeneya to his eldest son Tōzaburō, under whom the business would descend into final bankruptcy. Kōrin and his younger brother, Kenzan (1663–1743), received substantial amounts of money, real estate, and debt certificates issued to daimyo by generations of Ogata patriarchs. Relieved from the burden of succession to the Kariganeya, Kōrin and Kenzan led lives devoted to the arts: Kenzan retreated to the mountains of northwestern Kyoto to study Zen, Chinese classics, and pottery, while Kōrin indulged in making lacquer pieces and paintings from at least the 1690s.

Sōken’s testament allotted each of his sons a share of the family assets that, to Sōken, reflected the character and perhaps the destiny he imagined for each of his children. Echoing Kenzan’s lifelong devotion to the art of writing, he received the family’s calligraphy collection; Kōrin was given accoutrements for the Noh theater. Sōken outfitted his sons with sufficient monetary riches and he might have anticipated Kōrin and Kenzan to pursue the arts of the stage and that of calligraphy, respectively. In light of his inheritance, he may even have envisioned

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1 A number of documents with orders and designs for empress Tōfukumon’in and other court ladies survive. See Yamane Yūzō, ed., Konishi-ke kyūzō Kōrin kankei shiryō to sono kenkyū (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1962), 46–75, 293–308.

2 See Appendix Documents I / 2 and I / 4 to I / 6.
Kōrin to become a Noh performer—a profession that was all but uncommon among the wealthy commoner class. For instance, the Noh master Kobatake Ryōtatsu (d. 1710), with whom Kōrin studied in the mid-1670s, hailed from a Kyoto dying business similar to the Kariganeya. The core of Kōrin’s education did not immediately destine him to become a painter, and Sōken, who took up the brush on occasion, may have regarded Kōrin’s early training in painting as merely a part of the fabric of a cultured Kyoto townsman like himself.

However, Kōrin had a penchant for the visual arts and ultimately chose this path as his occupation. It is unclear when and how Kōrin received his earliest schooling in painting, but extant sketches and studies suggest that he initially studied with an artist trained by the Kano atelier. During the early 1690s, Kōrin took up painting in earnest and aspired to make it the fundament of his life. First and foremost, it was money (or the lack thereof) that may have pushed him to make this decision.

Throughout the 1690s, Kōrin faced at least one expensive lawsuit and various other financial failures that swiftly erased the financial cushion supplied by his father’s will. In the second month of 1689, as the result of a civil lawsuit, Kōrin gave up one of his inherited houses, along with the large sum of twenty sheets (mai) of silver, leading him to borrow the even greater amount of twenty pieces (kan) of silver just four months later. Kōrin appears to have acquired the money on behalf of Sakakibara Masakuni (1675–1726), lord of Echigo domain, who installed the artist as the supervisor of his storehouse (kuramoto) in Osaka. The position likely held few actual responsibilities and may have served as an honorary appointment and security for the loan.

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3 Miyamoto Keizō, *Kamigata nōgakushi no kenkyū* (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 2005), 82.

4 One *mai* equaled one *ryō*, whereas one *ryō* was roughly 187.5 grams. One *kan* was one thousand *monme*, amounting to 3.75 kilograms. See Yamane Yūzō, “Kōrin maki-e nidai,” *Kokka* 1123 (May 1989): 15.
which was never repaid in full. Around the late 1680s and throughout the 1690s, Kōrin borrowed and lent money at equal measure; by 1691, he sold off one of his other inherited houses.\(^5\)

Around this time, Kōrin and Kenzan began frequenting the estate of Nijō Tsunahira (1672–1732), a high-ranking courtier and future regent. The seventh month of 1689 marked the first of Kōrin’s innumerable encounters with Tsunahira and his salon-like circle of acquaintances.\(^6\) The two men built a long-lasting friendship that continued until Kōrin’s death. Tsunahira provided the artist with welcome support and a network of potential clients, especially in the initial stages of his artistic career. However, the timing of their first recorded encounter is remarkable. Kōrin’s initial association with the aristocrat coincided with the painter’s name being hauled through Kyoto’s judicial system in a scandalous case that involved an illicit love affair and pregnancy. Here, too, Kōrin’s illustrious ancestry and their ties to the imperial court via the Kariganeya surely played a role in facilitating his entry into the court’s upper tiers.

Kōrin was savvy in making his family heritage serve his purpose. Evidence of this is scattered throughout his career in the form of seals and pseudonyms. Until the late 1680s, Kōrin was officially referred to as Kariganeya Ichinojō, following the premodern tradition of associating scions of prominent merchant families with the name of their business. It is conspicuous that Kōrin’s public persona was still tied to the Kariganeya at a time when he was already in his thirties and his brother, Tōzaburō, had taken over operations. This appellation marks the early vestiges of Kōrin’s enduring association with his family’s trade. The legacy of the textile business Kariganeya was a red thread that traversed much of Kōrin’s life.

\(^5\) On the information above, see Appendix Documents I / 7 to I / 23, and I / 25.

The artist changed his name from Ichinojō, his given name, to Kōrin 浩臨 (lit. “Gazing Onto Vastness”) around 1689. He did so in a move to honor his deceased father, who used the name Kōsai 浩斎 (lit. “Vast Purity”). Soon after, borrowing the character kō 光 from Hon’ami Kōetsu 光悦 (lit. “Bright Joy”; 1558–1637), his great-granduncle and a renowned man of culture, Kōrin 光琳 (lit. “Bright Jewel”) changed his choice of characters in a possible reference to the lineage of his exalted ancestor. Parallel to his reliance on the prestige of Kōetsu, Kōrin also appears to have kept an allegiance to his Kariganeya ancestors. For instance, his early seal “Koresuke” 慎亮 (lit. “His Clarity”) appears derived from his grandfather Sōhaku’s alias “Koremoto” 慎元 (lit. “His Origin”); the name “Dōsū” 道崇 (lit. “Path of Sublimity”), on the other hand, which Kōrin used after 1704, seems to refer to his great-grandfather Ogata Dōhaku 道柏 (lit. “Path of Oaks”). Evidently, the Ogata lineage served Kōrin as a continuing source of inspiration and cultural acumen; only during the artist’s late years did he emancipate himself from his reliance on family history by using the name “Masatoki,” or “Hōshuku” 方悦 (lit. “Celebratory Direction”), which bears no recognizable connection to his ancestral pedigree.

Apart from his paintings, lacquer objects, and ceramic paintings, which largely entered the collections of patrons from the country’s elite, Kōrin’s artistic persona experienced a parallel

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7 Yamane proposes that Kōrin changed his name from Ichinojō to Kōrin by around 1689/09 and used this choice of characters until around 1691/04 and 1692/11. Yamane Yūzō, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, Yamane Yūzō chosakushū 3 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1995), 4–6. See also Kōno Motoaki. “Kōrin suibokuga no tenkai to gensen,” in Suiboku bijutsu taikei daiyūkan Kōetsu Sōtatsu Kōrin (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1977), 54. Correspondence concerning the lawsuit filed against Kōrin in 1688 repeatedly refers to him as Kariganeya Ichinojō. See Appendix Documents II / 3 and II / 4. The lawsuit is discussed in Chapter One.

8 The first use of this choice of characters is recorded in Nijō-keennai gobansho hinamiki in the year 1692, suggesting that Kōrin adopted those characters around that time. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 31 and Kōno Motoaki, Ogata Kōrin, Nihon bijutsu kaiga zenshū 17 (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1976), 110. See also Chapter One.

9 On the family connections of the Ogata family, see Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō, 225–226.
reception in the popular realm, by way of textiles. Perhaps the most expansive response to his oeuvre came through hinagata publications—pattern catalogues for kimono designs. In 1706, when Kōrin was active in Edo and had almost reached the peak of his career as a painter, a book entitled Kōrin hīnakata was published. Although the work is now lost, its title suggests that it may have been devoted exclusively to textile motifs associated with Kōrin.10 Similar publications that included so-called “Kōrin patterns” (Kōrin moyō, or Kōrin mon’yō) circulated during Kōrin’s lifetime. These patterns came in a variety of shapes, but the most frequent were “Kōrin plums” (Kōrin mume), which reproduced the abbreviated, circular shapes that were characteristic of Kōrin’s paintings of plum blossoms. It is unknown whether Kōrin sanctioned or endorsed this popular aspect of his artistic persona.11 But hinagata periodicals embedded Kōrin’s name in the public discourse of his time and contributed to his lasting popularity throughout the early modern period. Such books anchored Kōrin in the world of fashion and opened a secondary avenue for the profound impact of the painter’s oeuvre on early modern art-making.

Kōrin’s faithfulness to his family history and his popular reception are symbolic of the artist’s work and personality. Although Kōrin appears to have chosen art as his profession with the premise of leading a life removed from responsibility—an expectation that was largely unfulfilled—he was also well aware of the art market and the expectations of his clients. The artistic persona that emerged from Kōrin’s pseudonyms and his public image embodies both the

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10 See, for example, Oyama Yuzuruha, Kōrin moyō, Nihon no bijutsu 524 (Tokyo: Gyōsei, 2010), 20.

11 Hinagata books customarily alter Kōrin’s name to 光林, possibly indicating that Kōrin himself was not involved in the creation of those popular designs. This may have led publishers to slightly change the choice of characters while still retaining a recognizable association with the artist’s popular renown.
private and universal facets of his art. His eclectic oeuvre was at the forefront of the generalism that defined much of early modern creativity.

**A Versatile Artist**

Modern scholars often compare Kōrin to the refined, yet irresponsible protagonist of Ihara Saikaku’s (1642–1693) novella *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* (Life of an Amorous Man), a quintessential character of the free-spirited Genroku era (1688–1704). Similar to Kōrin, the book’s main figure, Yonosuke, comes from a wealthy merchant household. Instead of learning the skills necessary for succeeding in the family business, he indulges in sensual pursuits and cares little about work. However, in spite of his penchant for the pleasures of life, Kōrin represents a different case.

Although Kōrin lacked the frugality of his younger brother Kenzan, who scolded him on multiple occasions, the painter’s fortunes also suffered under loans to daimyo that comprised a significant part of his inheritance. Such debts were rarely repaid, imposing a considerable challenge on merchant families. Kōrin had a libertine side to his personality, but he was also a victim of contemporary circumstance. After numerous financial setbacks, he searched for a (more or less) reliable cornerstone that could both support him financially and accommodate his free-spirited demeanor. Thus, Kōrin turned to the arts and we owe one of Japan’s greatest painters to the transient nature of money.

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13 The Genroku era experienced comparatively lax jurisdiction by the shogunate, a groundwork that contributed to a flourishing of urban culture, particularly manifest in the visual arts, literature, and theater. See, for instance, Kodama Kōta, *Genroku jidai*, Nihon no rekishi 16 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2005), 460–488.

13 See Appendix Documents II / 9 and II / 10.
His father Sōken made sure that Kōrin and his brothers received an education in the arts—painting, theater, literature, and tea—an investment that served the artist well in dealing with his clients, who largely hailed from the upper reaches of early modern society. Rather than indulging only in pleasurable pursuits, Kōrin capitalized on the Genroku dilettantism described by Saikaku and used the arts as his source of revenue. This attempt resulted in a blend of different arts, namely waka poetry, Noh theater, and tea, which found their way into Kōrin’s artworks.

The painter’s wide-ranging education informed his eclectic oeuvre; just as Kōrin embraced many elegant pastimes, his body of works presents an encyclopedic array of genres and media. It seems that Kōrin, who took well into his thirties to make the visual arts his main vocation, could not restrict himself to a single form of expression. A painter on paper, silk, textiles, lacquer, and ceramics, Kōrin was one of the most versatile artists of Japan’s early modern period. Yet the core of Kōrin’s education was in painting. In spite of the esteem enjoyed by the arts of the brush at Kōrin’s time, he transferred their techniques to a variety of other media, including lacquer and ceramics. Lacquer in particular formed an early part of Kōrin’s artistic activities. The 1690s witnessed the first evidence of Kōrin’s emerging artistic potential. In a letter of circa 1697, the artist mentions the order of a lacquer writing box (suzuribako) from Edo.¹⁴

Thank you for your help the other day, I received the money from my neighbor.¹⁵ This is entirely thanks to you and I cannot express how grateful I am. I would like to show you

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¹⁴ On the dating of the letter, see Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 66–68.

¹⁵ Yamane proposes that this neighbor might be Jūichiya Tokuemon, who resided next to Kōrin’s Nakamachi Yabunouchichō residence and appears in another letter by Kōrin to the art dealer Nishimura Seiku. See Ibid., 67. See also Appendix Documents I / 23, and III / 2.
the stacked suzuribako today.\[16\] If it suits you, could you please come and pick it up? If you could also hand over the payment, I would be most grateful. This is all for now.

Yours sincerely, [Kōrin].

[1697?], second month, twenty-third day.

I have completed the innō with butterfly motifs according to your wishes. It is important [to me] and I keep it safely tucked away in my kimono. I would like you to send it to Nagasaki.\[17\] I am also waiting to hear from Nagasaki about the motif of the screen(s) [they ordered]. My neighbor is waiting [to hear from you], so could you please meet with him? That is all for now.

わたくしもちやうのいんろうも
御しよもう二候てしんし申候 いちかふ々
いてきものにてひさうにて候へとも
なかさきへ下し申たきと
申候ひょうふうの事もまつまつ
なかさきへもやう申っかわし
くだし候八八ひかるへきよし

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\[16\] Uchida Tokugo argued that the suzuribako mentioned here is either the example with decor of mizuaoi at the MOA Museum, Atami, or another with a design of beniaoi (both species of hollyhock) at the Hatakeyama Museum, Tokyo, which both fit the elongated shape described in the letter. See Uchida Tokugo, Kōrin maki-e no kenkyū (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 2012), 219–220.

\[17\] Richard Wilson has suggested that, rather than the city in Kyūshū, Nagasaki here indicates the Reiganjima neighborhood of Edo. Wilson’s interpretation is generally accepted by scholars today. See Richard L. Wilson and Ogasawara Saeko, Ogata Kenzan: zensakuhiin to sono keifu daisankan kenkyūhen (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1992), 125–126.
The document is an endearing example that reveals Kōrin’s early steps in the commercial art business. Kōrin defers the dispatching and handling of an artwork to Nishimura Seiiku (or Masakuni), a professional dealer.\textsuperscript{18} The painter continued this practice in a later letter to Seiiku, where Kōrin expresses his lack of knowledge about sending works of art by ship.\textsuperscript{19}

Kōrin continued to make works in lacquer until the end of his life. In addition to mentioning a lacquer \textit{inrô}, we learn from a late letter, dated to around 1715 or 1716, how his art business was a family enterprise.\textsuperscript{20} While Kōrin helped Kenzan sell his first ceramics during the late 1690s, Kōrin’s son Juichirō assisted the artist in brokering the sale and production of works during his final years. We also learn from the letter how Kōrin’s body of works remained eclectic throughout his life; just a few years before, Kōrin and Kenzan had begun collaborating in adding paintings to ceramic surfaces. This way, Kōrin’s oeuvre exhausted the entire breadth of the early modern art spectrum.

Numerous surviving documents and sketches illuminate how Kōrin approached artworks and their making. Such insights we owe to a collection of documents on the Ogata family, that is now known as the Konishi Archives (\textit{Konishi-ke monjo}, lit. “Konishi Family Documents”). These records provide a rare glimpse at the history of an early modern family and the story of an artist.

\textsuperscript{18} Uchida, \textit{Kōrin maki-e no kenkyū}, 215–222.
\textsuperscript{19} See Appendix Document III / 2.
\textsuperscript{20} See Appendix Document III / 11, and Chapter Three.
The Konishi Archives

In 1700, San, a domestic employee in the Ogata household, gave birth to a boy named Shinjirō (or Tatsujiro). This illegitimate son of Kōrin would play an important role in preserving the artist’s memory. In 1708, Shinjirō was adopted into the Konishi family of silver mint officials, who installed him as their heir soon after. Then known as Konishi Juichirō, he maintained a close connection to his biological father Kōrin and, in spite of carrying a different surname, Juichirō regarded himself as the guardian of the Ogata legacy. Kōrin writes in his will to Juichirō:

Testament
You are my flesh and blood. But since I lack a family business, it was hard [for me] to provide security [for you]. We were in an unfortunate [situation] until, luckily, Nakamura Kuranosuke took pity and [arranged for you] to be adopted into the family of Konishi Hikokurō. Nakamura Kuranosuke then gave you his daughter, Okatsu, as your wife. You will succeed as head and heir to the Konishi family, [and we owe this] above all to Kuranosuke’s generosity. You should pay him respect and follow his wishes. Okatsu herself is [a woman] without flaw.

My house and various implements I leave to my widow Tayo. Upon Tayo’s death, your younger brother Katsunojō will receive [the house]. Since he will inherit my name [Ogata], you shall help him [manage] my estate, so as to avoid any complications.

As part of his inheritance, one wakizashi and screen[es] shall be given to Katsunojō. Please support him.

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21 In different family trees that Juichirō drafted throughout his life he mostly focused on the Ogata line, rather than that of the Konishi.

22 The same Katsu who Kōrin raised under his roof from 1702 to 1706.

23 Kōrin’s last residence at Shinmachi Nijōkudari, built in 1711 after his own designs.

24 Implements (dōgu) were furniture and interior outfitting, such as tatami, screens, paper sliding doors (shōji), and sugito—outer sliding doors made of cypress wood that were often painted. See also Appendix Documents II / 3 and II / 4 for a similar use of the term.

25 This passage gives evidence that Katsunojō must have been quite young when Kōrin drafted his will in 1713. Kōrin effectively installed Juichirō as the manager of his estate until Katsunojō comes of age. According to Asaoka Okisada’s Koga bikō (Thoughts on Old Paintings; begun in 1850), Katsunojō was adopted into the family of the Osaka townsman (chōnin) Ishii Kichiemon. See Asaoka Okisada, Zōei Koga bikō, vol. 3 (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1970), 1542.
Shōtoku 3 [1713], [Year of the] Water-Snake, first month, twenty-fifth day.
Ogata Kōrin (round relief seal “Hosei Masatoki”)

[To] Konishi Juichirō

遺書之事
一 其方事我等嫡子二候得共、我等事唯今
相究タル家業も無之、末々其方身上之
安否難計、不便ニ存候ニ付、幸、中村内藏助様
御懐意故、小西彦九郎殿方へ養子ニ遺之候、
中内蔵助様御息女お勝殿、其方妻女ニ被相究、
小西家名跡相繼候事、偏ニ内蔵助様御
厚恩ニ候間、随分御意ニ相曳申様ニ孝養
可致候、お勝殿事疎略有之間敷候、

一 我等家屋敷諸道具ハ、後家多代へ譲与申候也、
多代死後ニハ弟勝丞へ譲与、我等名跡相繼せ候
様ニ申残候、其方事家督相備タル名跡ヲ
相継キ被申候事ニ候間、我等名跡ニ付訪違乱ノ事
有間敷候事、

一 為遺物、脇差一腰、屏風譲与申候、
弟勝丞事名跡相続仕候様ニ助分可
給事、以上

正徳三年癸巳正月廿五日 小形光琳（保成方祝）

小西寿市郎殿

Kōrin had dear feelings for Juichirō and entrusted him with preserving the Ogata family’s memory. It was Juichirō whom Kōrin bestowed the collection of documents on his own life and the Ogata family, which now comprise the Konishi Archives. In Kōrin’s testament to his wife, Tayo, he includes the following lines:
The document, dated to 1713, expresses Kōrin’s resolve to secure the legacy of the Ogata and his own memory. Kenzan was childless and their elder brother Tōzaburō had gone to Edo to seek his fortune there. With this inheritance, Juichirō transformed the Konishi family into the custodians of the Ogata heritage; by the early twentieth century, before the Konishi Archives entered the ownership of the Japanese government and different private collections, the documents were still in the hands of Juichirō’s descendants.

The Konishi Archives were accessed as early as the nineteenth century, by Sakai Hōitsu. In 1807, Hōitsu contacted Konishi Hikoemon, a descendant of Juichirō, to receive information on Kōrin’s family lineage. Hikoemon, also known as Masamori, drafted an undated biography of the Ogata family that is still part of the Archives. The document has an addendum recording the restoration of Kōrin’s grave in 1822. In modern times, Fukui Rikichirō (1886–1972) and Aimi Kōu (1874–1970) first introduced some contents of the Archives—such as the will of

26 The entire document is translated in Appendix Document II / 19.

27 Tōzaburō entered the service of Kawaguchi Tsunetoshi (1702–1769), a vassal (hatamoto) to the shogun. See Nakamachi Keiko, “Kakitsubata zu byōbu no seiritsu o megutte,” in Kokuhō Kakitsubata zu byōbu: hōzon shūri shunkōkinen (Tokyo: Nezu Bijutsukan, 2005), 57. See also Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō, 184.

28 The Konishi Archives also became a repository of the Konishi family’s own heritage. For example, they contain several family chronologies, letters, business papers, and a copy of the eighth-century Japanese classic Nihon shoki, handwritten by Juichirō himself.


30 The document is transcribed in Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō, 202–203.
Kōrin’s father Sōken—in separate articles in 1915. In 1934, the Archives left the ownership of the Konishi and were split among the Osaka Municipal Museum of Art and a private collector. The private collection portion was later acquired by the Agency for Cultural Affairs and, in 2001, it was entrusted to the Kyoto National Museum, where it remains to this day. Aimi and Fukui’s publications were followed in 1936 by Tanaka Kisaku (1885–1945) who introduced sketches from the Archives, before Yamane Yūzō (1919–2001) provided the first comprehensive publication of their content in 1962. More recently, Kano Hiroyuki has published the Archives’ sketches, stencils, and painting studies in an annotated edition.

The Konishi Archives reveal the complex mechanisms behind artistic practice and the personal motivations of an early modern painter. Sketches of medieval handscrolls and screens illustrate how Kōrin delved into his country’s past to formulate his own style. At the same time, he studied the oeuvre of more recent artists, such as Tawaraya Sōtatsu (d. ca. 1640) and Hon’ami Kōetsu. In addition, Kōrin resorted to yamato-e, Buddhist works, and Kano-style paintings to draft his distinctive, eclectic expressions. The Archives also preserve a large number of lacquer designs, textile patterns, and possible sketches for ceramics.


32 A number of letters and sketches from the Konishi Archives are scattered across different other private collections and museums, such as the Yamato Bunkakan, Nara.


34 Kano Hiroyuki, Kōrin geijutsu no kisō: Konishi-ke kyūzō shiryō o chūshin ni, Nihon no bijutsu 462 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 2004).
Since paper was a valuable commodity and Kōrin appears to have looked after his correspondence carefully, the Archives preserve a large number of private letters, some with incriminating content. Messages to and from a woman named Suma, one of Kōrin’s affairs, disclose a cold-hearted side of the artist’s personality as he tried to evade responsibility for an illegitimate child.35 Other documents unveil more intimate details of the artist. We learn how Kōrin seems to have long suffered from periodic abdominal pains. In an undated entry in his personal notebook (oboegaki), he records a concoction prepared to treat his illness.

[...] I have been suffering from colic pains in my stomach for many years, so I received this remedy from Arima Jōhaku. [Dissolve] the following ingredients in sencha (steeped tea) water and immediately add plenty of honey.

Three bu36 of chestnuts
Six bu of a potion from Chinese peonies
Two pieces of jujube

Add two bu of ginger to the tea water. [...]37

The Archives additionally contain numerous official pieces of correspondence on artistic and financial matters, making them a crucial source of reference for scholars since the nineteenth century.

35 See Appendix Documents II / 5 to II / 8.
36 One bu equals circa 0.34 grams.
37 In his notes, Kōrin wrote down a second recipe for medication against stomach aches. The ailment seems to have bothered him to a considerable degree. See Yamane, Kōnishi-ke kyūzō, 183.
38 Appendix Document II / 22.
century. Yet, in spite of their accessibility in published form, research has been confined to a select number of documents, a practice that ignores the breadth and profundity of the Archives’ content. This dissertation attempts to overcome such limitations by providing the first complete translation of documents on and by Kōrin in the hope of drawing a more comprehensive picture of this extraordinary painter and personality.

The Study of Kōrin

Although Western scholars have devoted limited attention to Kōrin, Japanese art historians have focused extensively on the artist. Pioneering research on the life and work of Kōrin began in the early nineteenth century with the painter Sakai Hōitsu, who studied and exhibited Kōrin’s oeuvre. In his research, Hōitsu concentrated mainly on the technical aspects of Kōrin’s works with the aim of infusing his own paintings with their characteristics. He also copied Kōrin’s paintings extensively. Around 1815 and in 1826, respectively, Hōitsu published two printed catalogues of Kōrin’s works. These books, entitled Kōrin hyakuzu (One Hundred Paintings by Kōrin), provide a much-used source of reference to modern scholars. Kōrin hyakuzu impacted the oeuvre of painters and affected the collecting practices of institutions like the MOA Museum, Atami, which continues to value Hōitsu’s assessments of the authenticity of works.

The interest in Kōrin’s art continued throughout the nineteenth century. Compendia such as Kōrin shinsen hyakuzu (Newly Selected Hundred Pictures by Kōrin), published by the Hōitsu pupil Ikeda Koson (1801–1866) in 1864, built on Hōitsu’s efforts to research and publish Kōrin’s works. Koson’s book carries Kōrin’s artistic memory into the modern age, where it served to

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39 Hōitsu was the subject of two recent exhibitions in Japan and the United States. See Matsuo Tomoko and Okano Tomoko, eds., Sakai Hōitsu to Edo Rinpa no zenbō (Tokyo: Kyūryūdō, 2011) and McKelway, Silver Wind.
inspire artists like Kamisaka Sekka (1866–1942). Sekka was part of a movement that turned to Kōrin to discover early modern styles in order to adapt them to modern visual expressions.

The modern period in Japan witnessed a significant turn to Kōrin, instigated in part by Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908) and other American and European connoisseurs, such as Louis Gonse (1846–1921), who helped introduce Kōrin to the Japonisme movement. Their lead was followed by Japanese scholars, namely Fukui Rikichirō and Aimi Kōu, whose groundbreaking archival work uncovered many of the primary sources that still form the foundations for our understanding of Kōrin.

In the postwar period, meticulous research by Yamane Yūzō, Murashige Yasushi, and Kōno Motoaki, among others, has introduced many additional primary sources, while their connoisseurial expertise and biographic research have provided an invaluable groundwork for further inquiry. The concerted efforts of Yamane and his graduate students at the University of Tokyo to transcribe the majority of the Konishi Archives were preceded by a special edition of the journal Yamato bunka in 1960, where Kamimichi Setsuko published her transliteration of passages on Kōrin and his brothers in the Nijō-ke nainai gobansho hinamiki (Daily Records of the Nijō Family; Keiō University Library, Tokyo), the official journal of the Nijō family of

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40 For instance, Gonse writes: “[…] Kōrin was the greatest impressionist, and the greatest among Japanese artists. […]”, placing the premodern painter on par with Western art, an assessment that contributed to Kōrin’s popularity among modern collectors in Japan and abroad. Louis Gonse, L’Art Japonais (Paris: A. Quantin, 1886), 205. Following Gonse’s example, Fenollosa also lauded Kōrin and Kōetsu as “the true Japanese school of ‘impressionism.’” Ernest F. Fenollosa, Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art: An Outline History of East Asiatic Design (Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press, 2007), 497. Fenollosa’s book was originally published in 1921.

courtiers. Yamane and Kamimichi’s accomplishments in making these documents accessible have been crucial for future scholarship. This dissertation is indebted to these scholars.

In the post-war period, several compendia followed in quick succession. They include established and newly discovered works by Kōrin, as well as scholarship on him and his impact on later painters. Most notable here is a series of five volumes edited by Yamane, in addition to another collection of five books edited by Murashige Yasushi. Previously, Kōno Motoaki published his own study on Kōrin as part of the *Nihon bijutsu kaiga zenshū* (Anthology of Japanese Painting) series. These tomes have become standard reference works symbolic of postwar scholars’ efforts to contextualize Kōrin—a largely independent artist without allegiance to a single tradition or school—as part of a larger network of painters. During the eighteenth century, Kōrin was grouped with artists as diverse as the medieval ink painter and curator of the shogunal collection Sōami (d. 1525), the early Edo period monk and painter Shōkadō Shōjō (1582–1639), and the non-conformist painter Hanabusa Itochō (1652–1724). By the end of the eighteenth century, he was increasingly linked with Tawaraya Sōtatsu. For example, Kuwayama Gokushū (1746–1799) in *Kaiji higen* (Humble Words on Painting Matters), published in 1799, declares:


[...] In recent times, there are Sōtatsu and Kōrin, both [of whom paint in] the same fashion. Sōtatsu’s floral [paintings] have heavy color applied and possess antique meaning (koi). Moreover, his boneless method is superior, simple, and excellent. There is genuineness in all of his [work] and, scrutinizing his method, [one understands that] his paintings possess spirit resonance (kiin). Kōrin’s figure and floral [paintings] altogether possess antique spirit (kosetsu) […]

A similar quest for finding a relationship between Kōrin and Sōtatsu continues in modern scholarship. Such categorization has its pitfalls, but it provided a useful framework to make sense of a painter, who presented scholars with a variety of problems. On the one hand, Kōrin’s art was conservative and adhered to the retrospective approach in art-making that was desired by early modern commentators. On the other hand, he was progressive enough to formulate a distinctive visual language. Furthermore, Kōrin did not follow in the footsteps of anyone’s atelier and, as far as we know, failed to establish his own lineage. As a result, scholars in the premodern and modern ages struggled to typecast Kōrin, and his stylistic similarities to Sōtatsu provided the most promising avenue to do so.47

Following the peak of research during the decades following the Second World War, the pace of scholarship on Kōrin decelerated and was often confined to reiterations of earlier work. In the past couple of decades, however, scholars such as Nakamachi Keiko, Nakabe Yoshitaka, Tamamushi Satoko, Igarashi Kōichi, Emura Tomoko, and Noguchi Takeshi have succeeded in adding new facets to our understanding of the artist. Nakamachi, a student of Yamane, has

46 Ibid., 91–92.

47 Sōtatsu and his studio also collaborated with Hon’ami Kōetsu, Kōrin’s great-granduncle. Sōtatsu may have married one of Kōetsu’s sisters. See Aimi Kōu, “Hon’ami keizu no kōsatsu,” in Aimi Kōu shū 1 (Musashimurayamashi: Seishōdō Shoten, 1985), 42–43. Aimi’s research was originally published in 1958 in the journal Hōshun.
contributed much to our knowledge of the literary content in Kōrin’s work, while Nakabe’s formal approach sought to draw connections within Kōrin’s oeuvre and in relation to that of other painters, such as Sōtatsu, his pupils, and artists following in Kōrin’s footsteps. Nakabe, taking up Yamane’s early lead, analyzed the relationship between Kōrin’s earliest paintings and the early seventeenth-century monk painter Shōkadō Shōjō.48 Tamamushi’s research has focussed on Kōrin’s posthumous reception from the eighteenth century to the present day.49 Igarashi, a historian, built on Kamimichi’s work on the Nijō journal by transcribing and analyzing records on Kōrin.50 His work on the Nijō-ke nainai gobansho hinamiki and Sanbōin hinamiki (Daily Records of Sanbōin), the priestly journals of the Daigoji sub-temple Sanbōin, proved essential to this thesis. In various articles, Emura Tomoko has highlighted different aspects of Kōrin’s work and life, namely the artist’s painting education and the role of the Noh theater in his works, an effort where she built on previous research by Kōno.51 Emura and the art historian Uchida Tokugo also contributed to the study of Kōrin’s lacquer work, a research topic pioneered by Yamane.52 Noguchi has explored Kōrin’s use of the early modern network of art

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50 Igarashi Kōichi, Kinsei Kyōto gadan no retto waaku: chūmonnushī to eshi (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2010).


dealers to sell his works, in addition to reexamining the relationship between the masterpieces *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi*. In the process, Noguchi discovered a previously ignored connection in the use of patterns in both works, a subject that we will explore in the second chapter. In English, John Carpenter has written an account of Kōrin’s life and artists following in his footsteps in the catalogue accompanying a recent exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

These scholars have demonstrated the need for reassessing lacunae in earlier scholarship, which often concentrated on introducing newly discovered artworks and contextualizing known ones. This focus left a significant body of primary sources untouched, a fact that has hampered a thorough understanding of Kōrin as a person and as an artist. Recent scholarship largely advanced the study of Kōrin by reconsidering known existing sources, such as artworks and primary documents, that have been ignored by earlier scholars. By placing such references in new contextual frameworks, researchers have been able to create an increasingly tactile understanding of Kōrin, an effort to which this dissertation hopes to contribute.

The thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach in presenting the first study that takes into account the full breadth of Kōrin’s oeuvre, both in terms of artistic media and cultural influences. I attempt to elucidate Kōrin’s work as an intricate amalgam of different aspects of cultural meaning—poetry, Noh theater, materials, genres, and technique—which contributed to the extraordinary breadth of his paintings. The dissertation fuses close reading of Kōrin’s paintings

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with biographical information contained in the Konishi Archives in order to draw a comprehensive picture of this extraordinary person and artist. In the process, Kōrin will emerge as a painter who constantly tested the boundaries of genres and the definition of early modern painting.

**Dissertation Structure**

With the aim of uncovering practices of art-making in early modern Japan, the dissertation takes a chronological approach and analyzes key stages of Kōrin’s life and work. It begins with his initial steps as a painter in the 1690s and ends with his turn towards iron-oxide paintings on ceramics around the 1710s.

The first chapter examines Kōrin’s earliest surviving works, a screen painting depicting the twelve months, as well as two hanging scrolls with figure paintings in ink, which illustrate how the artist was immersed in court circles and their idealization of the medieval past. Salon culture’s focus on assemblages of objects instilled Kōrin with a particular awareness of the communicative faculties of artworks with one another and their beholders. As a result, the works divulge their layers of cultural meaning through interaction with different agents—people, objects, and ideas.

I examine two of Kōrin’s most important screen paintings, *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi*, in the second chapter. By drawing from the artist’s devotion to his ancestor Hon’ami Kōetsu and the complex layers of cultural references embedded in lacquer designs, I analyze how absence patterns (*rusu moyō*, or *rusu mon’yō*) may have inspired the visual language of works like *Irises*. In an attempt to elucidate the complex processes of transferability in early modern art-making, I
also refer to a set of ceramic dishes by Kenzan, whose decor is related to the Noh theater. Here, I propose a chromatic connection between *Irises* and iris flowers as they appear in the Noh play *Kakitsubata*.

The third chapter traces Kōrin’s appropriation of a specific technique, *tarashikomi* (lit. “dripping in”), as a means to forge a local identity associated with the ancient capital of Kyoto. The artist engaged in a diversified dialogue with the material qualities of his painting media. Ink in particular supplied him with a versatile means for reevaluating established notions of that material. Kōrin employed *tarashikomi* to gain elite patronage in Edo, the shogunal seat of power. A painterly tool that combined accident and calculation, *tarashikomi* enabled Kōrin to display his artistic prowess while at the same time reaffirming his personal identification with Kyoto.

The final chapter deals with Kōrin’s last artistic innovation when he transferred the aesthetics of the ink medium to ceramic decor. Kōrin created numerous examples of so-called *sabi-e*, works in iron oxide on square ceramic vessels that emulate ink paintings. In the process, he created simulacra of conventional paintings in ink on paper in the ceramic medium that expanded the paradigm of ink to include an entirely new material component. This move fused two previously unrelated materials and expanded the meaning of ink in early modern Japan.

Through these chapters, I investigate the processes at work in early modern artistic production. Kōrin’s cross-referencing of different artistic media and materials provided the foundations for new forms of visual expression that frequently transcended established definitions of genres and the cultural role of artworks. Kōrin’s oeuvre includes the full range of the early modern arts. In this way, his life and work offer a lens through which to grasp the complex system of the early modern arts. By making extensive use of his education in literature
and performance, Kōrin added a profound complexity to his material eclecticism and stylistic versatility. We will see that Kōrin instigated an unprecedented tendency towards eclipsing the boundaries of genres, style, and materials, which gradually came to be at the core of early modern art-making. In so doing, Kōrin expanded the ramifications of the act of painting, a revolutionary move that has formed the bedrock of his popularity up to the present day.
Chapter One: The Beginnings of a Painter

This chapter analyzes three of Kōrin’s earliest known paintings: two hanging scrolls, Sōgi (Fig. 1.1) and Hotei Playing Kemari (Fig. 1.2), and a pair of folding screens entitled Poetic Meanings of the Twelve Months (hereafter Twelve Months; Fig. 1.3), all produced around the mid- to late 1690s.¹ The works echo Kōrin’s initial artistic training and exemplify an important part of the intellectual groundwork on which he built his oeuvre thereafter.² The paintings embody the eclectic cultural backdrop that formed the basis for Kōrin’s continuous search for new interpretations of old norms. They introduce his initial contact with the culture, namely poetry and tea culture (chanoyu), and painting modes associated with the court during the first half of the early modern period. In this context, Sōgi and Hotei Playing Kemari illustrate Kōrin’s early study of ink and how he turned to the brushwork of the early seventeenth-century monk painter Shōkadō Shōjō. The Twelve Months screens, on the other hand, reveal Kōrin’s initial exposure to the Kano school and show how the artist made the work as an artistic response to Kyoto-based Kano modes. Kōrin’s earliest pieces reflect the devotion to traits of medieval and contemporaneous culture among the early modern aristocracy, allowing us a grasp how the painter adapted these aspects as part of his own artistic and personal identity.


² The work stands in line with later paintings, such as his Birds and Flowers of the Twelve Months after Teika (Seikadō Bunko Art Museum, Tokyo), and works by contemporaries, namely his brother Kenzan, and members of the Kyoto-based branch of the Kano atelier.
I. An Aspiring Artist

Today, Kōrin is best known for his vibrantly colored flower paintings. However, less well known is the fact that he began his career working with the most readily available and inexpensive medium at hand: ink. Korin’s earliest portrait of the *renge* poet and literary commentator Sōgi (1421–1502) and his monochromatic hanging scroll of the lucky god Hotei playing kickball (*kemari*) set the stage for the artist’s perennial engagement with the faculties of ink and small-format paintings. The works formed the stylistic foundations for most of Kōrin’s subsequent figure paintings—he continued to paint Hotei, other auspicious images, and literary figures in substantial numbers—demonstrating the remarkable consistency in his work.

**Early Steps in Ink**

A conventional, oft-painted subject like Sōgi presented Kōrin with a combination of guidance, possibilities, and a need for restraint. The long tradition of portraits of the poet and his cultural prestige heightened the inevitable pressure to adhere to expectations while at the same time, like any tradition, it afforded the artist an opportunity to find his own position in it. In Kōrin’s painting, Sōgi, white-bearded and wearing a monk’s stole (*kesa*), resting his left arm on a prominently placed armrest, emanates the gravitas of an ancient poet. He turns his bald head to the left and holds up an oval fan in his right hand. Kōrin depicts Sōgi as an aging monk with deep furrows on his forehead and gentle eyes gazing into the distance, as if reminiscing about a verse or a past memory, appropriate to Sōgi’s role as one of the most important poets from the medieval period onward. The work is mainly done in monochrome ink, with faint touches of shell-white (*gofun*) for the beard, stole, ribs of the fan, and for the undergarment covering the
poet’s outspread legs. Kōrin also used small dots of white to suggest stubbles of hair on the side of Sōgi’s head, creating the rugged air of a nonchalant recluse who has forsaken the minutiae of worldly existence.

Although Kōrin relies predominantly on white and ink in the portrait of Sōgi, he also added tiny specks of brighter colors: crimson pigment for the poet’s lips and azurite for the lower joint of the fan. The deliberate inclusion of a red hue for the lips might reflect Kōrin’s early exposure to narrative paintings. He produced numerous undated sketches of medieval illustrated handscrolls that indicate close study of polychromatic painting practices and techniques associated with the indigenous tradition of yamato-e (Fig. 1.4).³

The consistent irregularity in brush strokes in the portrait suggests that Kōrin sought to give his painting an aloof casualness that befitted Sōgi’s pose. Betraying his thorough artistic education, Kōrin applied thin lines of light azurite beneath the ink strokes that form the kesa in a manner that suggests spatial depth. A similar layering of strokes was used for the armrest, with ink built up onto brown pigment to create a woodier surface. These attempts illustrate the perpetual duality of abstraction and representation at work within the majority of Kōrin’s works. He tried to create depth, yet painted Sōgi’s figure with an emphatic flatness, a signature feature that Kōrin would employ in many of his paintings.

Sōgi contains an inscription above Kōrin’s painting. Although unsigned, the late Edo-period connoisseur of painting and calligraphy, Kohitsu Ryōetsu (dates unknown), identified the inscription’s writer as Shōren’innomiya Sonshō (1651–1694), prince abbot of the temple

³ Kano, Kōrin geijutsu no kisō, 21–26.
Shōren’in and a member of the Shōren’in calligraphy lineage.⁴ A comparison of the inscription with other documented examples of Sonshō’s writing confirms Ryōetsu’s appraisal. Thus, Kōrin must have made the portrait sometime before or in 1694, the year that Sonshō died. Given that Kōrin changed the characters for spelling his name to the ones used in this painting around 1691/92, we can speculate that the work falls into the two-year span between 1692 and 1694. Yamane has concluded that Kōrin’s portrait of Sōgi predates another portrait that he made of Sōgi’s pupil, Botanka Shōhaku (1443–1527; Fig. 1.5), by one or two years, and that both portraits were produced shortly before Hotei Playing Kemari.⁵ This would make Sōgi Kōrin’s earliest extant painting, and an exemplar of the artist’s assimilation of Shōkadō’s style during the 1690s and Kōrin’s initial network of patrons.⁶

While Sōgi reiterates the age-old unison of image and text in Japanese art, in Hotei Playing Kemari, on the other hand, the presence of the kickball in the upper portion of the picture makes inscribing impossible. In fact, the ball acts as a prohibition against adding

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⁵ This triad of Kōrin’s earliest extant paintings each bear the same name, “Koresuke,” impressed in two different seals. This suggests that the three works were painted within a relatively close time span. “Koresuke” was one of Kōrin’s first aliases, and it appears in 1687 on documents relating to his inheritance. Kenzan used a similar pseudonym, “Koremitsu” 惟允, suggesting that the first idiom was common among the Ogata. Sōgi and Botanka Shōhaku each bear a square intaglio seal reading “Koresuke” and Hotei Playing Kemari has a cauldron-shaped relief seal with the same name. To write “Koresuke,” Kōrin used two sets of characters, 惟富 and 惟亮, at around the same time. The former appears in a seal Kōrin used on an itemized chart of his inheritance, dated to 1687 and in an agreement with Nakamura Kuranosuke (1668–1730) to take in his daughter for education, dated 1702. See Appendix Documents II / 13 to II / 15.

The same document also contains the latter characters in the form of a cypher (kaō). This indicates that Kōrin used different names inconsistently and not during fixed intervals, complicating the creation of a chronology of his works. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 59.

⁶ The dating is generally accepted. See Kōno, Ogata Kōrin, 110. Yamane, “Sōgi zō,” 24. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 4–5. In another article, Yamane Yūzō dates the Sōgi portrait to around 1693. Using Sonshō’s death in 1694 as his upper margin, he also took into account the style of Kōrin’s signatures and seals in this painting and two other early figure paintings by the artist. See Yamane Yūzō, Kōrin kenkyū ni, Yamane Yūzō chosakushū 4 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1997), 184–185.
anything external to the work. This parodic replacement of a poetic inscription is in line with the nonchalant attitude often found in *chanoyu* and other segments of early modern visual culture.\(^7\)

Kōrin painted *Hotei Playing Kemari* entirely in ink on an emphatically vertical sheet of paper, a feature often used in works made to fit the *tokonoma* niche at tea gatherings. The science of adhering to this preconceived space brought about drastic measures of cutting artworks into small, often rectangular or vertical formats.\(^8\) New paintings, like *Sōgi* or *Hotei Playing Kemari*, on the other hand, were already made with these aesthetic considerations in mind. The relatively compact format of Kōrin’s *Sōgi* represents the quintessential dimensions for *tokonoma* displays. The blithe air of the painting is the result of meticulous choreographing in which every inch of the work follows the painter’s intentions.

Four protagonists make up the painting: Hotei, the monk; his omnipresent, gigantic bag; the *kemari* ball, bouncing high in the air; and the signature, vaporously emerging from the cauldron-shaped seal beneath it. The small ball floating above Hotei echoes the enlarged bag beneath as well as the figure’s round head and protruding belly, his other trademarks. With this stacking of circles, the picture aligns four spherical shapes along the central vertical axis of the image, leading the eye upward towards the ball fixated by Hotei. Kōrin employed repetitions of forms as a visual tool in many masterpieces throughout his career, such as his pair of screens

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\(^7\) Tsuji Nobuo has argued for “playfulness” to be an inherent characteristic of Japanese art. While my analysis does not follow his generalizing notion, other art historians in Japan have continued to seek the unusual in Japanese premodern art. See Tsuji Nobuo, *Playfulness in Japanese Art* (Lawrence, Kan.: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, 1986).

\(^8\) Tsukamoto Maromitsu described how Chinese paintings, which adhered to a different aesthetic than Japanese works, were frequently trimmed to accommodate a preference for verticality. See his “Frictions in Universal Contexts and Individual Values: Chinese Paintings at the Toyokan,” *Orientations* 44, no. 5 (June 2013): 40–47.
Irises (Fig. 1.6). Hotei Playing Kemari establishes the use of visual echoes as a compositional device at a very early point in Kōrin’s oeuvre.

The color theme in Hotei Playing Kemari pairs gray and black ink hues. Applied fast, though with precision and forceful rhythm, the same tone of gray was used for much of Hotei’s physique, the bag, and the ball. The darker strokes in the picture—using the same hue as the signature—were added last. Hotei Playing Kemari in its entirety is as much a picture of Hotei as it is a personal statement, asserting Kōrin’s painterly inventiveness. In this way, it is stylistically and conceptually close to Sōgi.

Painted at the height of the Genroku era—a time of exuberance, whimsy, and visual experimentations—the commission of Hotei Playing Kemari allowed Kōrin an opportunity to play with an established subject matter. The elongated, slender vertical format of Hotei Playing Kemari takes up the traditional format of the shigajiku, which Kōrin wittily deconstructs in his painting. A product of the monastic Zen culture during the fourteenth and fifteen centuries, this painting genre, fusing the written word with elusive imagery by pairing a painting with inscriptions, was part of tea’s visual canon (Fig. 1.7).

Kōrin exaggerates the verticality of shigajiku by creating an elongated, narrow space. The light-hearted nature that is part of the tradition of Hotei paintings includes a tradition of whimsical play with dense religious meanings and the gravitas of older painting modes that found its way into Kōrin’s paintings. Each Hotei painting by Kōrin, and Hotei Playing Kemari in

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9 See Chapter Two.

particular, forms an idiosyncratic digest of renowned styles of past painters, religiosity, and worldly meaning, all of which would be easily discernible by audiences similar to Kōrin.¹¹

Besides this repetition of round shapes, found in the spherical features mentioned above, the painting relies on a predominance of curved brushstrokes. The three-fold line of Hotei’s garment above his waist is not dissimilar to the fastening of the bag and can be found in Kōrin’s later paintings of Hotei and other famous sages. For example, a small work in ink of a seated Hotei, now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art—another painting likely made for use in a tea context—recalls the basic features of Hotei Playing Kemari, though its brushwork is even quicker and more abbreviated. (Fig. 1.8)

Signed “Jakumei Kōrin” 寂明光琳 (lit. “Solemn Brightness”) together with a “Dōsū” seal, both used during the last ten years of Kōrin’s life, the Metropolitan Museum piece postdates Hotei Playing Kemari by at least a decade.¹² Kōrin made the Metropolitan Hotei at a time when his paintings were in higher demand and, naturally, his hand had assumed something of an automatism by repeatedly painting the same subject. This resulted in an intuitive quality often found in later Hotei paintings by Kōrin.

All of Kōrin’s paintings of Hotei and many other figure paintings in ink draw from the artist’s early exposure to the style of Shōkadō Shōjō, a monk painter of the early seventeenth century, whose works were desired collectibles in tea circles. Sōgi and Hotei Playing Kemari


¹² Kōrin had the pseudonym “Dōsū” divined in 1704, presumably in preparation for his departure for Edo that year. Most of his paintings produced there seem to bear seals with that name. See Chapter Three.
provide evidence for Kōrin’s first espousal of Shōkadō’s paintings and provided him with a blueprint for a large number of ink paintings throughout his life.

**Sources and Continuity**

The ink medium dominates Kōrin’s earliest extant works. By adopting the subject matter and brushwork of Shōkadō Shōjō, Kōrin used the painter as a touchstone for imbuing works with modes of the Muromachi period (1336–1573). Shōkadō referred to older paintings by combining different styles rather than by quoting specific painters. In his earliest figure paintings, Kōrin on the other hand, worked with a visual language associated almost solely with that of Shōkadō. Among all of Kōrin’s works, Sōgi is the most direct comment on works by the early seventeenth-century painter. The brushwork used for the dark outer garment (rai) worn by Sōgi, done entirely in ink, reproduces the curved parallel layers of strokes that are characteristic of Shōkadō’s monochrome paintings of Hotei, leading Kōrin also to employ them in *Hotei Playing Kemari* and later figure paintings in ink.

Kōrin’s choice of Shōkadō as his artistic model was fitting. The early Edo period painter was renowned for his expressive portraits. Oftentimes, Shōkadō rendered his sitters in poses similar to the one found in Kōrin’s portrait of Sōgi, a visual convention that pervades Japanese portraiture. The relaxed posture and characteristic furrow pattern of Sōgi’s face find their direct

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14 Xiaojin Wu has argued that Shōkadō emphatically turned his subjects into literati figures. This notion also befits Sōgi’s postmortem persona. Wu, “Innumerable Embodiments of Hotei,” 267–281.
parallel in several portraits by Shōkadō, who used similar brushwork in a self-portrait and in
depictions of contemporaries like Anrakuan Sakuden (1554–1642; Fig. 1.9), one of his close
acquaintances. In addition, Shōkadō himself is supposed to have painted several portraits of
Sōgi, but none survive.

Shōkadō joined the monastic service of the Takimotobō, a Shingon-school temple
attached to the Iwashimizu Hachimangū shrine near Osaka, at the age of seventeen, and held a
central role in Kyoto culture of the early Edo period. He was on close terms with many cultural
luminaries of his day. Posthumously associated with Konoe Nobutada (1565–1614) and Kōrin’s
great-granduncle Hon’ami Kōetsu as one of the so-called “Three Brushes of the Kan’ei
Era” (Kan’ei no sanpitsu), Shōkadō was also a much acclaimed calligrapher and a sought-after
painter. While at Takimotobō, he studied paintings associated with a wide range of Chinese and
Japanese masters of old. Takimotobō zōchō, a compendium of the temple’s treasure records, lists
works by the Song masters Muqi (J. Mokkei; late 13th century) and Liang Kai (J. Ryōkai; early
13th century), in addition to such domestic painters as Mokuan (ca. mid-14th century), Shūbun

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15 On Shōkadō’s self-portrait, see “Shōkadō Shōjō jiga zō kai,” Kokka 552 (November 1936): 318–323. The portraits
of Anrakuan Sakuden and Kobori Enshū (1579–1647) are included in Yamato Bunkakan, ed., Tokubetsuten Shōkadō

16 However, a lost work reproduced in a 1933 edition of the art historical journal Kokka shares very similar features
with both the portrait of of Anrakuan Sakuden and Kōrin’s Sōgi. “Shōkadō Shōjō hitsu Sōgi zō kai,” Kokka 506
(January 1933): 25.

17 Yamaguchi Kyōko, Shōkadō Shōjō to Takimoto-ryū no tenkai (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2011), 5

18 Among Shōkadō’s closest acquaintances were such illustrious names from the world of tea like Konoe Nobutada and
Konoe Nobuhiko (1599–1649); Kobori Enshū (1579–1647); Takuian Sōhō (1573–1646), head abbot of Daitokuji;
and Kōgetsu Sōgan (1574–1643), son of the wealthy Sakai tea practitioner and renga poet Tsuda Sōkyū (d. 1591).

(15th century), Sesshū (ca. 1420–1506), and Sesson (early 16th century), to whose works Shōkadō apparently had access to from around the Keichō era (1596–1615). Though few of these paintings may have been genuine, they nevertheless provided Shōkadō with references to an accepted meta-framework of these artists’ modes. Such a retrospective turn towards the medieval period and Song painters famed in Japan was common during Shōkadō’s time. Along with Kōrin’s ancestor Kōetsu, Shōkadō built the foundation for elite culture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century of which Kōrin was a major representative. With this cultural authority in mind, Kōrin may have set out to paint Sōgi and Hotei Playing Kemari. For Kōrin, Shōkadō served as a filter for absorbing medieval tastes and techniques into his own works.

Such portraits had been hung at gatherings since the medieval period, creating a quasi-religious context for poetry composition and stimulating poets to engage in engineering their afterlife; Sōgi himself is said to have overseen the archetype for his own portrait tradition. The oldest work, dated between 1489 and 1506, depicts a seated Sōgi in monk’s garb and, above the figure, are three shikishi, decorated square sheets of paper, with inscriptions by Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (1455–1537), a close acquaintance of Sōgi’s and a key member of late Muromachi poetry circles (Fig. 1.10). Sōgi, who died in 1502, might have had a say in the production of this portrait, since it was not unusual to exert some control of one’s own afterlife.

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23 For instance, Sanetaka ordered Tosa Mitsunobu (ca. 1434–ca. 1535) to sketch the courtier in situ, perhaps for a lost commemorative portrait.
Kōrin’s portrait is part of an artistic tradition that channeled the assimilation of historical figures like Sōgi into cultural memory. By creating commemorative idealizations of a person—hung at poetry gatherings, memorial services, or to seek individual inspiration—such works perpetuated both the historical and the idealized image of a person. Kōrin most likely made his Sōgi for a similar purpose, partly by drawing from a long tradition of portraits of poets. Ink provided Kōrin with an entire spectrum of possibilities for doing so. Rather than demonstrating a parsimonious decision, Kōrin’s choice of ink as the primary medium of his Sōgi portrait represents an intrinsic aspect of a seventeenth-century artist’s training and struggle to build a name for himself.

Kōrin remained consistent in his style of figure paintings and kept referring to Shōkadō in later works as well. For example, a hanging scroll in monochrome ink, depicting the writer Yoshida Kenkō (1283?–1352?), is close to Sōgi and Hotei Playing Kemari. (Fig. 1.11) Kōrin used the same blend of broad, curved strokes to depict Kenkō’s jacket and constantly modulating strokes for everything else in the painting as in his earliest figure paintings. The early medieval essayist gazes to his left just like Sōgi; the left arms of both figures rest on an object before them. Kenkō is depicted at nighttime, with a small paper lamp before his desk, perhaps immersed in writing part of his famous Tsurezuregusa (Essays in Idleness), a book which Hon’ami Kōetsu published in its first printed version in the early seventeenth century.24 Kenkō’s portrait bears the signature “Hokkyō Kōrin” 法橋光琳, along with the painter’s “Kansei” 謂聲 (lit. “Sound of the Ravine”) seal, a pseudonym he seems to have used during the first four or so years after

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receiving the *hokkyō* title in 1701. In the signature, Kōrin abbreviated the first character of his name in a manner that is close to his earlier paintings, suggesting that he painted Yoshida Kenkō’s portrait sometime within a five-year span after 1701.

Another work that uses a similar combination of Shōkadō’s style, in addition to the signature and seal found in the Kenkō painting is a depiction in light color and ink on silk of the Zen sages Kanzan and Jittoku (Fig. 1.12). Yamane dates the work to circa 1703. At the time that Kōrin painted *Yoshida Kenkō and Kanzan and Jittoku*, he embraced the style of Tawaraya Sōtatsu, resulting in a more watery application of ink. However, in his brushwork, Kōrin remained true to his early training. By relying on bold strokes in dark ink to render the outlines of lighter garments in his figures, as well as by employing dark patches for parts of their clothing, Kōrin illustrates how he made Shōkadō’s style a key feature of his figure paintings.

Kōrin is known as a painter who constantly strove for new forms of expression. He kept adding new elements to his style, creating a fusion of his early artistic training and his shifting exposure to other artworks. We can discern this dichotomy in a late work, possibly painted within the last five or so years of his life. (Fig. 1.13) The portrait depicts the Chinese statesman and calligrapher Huang Tingjian (1045–1105), a subject that Kōrin painted several times. Stylistically, the work represents Kōrin’s final advancement of his early studies of Shōkadō.

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25 Yamane argued that Kōrin used the “Kansei” seal until around 1704/05. He admits, however, that Kōrin may have used different seals simultaneously, making it difficult to pinpoint exact periods of usage. See Yamane, *Kōrin kenkyū ichi*, 119–123. *Hokkyō* (lit. “Dharma Bridge”) is an honorary, originally priestly, title bestowed upon accomplished painters by the imperial court. Kōrin received the title in 1701 and, as was customary, thereafter incorporated it into his signature.

26 Kōrin’s portrait of Nakamura Kuranosuke (Yamato Bunkakan) carries the “Kansei” seal. By way of its inscription, the work can be dated to 1704. In 1704, Kōrin had a different alias, “Dōsū,” divined, possibly for use in Edo between 1704 and circa 1709. It seems that the artist abandoned his use of “Kansei” within a year or two after he adopted the “Dōsū” seal. See Chapter Three.

27 Yamane, *Kōrin kenkyū ichi*, 123.
ubiquitous rendering of the facial features, with a furrowed forehead, modulating strokes for nose and ears, as well as the arched line and dot for the eyes in Huang Tingjian resembles those in Sōgi, reverberating Shōkadō’s particular style in portraits such as that of Anraku Sakuden. Also the expressive strokes used to build up the poet’s clothing reveal Kōrin’s early artistic training. As we shall see in Chapter Three, while in Edo from 1704 and after Kōrin fused his early education in ink techniques with his exposure to luminaries of medieval ink painting, namely Sesshū. Paintings like Huang Tingjian illustrate how Kōrin kept developing the stylistic foundations he had studied from Shōkadō. The sequence of Kenkō, Kanzan and Jittoku, and Huang Tingjian illuminates the evolution from Kōrin’s early artistic education to developing a distinctive visual language on the basis of Shōkadō’s style.

In sum, these figure paintings—extending over a period of roughly twenty years, encompassing the entirety of Kōrin’s career as a painter—reveal the artist as a complex individual. Kōrin was both a technician and an innovator, attentive to the varying tastes of his patrons. In his early days as an artist, Kōrin and his benefactors looked to Shōkadō’s early seventeenth century to discover and use an even more distant past, that of the medieval period. Kōrin did so with an eye towards his earliest clients, the upper reaches of the court aristocracy, who embraced set stylistic references from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In this way, Kōrin’s earliest body of works comprises of a blend of modes that were popular in elite circles of his time. They provide a glimpse of Kōrin’s initial training in the arts, aspects of which determined his oeuvre throughout his life.
Becoming an Artist

Around the mid-1690s, the period when Kōrin painted his first surviving works, he resolved to make the arts the basis of his life.\(^{28}\) Produced against the backdrop of Kōrin’s comparatively late—he was in his late thirties—but forceful entry into the art world, the works reflect his earliest exposure to the aesthetics of the court and Kyoto’s urban culture.\(^{29}\) These influences would form the two guiding principles for much of his career—cultural erudition and a keen awareness of artistic trends of his time.

All of his earliest paintings are signed “Kōrin hitsu” (“painted by Kōrin”), indicating that they were produced prior to his receipt of the honorary hokkyō title in 1701. The most common interpretation, proposed by Yamane Yūzō, is that paintings bearing this signature precede the year when Kōrin received the hokkyō title and began using a confusing variety of signatures and pseudonyms. The most common signatures are “Hokkyō Kōrin” or “Seisei Kōrin” 青々光琳 (lit. “Verdant Kōrin”), the latter of which, although used to a lesser degree, is affixed to key works by Kōrin.\(^{30}\) Other signatures include “Jakumei Kōrin” which, along with “Seisei” are pseudonyms suggested to Kōrin by his brother Kenzan and reflect the latter’s erudite knowledge of Chinese classical literature. In his earliest paintings—Sōgi, Botanka Shōhaku, and Hotei Playing Kemari

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\(^{28}\) In 1959, Yamane Yūzō published a chronology of Kōrin’s works that remains largely accepted today. On the basis of their seals and signatures, he argued how the four works represent Kōrin’s earliest oeuvre. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 59–60. In addition to the four signed works, two screens depicting autumn grasses (private collection, Japan; Suntory Museum, Tokyo) are considered part of Kōrin’s earliest oeuvre. These works, however, are unsigned and stylistically eclectic, making them difficult to date. See, for instance, Yamane Yūzō, “Kōrin hitsu Akikusa zu byōbu ni tsuite,” Bijutsu kenkyū 206 (September 1959): 26–35.

\(^{29}\) The thirties was also the common age when promising courtiers, one of Kōrin’s main group of friends, began participating in prestigious poetry circles. Thus, upper-class men of that age were considered intellectually capable of engaging in the rarified realm of the arts, a perception that differed sharply from that of the younger ages at which professional artists typically began working on commissions. See Shimazu Tadao, “Kinsei waka no sekai,” in Kinsei no waka, Waka bungaku köza 8 (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1994), 12.

\(^{30}\) Paintings with a “Seisei Kōrin” signature are, for instance, Red and White Plums (MOA Museum) and Irises at Yatsuhashi (Metropolitan Museum of Art).
Kōrin used one of his early aliases, “Koresuke” 惟亮, which appears in documents dating to the 1690s. Later, with different characters, works like the Irises screens bear a round “Koresuke” seal (also read “Iryō” 伊亮). A square seal reading “Koresuke” is affixed to Sōgi and Botanka Shōhaku; a cauldron-shaped variant with “Koresuke” is found on Hotei Playing Kemari; and a square seal reading “Sekisui” 積翠 (lit. “Abundant Green”) appears on each panel of the Twelve Months screens, enabling a dating to before circa 1701.31

It is no coincidence that Kōrin’s earliest painting commissions accumulate around the last decade of the seventeenth century. His choice to become a painter was in large part necessary for survival. His father Sōken, who died in 1687, had left the family business and its fortune to Kōrin’s elder brother Tōzaburō. In good faith, Sōken bequeathed Kōrin two mansions, artworks, and invoices for money lent to daimyo, which he hoped would bring his son financial security.32 However, most of these credits remained unpaid. In addition, between 1687 and 1696, Kōrin fathered at least four illegitimate sons with four different women. One of these affairs caused a scandal that ruptured Kyoto’s upper bourgeoisie. In 1688, a woman named Tsune launched a lawsuit against Kōrin with the district elders.33 As was the case with some of these illegitimate children (Kōrin later had more after he was married), the artist tried to evade responsibility, but Tsune sought compensation. Being the daughter of an urban merchant family of similar rank to the Ogata, she demanded a financially devastating fine. Kōrin was forced to hand over a mansion

31 See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 63–64. Among Kōrin’s ceramic paintings in iron oxide on vessels made by his brother Kenzan, several more samples of the “Kōrin hitsu” signature, often similarly abbreviated as in the four earliest paintings above, survive. They form a separate group of analysis, covered in Chapter Four.

32 See Appendix Documents I / 1 to I / 6.

33 See Appendix Documents II / 3 and II / 4.
and significant payments of silver to cover the costs of raising the child, in addition to furnishings for the property into which Tsune planned to move. The event decimated the inheritance that Kōrin had received just a year before.

Love escapades, irresponsible spending, and un-repaid invoices depleted Kōrin’s inheritance in less than a decade; heavy borrowing of money followed. In two letters dated to around 1695 and 1696, Kenzan advised his elder brother on how to handle his current financial crisis. Kenzan had turned to high urban authorities for advice: the district’s council of elders (the central authority for jurisdiction) and several fellow members of the merchant class were consulted.

To Kōrin [From] Shinsei [Kenzan]

This requires your prompt attention.
I went to solicit advice from Kōan in the matter of the Mitake [clan?]. Both are now soliciting counsel from the district’s elders. We should receive a reply in the next days.
Also, on our behalf, Sōin informed Dōju about the details [of your situation]. Tomorrow, I will head for Takagamine to ask for more advice. I met with Jizaemon recently to discuss the issue of Zeze [domain?]. Since all this is such an unusual affair, we need to watch how the situation is developing.
First, I would like to see the invoices for the amounts of silver borrowed by you. This way, we can avoid inconsistencies in your ledgers. To my knowledge, the amount of silver [we talked about] is recorded on a separate sheet. Please let me take a look at it. Once again, please do tell me your thoughts [on your money problem]. The problem is not solved yet. I’ll [take a look at] the invoice that I have here with me for the very first four kan [of your debt]. Please think carefully again about everything I have said here and reply with your thoughts within two days. And, I beg you not to lose your ledgers.

Third month, eleventh day Shinsei (cypher)

光琳様 深省

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34 The letters are undated but, given their content, Yamane suggested they probably date to around the 1690s, when Kōrin experienced his most severe financial hardship. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 31–32. See Appendix Documents II / 9 and II / 10.

35 This might be a reference to one of many unpaid daimyo debts accumulated by Kōrin’s father and forefathers.
In a stern but amicable tone, Kōrin’s worried brother struggled to find him a way out of his pecuniary malaise, first by sifting through Kōrin’s complete accounts and reminding his brother of keeping receipts for lending and borrowing money, reflecting the wild fluctuation of Kōrin’s finances at the time. Both letters evince how Kōrin lacked substantial income around the mid-1690s—a significant factor if we consider that he took up painting in earnest around that time.

Concurrently, *Nijō-ke nainai gobansho hinamiki* repeatedly mentions the Ogata brothers Tōzaburō, Kōrin, and Kenzan bringing painted folding fans as gifts to Nijō Tsunahira, a high-ranking aristocrat who would become one of Kōrin’s main benefactors. The repeated closing and opening of folding fans—a practice not used in Chinese-style fans by Kōrin which survive in larger numbers—increased the level of wear. The constant need to replenish such objects of daily use may explain the high frequency with which folding fans were used as gifts. In most entries of the Nijō records, the folding fans’ authorship is left unclear, though we can assume that they

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36 Appendix Document II / 9.
were often by Kōrin himself but, perhaps, unsigned. A year or so after Kōrin painted Sōgi, in 1695/02/14 the journal records the first definite mention of paintings by Kōrin.

As requested by the Second Princess, Ogata Kōrin handed over a box with five hanging scrolls with fans [carrying] paintings by him that are intended for Her Majesty [retired empress Shinjōsaimon’in].

女の院様江掛物扇子亀包五本緒方光琳絵被進之女二宮様江被願遺也

Up-and-coming painters often used fans as a means to introduce their skills to prospective clients. The small format and practicality of fans made them ideal presents within the complex gift culture of the Edo period, and Tsunahira ordered them for this purpose. The aristocrat acted as an intermediary between the Second Princess (his wife) and her mother, empress Shinjōsaimon’in (1653–1712). The princess used Kōrin’s fans as gifts to her mother—a high honor that reflects Kōrin’s personal status among Kyoto’s court society and the value his paintings had achieved already by the mid-1690s.

Kōrin appeared first in the Nijō records in 1689, but only by the mid-1690s did he start to bring fans and other artworks as gifts. This coincided with his earliest surviving painting, Sōgi. Kōrin’s visits to Tsunahira’s residence peaked between 1694 and 1701, when he called on the

37 Shinjōsaimon’in, also called Fusako, was a sister of shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi’s wife, one of the customers of the Ogata’s family business, the Kariganeya. See Emura, “Neoi no bungen,” 273, 278. The entry in the Nijō journal was transcribed by Kamimichi Setsuko in her “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 47. See also Igarashi Kōichi, Kinsei Kyōto gadan no nettowaaku, 164.

38 One of Kōrin’s early sources of stylistic inspiration, Kano Eikei (1662–1702), the fourth head of the Kyoto-based Kano atelier, also brought a fan painted by him as a present to Nijō Tsunahira when they were first introduced. See Igarashi Kōichi, “Kano Eikei no kenkyū,” Kajima bijutsu zaidan nenpō18 (2000): 11.

39 Fans were an established gift—both as a means of painters to solicit clients and as courtesy presents—since at least the medieval period. See, for example, Quitman E. Phillips, The Practices of Painting in Japan, 1475–1500 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 44–46, 63–64.

40 Nijō-ke nainai gobansho hinamiki begins in 1688 and Kōrin probably interacted with the family earlier than that. His first mention involved a courtesy visit (onrei) with his brother Kenzan, suggesting a familiarity that was preceded by earlier encounters. For Kōrin’s earliest appearances in the Nijō records, see Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 43–45.
courtier dozens of times. Kōrin’s activities as a painter around that time brought forth a potpourri of works. In 1697, as a New Years present, Kōrin gave Tsunahira a set of six shikishi, further indicating what crucial role small-format works played in soliciting aristocratic sponsorship in his early days as a painter. These works, although their motifs remain unknown to us, and Kōrin’s talents in otogi (a form of animated storytelling) which Tsunahira requested dozens of times from Kōrin, seem to have paved a road to court patronage that eventually led to bigger commissions like Twelve Months.

Kōrin’s artistic renown within Tsunahira’s circle reached its height around the late 1690s. In 1700, he gave Tsunahira fifteen small containers of herbs as a wish for long life, decorated with pictures by Kōrin himself. The gift was part of a lavish event held to celebrate Tsunahira’s elevation to the court rank of General of the Left (sadaishō); Kōrin also presented a set of ten fans on the same occasion. The same year, Tsunahira, who frequently used Kōrin’s works as gifts, gave a friend a hand-painted box by Kōrin with sweets as a memento for an impending trip to Edo. At the same time, the artist was frequently invited to soirées at the Nijō estate. Clearly, by means of an eclectic array of artworks, Kōrin had gained considerable trust in court society by the late 1690s when he made Sōgi, Hotei Playing Kemari, Twelve Months, and his other early works.

Ibid., 46–54.

The visit and gift are recorded for 1697/01/04. Kōrin repeated the same New Year’s gift, this time a set of three fans, in 1701/01/04. Ibid., 48, 53.

Emura, “Neoi no bungen,” 279.

The reception was held on 1700/03/11. Kenzan presented a tea bowl at the same event. Kamimichi, Kōrin kankei shiryō, 52.

The friend departing to Edo, Kinoshita Kiyobei, appears several times in the Nijō records but his identity remains obscure. The farewell banquet is recorded for 1700/05/10. Ibid., 53.
As we will see in Chapter Three, Kōrin had a tendency to drop patrons when another benefactor appeared to be more lucrative. By 1701, once Kōrin had reached his goal of achieving the *hokkyō* title, he replaced his main sponsor Nijō Tsunahira with the high-ranking silver mint official Nakamura Kuranosuke (1668–1730). Kōrin’s marked focus on Tsunahira until 1701 suggests that he received substantial favors from the courtier, which eventually culminated in the *hokkyō* title. Tsunahira provided an entrée to court commissions, enabling us to assume that Kōrin produced his earliest extant works—all of them depicting subjects popular among the aristocracy—around 1694 to 1701.

Kōrin quickly garnered a steadfast audience at court. Private commissions from Tsunahira like these demonstrate how the painter’s cultural erudition and family heritage helped solicit early patronage by Kyoto’s nobility, whose regulated hierarchy proved to be both a privilege and a burden for the light-hearted Kōrin.

II. Early Networks of Patronage

Kōrin made his first paintings within the upscale culture of Kyoto. The offspring to the Kariganeya, a business that once had been the exclusive garment suppliers to the empress Tōfukumon’in, Kōrin associated with the highest ranks of the imperial aristocracy at least since his teenage years. It is not surprising, then, that Kōrin’s first sponsors hailed from the court and upper-class bourgeoisie. In his earliest commissions, Kōrin employed the gentlemanly arts, such as poetry and tea culture, as a means to accommodate his patrons’ cultural interests. In order to gain traction among elite salons, Kōrin adopted painting styles popular with courtiers while also drawing from the cultural leverage of his great-granduncle Hon’ami Kōetsu, a famous
calligrapher, amateur potter, publisher, and lacquer designer. Kōetsu’s legacy provided Kōrin with an array of artistic and personal inspirations that expedited his entry into the art world of the capital.

**First Imperial Sponsorship**

Kano Einō (1631–1697) wrote in his *Honchō gashi* (Painting of the Realm; 1693) that “poems are paintings without shape, while paintings are poems with form” 詩者無形而画也者有形詩也.46 Adding a poem to a picture unites these two faculties in one artwork. Kōrin adheres to this principle in Sōgi. The portrait marks the first physical artifact of Kōrin’s ties to the court aristocracy. Not only was the late medieval poet an oft-painted subject, the work also carries an inscription of two poems by Sōgi, probably brushed by the princely abbot of Shōren’in.47

My reflection, like clouds,  
is floating in this world,  
and stirs an unknown feeling.

This world I long for,  
is touched by the rain that is falling on my abode.

うつしをく我影  
ながら世のうき  
を  
しらぬきなそ  
うらやまれぬ  
る

世にふるもさらに時雨のやとり

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47 The first poem is part of *Sōgi hōshi shū* (Collection of the Revered Sōgi) while the second part of the inscription is taken from *Shinsen Tsukuba shū* (New Tsukuba Collection). Yamane, “Sōgi zō,” 23.
These two verses by Sōgi were commonly added to pictures of the poet and formed part of the conventions for portraits of him. Sonshō, the author of the inscription, was one of emperor GoMizuno’o’s (1596–1680) many sons (his seventeenth child) and succeeded to the lineage of imperial head priests of the temple Shōren’in in 1676. As a consequence of Sonshō’s early affiliation with Shōren’in, the place where he received the lion’s share of his education, he adopted and developed the tradition of calligraphy associated with the temple.

Shōkadō Shōjō, whose painting style acted as Kōrin’s model for the Sōgi portrait, also practiced Shōren’in-style calligraphy. In 1614, Shōkadō drafted a copy of the Chōgonka (Song of Lasting Sorrow), kept at the Tokyo National Museum, in Shōren’in-style writing (Fig. 1.14). Other works, such as an album of poems from the Hyakunin isshu (One Hundred Poets, Each a Poem), dated to 1611, demonstrate Shōkadō’s early exposure to this style of calligraphy that was prominent among courtiers during much of the seventeenth century.

Shōren’in might have thought of Shōkadō as a prominent advocate of their tradition, which would have provided a reason for Kōrin to choose Shōjō’s paintings as his main point of reference in Sōgi. If Shōrin’in requested the portrait from Kōrin—and, given the relatively pricy silk ground, it likely was a commission from an affluent patron like the temple—Sonshō could have asked for a stylistic quote of Shōkadō and his early Edo-period painting tradition.

48 Ibid.


50 On the influence of the Shōrin’in style on Shōjō’s calligraphy, see Yamaguchi, Shōkadō Shōjō, 5–6, 11.
Kōrin selected for Sōgi may have been intended to forge an artistic connection between the inscriber, Sonshō, the tradition of Shōren’in, and Shōkadō. By way of a respected, nostalgic visual mode, the portrait provided a literary-minded patron with a piece by which to pay tribute to Sōgi, one of court culture’s most influential medieval intellectuals. In fact, Shōkadō’s paintings and images of Sōgi were popular in seventeenth-century cultural circles. Research by Tani Akira has revealed how portraits of Sōgi formed the third-largest category of paintings hung at early modern tea gatherings and works by Shōkadō were highly sought after.  

As we have seen earlier, Kōrin began associating with the courtier Nijō Tsunahira by 1689. The painter had established a firm relationship with the aristocrat by around 1693 and 1694 when he became a frequent a visitor, coinciding with the time he painted Sōgi. The Nijō records show that in 1694, a representative of Shōkadō’s home temple, Takimotobō, received an audience with Tsunahira where he was given a hundred pieces of gold as an end-of-the-year gift. A second representative came in 1704 to bring three ink stones and again in 1709 for a New Year’s call. Thus, reflective of the tightly knit early modern networks, Tsunahira was in touch with Shōkadō’s old place of affiliation and could have gained easy access to works of the master, which no doubt also circulated at court.

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51 Tani, Chakaiki no kenkyū, 136.

52 Around that time, between 1693 and 1694, Kōrin started receiving his first private audiences with Tsunahira, indicating that both men had grown close. Kōrin’s first private audience is recorded for 1693/11/18. Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 45–46.

53 Kōrin himself was also present at the meeting in 1704, though not in 1694 when Sōgi was painted. Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 46, 55, 58. See, also, Nakabe, “Ōgata Kōrin to Shōkadō Shōjō,” 1.
In 1693, Kōrin’s brother Kenzan for the first time brought fans as New Year gifts. Their authorship is not recorded, but it is possible that Kōrin painted them, given that he received commissions like Sōgi around that time. Later, by 1695, the Ogata brothers frequently gave fans as gifts to Tsunahira, coinciding with the time that Kōrin’s earliest extant paintings were made. Though the painter(s) of these first fans are not identified before 1695, when examples by Kōrin were given to former empress Shinjōsaimon’in, there is little evidence to suggest that it was not Kōrin himself who made them. Tsunahira might have referred Sonshō to Kōrin since he was pleased by the artist’s fans. Also, Shinjōsaimon’in’s husband, the retired emperor Reigen (1654–1732), was Sonshō’s brother, making Sonshō Tsunahira’s uncle by marriage.

In addition to the networks that might have formed the backdrop for the making of Sōgi, the year 1695 marked the two-hundredth anniversary of Sōgi’s compilation of the renga anthology Shinzen Tsukuba shū (New Tsukuba Collection; 1495)—a crucial work of reference for poets. In fact, the last part of the portrait’s inscription is taken from that poetry compilation and its anniversary would have provided a fitting occasion to commission a commemorative work, perhaps hung at a gathering of tea or poetry (or both) in the poet’s honor. After the Japanese count, the anniversary would have been celebrated in 1694, the last year of Sonshō’s life. Moreover, the compilation was endorsed by emperor GoTsuchimikado (1442–1500), making a prince like Sonshō and his imperially sponsored temple Shōren’in a likely site for commissioning a portrait of Sōgi on such an occasion.

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54 The gift of a box with three fans is recorded for 1693/01/02. Ibid., 45.
55 Ibid., 47.
Kōetsu and Kōrin

The fact that Kōrin was selected to produce a portrait of Sōgi presupposed at least some literary erudition and other cultural leverage on the part of the painter. Sōgi defined the art of *renga* and his commentaries on the *Tales of Ise* and Fujiwara Teika’s (1162–1241) writings were ubiquitous in seventeenth-century literary culture. To qualify for making a commemorative portrait of such an important cultural figure, Kōrin needed to possess sufficient intellectual credibility, a feat he acquired by turning to his ancestor Kōetsu’s cultural power.

Kōetsu, together with the courtier Nakano In Michikatsu (1556–1610), published a printed edition of *Ise monogatari shōmonshō* (Commentaries on the Tales of Ise Heard by Shō[haku]; Dai-Tōkyū Bunko, Tokyo), the collection of Sōgi’s teachings on the *Tales of Ise*, in 1609, confirming the interest and demand Sōgi’s work attracted during the early Edo period. By way of this prestigious project alone, Kōetsu’s name was tied to the guardians of Sōgi’s literary legacy, the Nakano In family. Thus, for a court-commissioned project like the *Sōgi* portrait, Kōetsu provided a reliable point of reference for Kōrin.

A few years before Kōrin painted *Sōgi* and his other early works, he changed the characters of his name from honoring his father—probably chosen in the wake of Sōken’s death in 1687—to a choice of idioms that alluded to the male lineage of the Hon’ami. Before circa 1692, the *kō* (vast, grand) that Kōrin used for the first character of his alias was the same as in his father’s pseudonym, Kōsai 皓斎. The first character Kōrin 皓琳 selected thereafter

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57 Ibid., 1076–1092.

58 Here, Kōrin’s great-granduncle collaborated with aristocrats like Nakano In Michikatsu who provided the postscript to Kōetsu’s printed edition of *Ise monogatari shōmonshō*. See Gotō Bijutsukan, *Kōetsu: Momoyama no koten*, 210. This connection will be discussed again in Chapter Two.

59 Yamane, *Kōrin kenkyū ichi*, 4–6. See also Kōno, “Kōrin suibokuga no tenkai to gensen,” 54.
corresponds with the one used by Kōetsu 光悦 (Fig. 1.15).\textsuperscript{60} The kō (radiant, bright) had also been used by Kōetsu’s son, grandsons (like Kōho 光甫), and subsequent male descendants of the Hon’ami lineage.

Evidently in an attempt to align his artistic identity with that of his famous ancestor, in his earliest works Kōrin also brushed kō (or mitsu in the Japanese reading) in the same way as Kōetsu. Contemporaries of Kōetsu who wrote in the same calligraphy style as the master used different ways of writing the character (Fig. 1.16).\textsuperscript{61} However, Kōrin’s abbreviation of his new alias to a single line ending in a pronounced rightward hook matches that of Kōetsu’s own signature and represents a direct quote of his great-granduncle’s cultural legacy. The Konishi Archives contain a curious sheet on which probably Kōrin himself practiced writing out the kō in Kōetsu’s style on the back of sketches for a set of playing cards with poets from the Hyakunin isshu (Fig. 1.17).\textsuperscript{62} The leaf might date to around the time when Kōrin adopted his new signature and reveals part of the artist’s efforts to appropriate Kōetsu’s legacy. Shortly after, he used the signature on his earliest paintings.

In part through his avid correspondence that was treasured by many addressees, Kōetsu’s distinctive style of writing and signature were widely known.\textsuperscript{63} This was especially the case

\textsuperscript{60} Yamane first suggested that Kōrin adopted the first syllable in reference to Kōetsu, but did not elaborate any reasons beyond Kōrin’s possible reverence for his great-granduncle. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 4–6, 59. The section of the Konishi Archives at the Osaka Municipal Museum contains an undated piece of paper where someone, perhaps Kōrin himself, jotted down a variety of different spellings for “Kōrin,” perhaps in an attempt to find a suitable pseudonym. Still, Kōrin never used any of those alternate spellings. See Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō, 182.

\textsuperscript{61} On Kōetsu-style calligraphy and contemporaneous followers see, for instance, Hatano Yukihiko, “Kōetsu no sho o chūshin toshite Momoyama Edo no sho o miru,” in Kōetsu no sho: Keichō Genna Kan’ei no meihitsu (Osaka: Ōsaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan, 1990), 276–282.

\textsuperscript{62} See Nakamachi, “Kōrin no monogatari zu ni tsuite,” 48.

\textsuperscript{63} On Kōetsu’s many surviving letters see Masuda Takashi, Kōetsu no tegami (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1980).
among Kōrin’s target clientele, the court aristocracy and the upper-class bourgeoisie of Kyoto. His link to Köetsu, one of the leading agents in disseminating the classics during the seventeenth century, may have acted as part of Kōrin’s credentials for commissions like the Sōgi portrait and paintings of other literary subject matter. The reference to Köetsu in Kōrin’s new alias also displayed his family legacy. A painter with clearly visible ties to the grand ancestor of the Hon’ami, a family that also helped channel Sōgi’s popular reception through Köetsu’s publication of the *Ise monogatari shōmonshō*, could be trusted with important artistic matters.

The lives of other early modern painters resembled Kōrin’s first steps as an artist. When looking at examples of painters before him, portraits of famous poets acted as a means to test the abilities of up-and-coming artists. Yamamoto Yūga, an early seventeenth-century scion of a wealthy townsman dynasty similar to that of Kōrin, aspired to be a painter. In order to examine his fortitude with brush and ink, Shōkadō Shōjō asked Yūga to produce a portrait of the poet Hitomaro. Shortly after, Yūga was summoned to paint large projects, such as screens for the imperial palace. This sequence of commissions reflects Kōrin’s own experience, where Sōgi seems to have immediately preceded larger, court-related orders. This way, Sōgi and *Hotei Playing Kemari* arguably served to cultivate Kōrin’s early artistic persona and paved the way for larger commissions, such as *Twelve Months*.

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64 The life of Yamamoto Yūga resembles that of Kōrin in many ways. Both came from affluent merchant families in Kyoto and both studied Noh and painting, among other arts. Similar to Kōrin’s early affiliation with Tsunahira, Yūga was part of the circle of the aristocratic abbot Hōrin Jōshō (1593–1668). See Kumakura Isao, *GoMizuno’o tennō* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2010), 156–163.
III. Kōrin’s First Screen Painting

Kōrin possessed profound knowledge of literature, as is evident from his many paintings of the *Tales of Ise*, literary figures, and poetic flowers. Still, we know only one poem that the artist composed himself. It is part of a letter to his friend Ueshima Gennojū, dated to around 1705.65

Please let me come again in a little while. Thank you.

Thank you for your letter from yesterday. Please also accept my gratitude for your parting gift of five bundles of small paper (*kogami*).

*In the sorrow of our parting, the sleeves of my sunlit robe are drenched with many layers of blossom scent,*

*alas, this means farewell.*

I will visit you in time to express my gratitude.

Yours sincerely.

Fourth month, thirteenth day. Kōrin (cypher)

To Ueshima Gennojū Ogata Kōrin

尚々後劵御入来
可被下奉待候 かしく

昨日は御状糾 殊更
為御餉別小帯五束
被懸芳意糾存候
花染の袖のなこりにた日ご路も
たちかさ年たる別をそ思ふ
期貴面し御礼
可申仲候 恐惶謹言
四月十三日 光琳（花押）

上嶋源常様 尾形光琳

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65 The feeling of farewell that the poem evokes suggests that Kōrin perhaps sent the letter after his second departure for Edo around 1705/03. The fourth month is too early a date for Kōrin to have written the letter during his first trip to Edo in 1704. Yamane, *Kōrin kenkyū ichi*, 80–81.
This somewhat generic poem with widely known literary tropes like drenched sleeves and blossom scent suggests that Kōrin might have been better at painting poetry than at composing verses himself. Kōrin’s first steps at rendering poetic subject matter in painting are embodied by his *Twelve Months* screens, completed less than a decade before the artist wrote his verse to bid farewell to Gennojū. The screens were produced in collaboration with twelve high-ranking courtiers and stand out as Kōrin’s earliest screen painting. They occupy a singular place among his body of works.

Poetic definitions of the twelve months in early modern Japan were largely bifurcated into two mutually linked traditions. The earliest and most frequently painted subjects were birds and flowers of the twelve months as stipulated by Fujiwara Teika. The source for Kōrin’s screens, however, was the *Hatakeyama shōsakutei shika* (Japanese and Chinese Poems of the Hatakeyama Shōsaku Pavilion), a medieval poetic gathering held around the year 1447, which established a different set of seasonal plants and deleted Teika’s poetic references to birds. Although the number of screens depicting Teika’s twelve months by far surpassed those of the Hatakeyama gathering, aristocratic patrons frequently ordered works based on either one of these subjects.

Kōrin painted *Twelve Months* around the late 1690s. The pair of screens is oddly conventional and seems to defy attempts at situating it among Kōrin’s innovative body of works.

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66 The inscriber of each poem, all of them high-ranking courtiers, and their respective ranks at the time of inscribing are identified through a small cartouche attached (probably at a later date) next to each image. They are, from the first month to the twelfth: Takatsukasa Kanehiro (1660–1725), Nakayama Atsuchika (d. 1716), Seikanji Hirosada (1662–1707), Nakanoin Michishige (1631–1701), Tokudaiji Kintomo (1678–1720), Higashizono Motokazu (1653–1710), Imashiro Sadatsune (d. 1702), Nakanoin Michimi (1668–1740), Uramatsu Norimitsu (d. 1707), Kazahaya Sanetane (1632–1711), Madenokōji Atsufusa (1653–1709), and Konoe Iehiro (1667–1736).

Yet the piece represents the painter’s first engagement with larger compositions, where different elements of a painting communicate with one another. By trying to adhere to the standards of court-related floral images, Kōrin showed that he was able to meet his clients’ expectations and could handle larger works in color. If viewed as an early ensemble with Sōgi and Hotei Playing Kemari, Twelve Months reveals how Kōrin approached painting in his early days, carefully but with confidence.

As was the case for all of his early paintings from the 1690s, Kōrin painted Twelve Months at a time when he was moving away from pursuing the pictorial arts as an idle pastime and worked to establish himself as a painter. The screens, inscribed by twelve of the most distinguished courtiers of his time, were an important commission and a crucial step in Kōrin’s career. Already during the early stages of his efforts to fashion himself as an artist, significant trust was given to Kōrin to accomplish the daunting task of satisfying the court’s highest ranking nobles. The screens reflect a point of departure towards the creation of an eclectic oeuvre, in which Kōrin constantly reinvented his works by adopting new and old aspects whenever they seemed fitting.

**Painting Poetry**

Given its modest size, Twelve Months is one of Kōrin’s smallest large-format works. The screens consist of twelve paintings, one per panel, dispersed among two six-fold screens. Several high-ranking court nobles inscribed the poems in the upper portion of the pictorial frame of each of the twelve paintings. Other extant paintings demonstrate that collaborative projects

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68 *Twelve Months* is 98.5 centimeters tall, a relatively small size for a screen painting.
like Kōrin’s *Twelve Months* were lengthy endeavors, and sometimes several years elapsed between the completion of the paintings and the realization of the last inscription. For example, Kano Eikei’s (1662–1702) screens *Poetic Meanings of the Twelve Months* (hereafter *Twelve Months*; Fig. 1.18) in the Kyoto City Museum were made prior to 1694, while the final poetic inscription, pasted above each painting, was completed only in 1699.\(^{69}\) Other works encountered a similar fate or were not inscribed at all; Kōrin’s *Birds and Flowers of the Twelve Months after Teika* at the Seikadō Bunko Art Museum (hereafter *Teika Twelve Months*; Fig. 1.19) contain large blank spaces above each painting, revealing how the screens were originally intended to include calligraphy that never materialized. Kōrin’s earliest work, on the other hand, did not suffer such a fate.

The inscriptions above the pictures provide the viewer with linked ways of aesthetic appreciation: poetry, the literary content of the writing, and calligraphy, the visual aesthetics of the written word as an independent entity. On the basis of the life dates and respective positions held by each courtier at the time of their inscriptions, Nishimoto Shūko has calculated that the calligraphic inscriptions were written between 1699 and 1701.\(^{70}\) Given that in such joint projects the paintings were commonly made before adding inscriptions, Eikei must have finished the pair sometime prior to 1694. See Ichikawa Akira, “Kano Eikei hitsu Jūnikagetsu kai zu byōbu ni tsuite,” *Suzaku* 23 (2011): 66–70.


\(^{69}\) By comparing the rank each inscriber held at the time of writing, Ichikawa Akira has concluded that the *shikishi* added above each painting were made between 1694 (the year one of the courtiers died) and 1699. Since paintings were customarily made before the inscription process commenced, Eikei must have finished the pair sometime prior to 1694. See Ichikawa Akira, “Kano Eikei hitsu Jūnikagetsu kai zu byōbu ni tsuite,” *Suzaku* 23 (2011): 66–70.

\(^{70}\) Nishimoto further speculated that Kōrin painted his images around 1696 and 1699. See Nishimoto Shūko, “Ogata Kōrin hitsu Jūnikagetsu kai-e byōbu ni tsuite (jō),” *Kokka* 1006 (December 1977): 10, 21–23.
small architectural structure, framed by two clusters of craggy plum branches dominates the composition (Fig. 1.20). The building contrasts with the branch’s geometrical regularity, while echoing its diagonal orientation. This landscape of deep winter with tiny blossoms hinting at the approaching spring—a traditional marker of the New Year—is rendered in light colors and ink. Kōrin painted the trees’ angular branches in long, winding strokes, establishing ink as the main visual trope of the first picture and, eventually, for much of the entire work.

Kōrin’s placement of signatures and seals illustrates a resolve to disseminate his name among the screens’ potential calligraphers. The inscriptions for the first and twelfth months were traditionally reserved for the highest ranking aristocrats. In Kōrin’s screens, Minister of the Left (sadaijin), Takatsukasa Kanehiro (1660–1725), who held the highest court title of all participants, inscribed the most prestigious first month.

Kanehiro was renowned at court as one of the most eminent calligraphers of his time. In addition to Kōrin’s work, Kanehiro was involved in various art-related court projects. Among others, he contributed inscriptions to an album of poem cards of the Tale of Genji with paintings by Tosa Mitsuoki (1617–1691), a project that predated Kōrin’s screens by about a decade. Kanehiro also boasted a high-level career at court. He acted as Minister of the Left between 1690 and 1703 after which he rose to the rank of regent. The first waka acts as the overture to the sequence of twelve months in poems and pictures.

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71 Contemporaries of Kōrin, Yamamoto Soken and Kano Eikei, who painted their own renderings of the twelve months only signed the images of the first and twelfth months and merely impressed their seals on the remaining pictures.

First Month / New Year
Yūga

Amidst unfallen blossoms in unmelted snow,
I gaze at the plums,
gracing the spring eaves.

正月
祐雅
ちらぬ花きぬ雪とやなかめし梅さかりなる春の軒端を

Kōrin’s paintings correspond to the concrete and abstract aspects of the poems. The similar
downward movement of the inscription frames the building and plum branches. The pictorial
objects and the inscription seem to be reaching out to one another and encircle a central portion
of negative space in between them, suggestive of the chill but pleasantly scented morning air in
early spring.

The waka describes more than merely seasonal scenery. It implies someone performing
an action. From the second and third lines we learn of a person gazing at the blossoms,
presumably from inside a building whose eaves are “graced” (sakari naru) by plum blossoms.
The openness of traditional Japanese structures provided a flux between outside and inside.
While other poems, namely those for the fifth and eleventh months mention man-made
structures, the pavilion in the first image is the only such building depicted. At the beginning of
the twelve months series, it establishes a space for an imagined viewer, gazing leftward upon the
entire cycle of the year.

73 The name of the poet at the Hatakeyama gathering always follows the first line stating the respective month. Yūga
is also read Sukemasa and signifies the courtier Asukai Sukemasa (dates unknown, 15th century).

74 My translations follow Nishimoto Shūko’s transcriptions of the poems. See Nishimoto, “Ogata Kōrin hitsu
Jūnikagetsu kai-e byōbu ni tsuite (jō), 7–10.
The brushwork in the trunks of a willow and blossoming cherry tree in the second image suggests that Kōrin magnified his smaller strokes in the first image (Fig. 1.21). The increasing display of brushwork in ink from one picture to the next shows that Kōrin tried to make sure that his ability to excel in this challenging medium of screen paintings would not go unnoticed.

Such a strategy was fitting, since Twelve Months was an important step towards strengthening his position as a painter. The following pictures of a pine and wisteria, in addition to a rice field with distant mountains, the poetic symbols for the third and fourth months respectively, reaffirm the artist’s effort to excel through meticulous brushwork (Fig. 1.22; 1.23). In the image of the fourth month, Kōrin relies on the use of negative space to create a sense of distance. He delineates each paddy field by quick, overlapping strokes in differing gradations of ink. The image in its entirety creates a clear topography of land, water, and sky. The different, clearly defined layers of space recall the standard composition of monochrome landscape painting: foreground, middle distance, and far distance. However, rather than through composition, which was predetermined by the long tradition of pictures of the twelve months, Kōrin sought to emancipate himself by way of his handling of the brush. Twelve Months illustrates how Kōrin already displayed a secure mastery of artistic techniques when he painted the screens.

The poem and painting for the third month, emphasizing the permanence of the pine’s evergreen needles, enhances the pictorial contrast with the ephemerality of snow and blossoms, the subject of the first and second panels.

Second Month
Sangi Masanaga

75 Asukai Masanaga, (mid-15th century).
Mountain cherries now spread their branches
and cross with pussy willows.
This, too, is the essence of flowers.

二月
参議雅永
山さくら今そひらく枝かはす柳のまゆも花のこころも

Third Month
Sachūjō Mochitame

Against the pine needles everlasting
these waves of wisteria
become the seeds of idle jottings.

三月
左中将持為
たねとなるふてのすさみの松のはをちらぬためしにかかるふちなみ

Instead of the landscape of the first panel, Kōrin depicted a willow and a cherry tree in ink and layers of malachite and shell-white. Willow trees bear the first green of the year and cherry blossoms, whose flowers quickly fade, are symbols of evanescence. Together, their fresh green and exuberant blossoms are harbingers for early spring. However, the plants depicted for the third month—wisteria growing in symbiosis with a pine tree—are both a poetic, as well as a political motif. Since the late Heian period, the steady evergreen pine and the fragile, elegant

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76 Shimoreizei Mochitame (1401–1454).

77 *Fude no susami*. Humble expression for composing a poem.

78 The same image also appears in *Minase sangin hyakuin*, in a line by Sōgi, that reveals the inter-referentiality between different genres of traditional poetry, exemplifying how *renge* drew from *waka* and absorbed its vocabulary, and vice versa.

wisteria were considered symbols of the mighty Fujiwara (lit. “wisteria plain”) clan. In poetry, the pine symbolized perseverance and continuity vis-à-vis the fragility of slender willow leaves and cherry blossoms.

Corresponding with the hazy vista in Kōrin’s painting, the fourth panel describes a mindscape of a rice paddy with distant mountains engulfed by bands of mist.

Fourth Month
Sachūjō Masachika

In the distance
in the planted young rice seedlings
I can see the chilly wind that makes no sound.

四月
左中将雅観
うらわかみなひく早苗にはるばると音なきかせのみえです
しき

In his painting, Kōrin emphasizes the rice seedlings referred to in the middle portion of the waka, alluding to the idealization of rural life among the aristocracy.

Nakanoin Michishige (1631–1710), who added the poem for the fourth month, was heir to a renowned lineage of poets and literary commentators. His great-grandfather, Michikatsu (1556–1610), received instruction from such luminaries as the poet Hosokawa Yūsai (1534–1610) and others. Michikatsu’s descendants passed this knowledge on to Michishige, who authored several literary treatises himself. The Nakanoin family was linked to the Ogata through

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80 The Fujiwara created a quasi-religious cult around certain personae in their lineage, such as Fujiwara Kamatari (614–669), an Asuka period (538–710) statesman and founder of the clan, who began to be portrayed in painting as a Shintō deity from the tenth century. Behind him, a pine with wisteria was depicted, which eventually became a common convention for such paintings. Komatsu Kazuhiko, Kami ni natta hitobito (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 2001), 104–110.

81 Asukai Masachika (1417–1491).
Michikatsu’s collaboration with Hon’ami Kōetsu in the printing of court classics around the early seventeenth century. We have seen earlier how both men joined forces in the publication of several editions of classical works, among them the Tales of Ise (1608). Michikatsu provided the postscripts and, perhaps, the original manuscripts that formed the basis for the printed books.

Screens depicting the twelve months provided an expedient means for painters to gain renown among the upper reaches of the court. The poems included a broad array of floral subjects, each requiring the use of different brushwork. As a result, artists needed to master a relatively broad array of techniques, a fact that turned works like Twelve Months into showcases for artistic ability. The picture of bamboo for the fifth month and that of pinks for the sixth month show the difference in requirements for each image; while Kōrin painted the bamboo in elongated strokes of ink, with leaves veiled by mist, he rendered the pinks in crisp, repetitive strokes in polychromatic pigment (Fig. 1.24; 1.25).

The content of the inscriptions now turns away from seasonal descriptions to love. The poem for the fifth month alludes to words of devotion, perhaps exchanged at the parting of two lovers. The poems for the fifth and sixth months draw from established associations between seasonal flowers and human relations.

Fifth Month
Dōken
This year’s fresh bamboo,
its leaves of words outside my window,
are the beginning of our bond that shall last for eight thousand ages.

五月

82 The family connection between Kōrin and Kōetsu was introduced by Aimi Kōu on the basis of a family tree handed down among a branch family of the Hon’ami. Kōrin’s great-grandfather, Dōhaku, married a sister of Kōetsu. See Aimi, “Hon’ami keizu no kōsatsu,” 42–43.

83 Hosokawa Mochikata (1403–1486)
Sixth Month
Sakyō Daifu Norichika

Amidst the bonding mist, I do not see
the jeweled crown laden with this world’s dew.
Your face lingers on in the pinks.

六月
左京大夫教親
むすひしもみぬよの露のたまかつつらおもかけのこすなてしこのはな

The poem for the fifth month refers to fresh bamboo, an evergreen, strong plant that was thought
to embody stability and endurance, as a symbol for an everlasting bond between two people. The
following poem on the sixth month laments the absence of a lover, who fails to stay faithful to a
promised bond. The memory of that person, however, lives on in the blossoms of the flowers.

Kōrin used this artistic approach in the left screen. Although the right screen relied
heavily on the effects of ink, the six paintings of the left screen place equal emphasis on more
expensive, polychromatic pigments, especially malachite green. For example, in the image of the
seventh month, the paulownia tree, nestled against a crescent moon, uses a combination of ink
and malachite to render the tree trunk (Fig. 1.26). Kōrin employed a similar technique with
varying amounts of malachite in the bamboo of the fifth month.

According to the lunar calendar, used in Japan until the mid-nineteenth century, the end
of the sixth month signified the end of summer. The six-panel screen format perfectly fit this
system, since the seasons of spring and summer could be combined in the right screen while

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84 Isshiki Norichika (1419–1451).
autumn and winter were assigned to the left screen. The final two waka of the right screen describe an act of parting. They poetically link the passing of summer with the melancholy mood of autumn. Pictorially, their content frames the leftmost portion of the right screen and creates a unity between spring and summer. Simultaneously, the mention of a bond (musabi) in the waka for the sixth month creates a poetic and pictorial continuity with the autumnal content that follows in the right screen.

Seventh Month
Shaku Shōtetsu

With the leaves scattering, I cannot see the phoenix,
as the crescent autumn moon
parts the sleeping paulownia leaves.

七月
釈正徹
ちらせなおみぬもろこしのとりもねすきりのはわくる秋のみか月

Contemplation of the sky and in particular the moon was an important pastime associated with autumn. Kōrin’s painting recreates a night scene in which a crescent moon shines through the leaves of a paulownia tree that is mentioned in the final line of the poem. Kōrin continued to employ a blend of malachite and ink in other pictures, such as the reeds for the eighth month, as well as in the rock and maple tree of the ninth month (Fig. 1.27; 1.28). The resulting effect of moss-covered bark and rocks adds a cunning visual detail to the screens. The technique’s prominent usage distinguishes the work from other painters and indicates Kōrin’s striving to create a subtly individualized rendering of an established subject.

85 Seigan Shōtetsu (1381–1459), a Tōfukuji monk.
86 The inscriber here is Nakanoin Michimi (1668–1740), a son of Michishige. On Michimi, see Nojima, Kugyō jinmei daijiten, 554–555.
Kōrin illustrated the tenth month with a young cypress tree, but employed another landscape view for the eleventh month, with a cedar grove against the backdrop of a snowy mountain range (Fig. 1.29; 1.30). The trees’ candle-shaped crowns are surrounded by a layer of shell-white, suggesting snow, which Kōrin accentuated with ink washes around the outlines of both cedars and mountains. Kōrin framed the overall composition of the screens with a plum tree in the first panel of the right screen and in the last panel of the left screen (Fig. 1.31). Their presence creates a continuous sequence of the seasons. It visualizes that the twelve months are not isolated entities, but an unceasing cycle whose beginnings and ends are transient and ceaselessly corresponding with one another.

While the first three panels praise the colors of autumn and the shining moonlight, the following ones focus on the cold winds and snowy landscapes of winter.

**Eighth Month**
Kenshō Sōbu Gyōkō [(1391–1455)]

With the mist yielding in the wind
the clover becomes scarce
and the autumn dusk envies it.

八月
権少僧部堯孝
霞になひき風にともなふ萩をせて萩をうらやむ秋の夕ぐれ

**Ninth Month**
Jōgon

Crimson autumn leaves
and chrysanthemums have come.

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87 Following a common convention of screen paintings of the twelve months, Kōrin’s pair allocates three panels per each of the four seasons.

88 An unidentified member of the Imagawa clan, 15th century.
With them, I forget my unfinished writings.

九月
ジオウゴン
たちそゆる紅葉も菊もそれからおられぬ筆の跡をわずれて

The *waka* for the tenth month speaks of the steadiness of the cypress groves that are untouched by the fiercest winds. Their color, it says however, is affected by the stormy mountain rains.

Tenth Month
Senkū

Although unconcerned by it
the sound of rain in the mountain wind
becomes the color of the cypress grove.

十月
仙空
さもあらぬひはらを染る音そへて色なる雨に山風そ吹

The painting of the eleventh month features white mountain peaks and a grove of cedars. Kōrin’s picture enhances the frosty atmosphere of the poem. He includes frozen reeds along a snow-covered shoreline in the foreground, which further intensify the feeling of winter cold. The elaborate, curvy calligraphy by Madenokōji Atsufusa (1653–1709) resembles a gentle snow fall.

Eleventh Month
Kenryō

Fields and mountains
are all covered in snow,
amidst them lie the silhouettes of cedar villages.

十一月
賢良

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89 Hatakeyama Sazumi (15th century).

90 Hatakeyama Yoshitada (d. 1463)
野もやまもみなうつもるる雪の中にしるしはかりのすきのむらたち

The last panel renders the twelfth month, the height of winter and the coldest period of the year. The gnarled, bare plum branch extending from a tree trunk evokes an icy day. Yet from the accompanying poem we learn that the desolate landscape already bears the harbingers of a more inviting season. Painting and waka illustrate the intense anticipation of spring that lies at the heart of winter poetry.

Twelfth Month
Shaku Shōkō

More numerous than in spring
under the snow-covered trees hide flower caps.
At the height of winter, the plums begin to bud.

十二月
釈正晦
はるよりもまさきのゆきの花かつら冬をさかりにむめひろく也

Konoe Iehiro (1667–1736), Minister of the Right (udaijin) and bearer of the second highest rank in the screen project, added the poem for the twelfth month. A member of an influential aristocratic family, Iehiro was a prominent courtier, intellectual, and patron. In the first half of the eighteenth century, Iehiro emerged as an influential patron of painters such as Watanabe Shikō (1683–1755), whose eclectic oeuvre incorporated many traits of Kōrin’s work. In combination with Masafusa, Minister of the Left and the inscriber of the first panel, Kōrin’s screens were thus inscribed by two of the highest ranking officials within the imperial...

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91 A pupil of Shōtetsu.

bureaucracy, placing the artist at the vortex of court culture.

The calligraphy by Konoe Iehiro here reflects part of the atmospheric nature that is described in picture and poem. The writing becomes thinner and fainter the further it progresses leftward, indicating that Iehiro did not refresh the brush with new ink after he started writing. The intensity of the ink lessens gradually, as if the words dissolve in the frosty air of winter, a visual reference also to the end of the old year.

Each of the twelve paintings contains a “Kōrin hitsu” signature. The square relief seal, “Sekisui,” below each signature, cannot be found on any other product by Kōrin’s hand, except for an early letter. In the letter, Kōrin invites Nakagawa Toshitsune, the governor of Tanba, to a tea gathering hosted by an unidentified Lord Shusui. Yamane dates the letter to before 1698, coinciding with the making of Twelve Months. Nakagawa Toshitsune was a close acquaintance of Nijō Tsunahira, and he appears frequently together with Kōrin in the Nijō records. It is possible that Kōrin used the name “Sekisui” as part of his cultural persona when dealing with high-ranking aristocrats and imperial bureaucrats like Toshitsune. The fact that the artist used corresponding pseudonyms on a poetic painting such as Twelve Months and for inviting a top-level official to a tea gathering hints at the cultural currency that Kōrin associated with the name. Also, given the private nature of the invitation to tea, Twelve Months may have been commissioned in a similarly intimate context, rather than being an official court order. It seems that Kōrin ceased to use this seal soon after the production of the Twelve Months screens.

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93 The couplet of two characters, in Japanese reading “Sekisui” and literally meaning “abundant green,” appears frequently in Chinese poetry, such as, for instance in Quan Tang shi, often to denote mountains or other far-away vistas. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 4–5, 69.

94 See Appendix Document IV / 1.

95 Kōrin did the same with his late pseudonym, “Masatoki,” which he used to sign letters and documents, while also affixing it to his paintings in the form of a seal.
Twelve Months preserves the visual evidence for Kōrin’s early struggle to establish himself as a vocational artist. The timing of the work’s production is important, since the artist found himself in dire financial circumstances, particularly around the 1690s. Kōrin needed money and actively promoted his talents as a painter to make ends meet. A collaborative project as Twelve Months provided a means to secure future sponsorship from the aristocracy. There are no surviving records that tell us whether Kōrin knew which courtiers would eventually inscribe the screens. But in light of the common practice used for similar commissions at the time, it is likely that he had some idea of the impact that even such a relatively small work could have on a painter’s life and career.

IV. Mixed Modalities

Much evidence survives that Kōrin initially studied the Kano style of painting. Apprenticeship with the Kano school was a prerequisite for anyone who sought to establish himself as a painter in early modern Japan; the physically largest indicator of Kōrin’s study is a group of sketches from the Konishi Archives. Comprised of landscapes and figure paintings, they are aspects of the eclectic style commonly associated with Kōrin, and might represent relics of his very early education in painting. Such sketches express the pure form of Kōrin’s training with the Kano atelier that likely preceded Twelve Months. The artist learned much from his exposure to the Kano school, but soon moved away from the atelier’s overarching influence and created a concoction of handpicked painterly elements from a variety of sources that he retained, reformulated, and sometimes completely abandoned. The following section analyzes Kōrin’s exposure to the Kano style and the school’s Kyoto atelier.
Early Kano Study and Yamamoto Soken

Four decades ago, Tsuji Nobuo discovered how a set of bird studies at the British Museum (Fig. 1.32) closely corresponded to a scroll with sketches of the same subject by Kōrin that is preserved in the section of the Konishi Archives in the Kyoto National Museum (Fig. 1.33). The British Museum pictures are the work of the otherwise obscure Kano painter Noda Tōmin. According to his preface, Tōmin based the images on copies of sketches by the famed seventeenth-century Kano Tan’yū that apparently circulated within the atelier. The source for Kōrin’s studies is unknown, yet their close resemblance to Tan’yū’s originals has established that Kōrin, too, based them on Kano models, if not even those by Tan’yū himself. In fact, some images in Tōmin’s sketches are almost identical to those by Kōrin.

Kōrin’s pictures of such lifelike subjects reflect the naturalism and attention to detail found in many of his works, and it also illustrates that he had access to model books from the Kano workshops at some point in his career. No date is known for Kōrin’s avian studies; but his use of similarly detailed representations of birds in his *Teika Twelve Months*, dating to sometime between 1701 and 1704, indicate that he was in possession of Kano-related model books at least

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97 The Konishi Archives contain a total of 93 leaves, now mounted as two scrolls, with images of birds and other animals. The works contain labels inscribed by Kōrin and other, unidentified persons. Nishimoto Shūko was the first scholar to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the sketches by Kōrin and Tōmin. She concluded that eleven images were identical, indicating how Kōrin had access to model books of the Kano atelier. See Nishimoto Shūko, “Kōrin hitsu Chōjū shasei zukan ni tsuite,” in *Rinpa kaiga zenshū Kōrin-ha ichi* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1979), 37–44. Later, Nakamachi Keiko and Katō Hiroko illustrated how Kōrin’s bird studies are most likely copies from a Kano-school original, possibly by Tan’yū. Katō explained that Kōrin and Tōmin’s sketches differ and cannot originate from the same source. She suggested the possibility that Kōrin might have copied his bird sketches directly from a now-lost original by Tan’yū’s own hand. Katō further suggested that such bird studies were conducted on the basis of dead animals, rather than as sketches from life. See Nakamachi Keiko, “Kinsei zenki no chōjū shasei: Ogata Kōrin no Shasei zukan o chūshin ni,” in *Rinpa daisankan fūgetsu chōjū* (Kyoto: Shikōsha, 1991), 247–254; Katō Hiroko, “Noda Tōmin hitsu Chōrui shasei zu: Ogata Kōrin hitsu Chōrui shasei zu to no kankei,” *Bijutsushi* 162 (March 2007): 338–355.
in the years leading up to those dates.

The 1864 Kōrin shinsen hyakuzu by Ikeda Koson contains a reproduction of a painting showing Hotei on horseback. (Fig. 1.34) Its caption states that Kōrin allegedly copied the image from a work by Tan’yū in 1681. It is impossible to judge the work’s authenticity from a printed reproduction, but in light of the large numbers of paintings attributed to Tan’yū that circulated, as well as Kōrin’s early study of Kano modes, we cannot rule out the possibility that such an early Tan’yū copy as that in Kōrin shinsen hyakuzu actually once existed.

Kōrin’s devotion to Tan’yū was long-lasting. A late letter by Kōrin, dated to around 1714 or 1715, mentions his study of a triptych by Tan’yū.98 The letter is addressed to a man named Takabayashi Tokusai, who appears to have been an art dealer or connoisseur. The document refers to a triptych of Taigong Wang—a subject Kōrin painted earlier in the screen format (Fig. 1.35)—flanked by images of pines and monkeys. Kōrin praises the quality of the painting and reveals his affinity with Tan’yū’s style. Given the Kano artist’s prominent role throughout the Edo period, it is likely that Kōrin had repeated access to works associated with Tan’yū over the course of his career. That possibility was especially high between 1704 and circa 1709, during and after his stay in Edo, where Tan’yū was held in high esteem.

Kōrin was trained in both the polychromatic and ink modes of the Kano atelier. His Kano-related sketches likely predate his earliest extant paintings and represent an undiluted stage of Kōrin’s painting studies, where he studied different modes and only slowly began to blend them. Most of his works from the 1690s onward rely on Kano features in a selective manner and

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98 Based on the style of Kōrin’s signature, Yamane dates the letter to 1714 to 1715. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 96–97. See Appendix Document III / 10.
none of the Kano-esque sketches became the basis for a surviving painting by Kōrin. It is possible that Kōrin made these sketches after extant works for study purposes, rather than as the underdrawings for his own pieces. Even though the majority of his surviving works omits the modal features found in many of those studies, Kōrin’s surveying of such a breadth of subjects and styles instilled in the young artist an awareness of the effects of blending different painterly fashions. Other sketches and studies of paintings from the Konishi Archives bear evidence of Kōrin’s exposure to a multitude of styles, ranging from Kano studies to genre paintings, medieval handscrolls, and medieval bird and flower paintings (Fig. 1.36; 1.37). While it is uncertain when exactly Kōrin had exposure to each of the works he copied in the Archives, it becomes clear that he relied on a variety of artistic inputs from an early time, planting the seeds for his lifelong tendency towards eclecticism. The question, however, remains who instructed Kōrin in the Kano mode.

Yamamoto Soken (d. 1706), a pupil of Tan’yū active in Kyoto roughly around the same time as Kōrin, was early identified as Kōrin’s painting teacher. Fukui Rikichirō first suggested the connection in modern times, but the possibility of Soken’s alleged role in forming Kōrin’s early aesthetic sensibility dates back to the eighteenth century. Fukui’s theory relied on Sakai Hōitsu, the most thorough Edo-period researcher into the life and arts of Kōrin, who identified Yamamoto Soken as Kōrin’s teacher in his influential Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu (Concise Kōrin hyakuzu (ca. 1815/1826), initially published after around 1815 by Sakai Hōitsu as the record of an exhibition commemorating the centennial of Kōrin’s death, does not include any painting that corresponds with the studies in the Konishi Archives. On Kōrin hyakuzu, see McKelway, Silver Wind, 80–81.

Fukui gives an overview of the different premodern theories on possible teachers of Kōrin. Arguing that Asai Fukyū might have been personally acquainted with members of the Ogata family, as his dates of life overlap at least with those of Kenzan, Fukui leaves little ambiguity in his conviction that Kōrin received tutelage in the Kano style by Yamamoto Soken. See Fukui Rikichirō, “Kōrin no shi toshite no Yamamoto Soken,” in Fukui Rikichirō bijutsushi ronshū ge (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2000), 133–149, especially 136–145. Fukui’s piece was originally published in 1916, in the journal Geibun.
Chronology of Seals of the Ogata School), published in an expanded version in 1815.101

After [Kōrin’s father], Ogata Sōken, released him from his care, [Kōrin] was drawn to the style of Sōtatsu and became a pupil of Yamamoto Soken. Later, he received the hokkyō [title]. This [information] we can glean from Asai Fukyū’s Inpu. […]

尾形宗謙が子を隔て宗達の風を慕山本素軒の弟子となり後法橋に叙すと浅井不旧の印譜に見へたり[…]

Hōitsu relied on a certain Inpu by Asai Fukyū (dates unknown), which Fukui identifies as Fukyū’s Honchō gaka inpu (Chronology of Seals of Painters of this Realm). The book, however, does not survive. Fukyū was a mid-Edo period connoisseur whose Fusō meikō gafu (Compendium of Famous Painters of Japan), authored sometime during the Kyōhō era (1716–1736), became an influential reference work for artist biographies. In his studies of Kōrin, Hōitsu clearly trusted in Fukyū’s reputation.

Yet it is unclear whether it was Fukyū who spearheaded the idea of Soken as Kōrin’s teacher, or whether Hōitsu simply used Fukyū’s name to validate his own claim. After all, Fukyū’s life overlapped with Kōrin’s last years and Fukyū appears to have been in Kyoto by 1710, around the time when Kōrin returned to his native city from Edo.103 Still, different commentators on Kōrin’s oeuvre after Fukyū suggested a range of other painters as possible teachers. Relying on similarities of style between Kōrin and other masters, early modern connoisseurs also proposed such names as Kano Yasunobu (1613–1685) and Kano Tsunenobu (1636–1713) as Kōrin’s teachers, adding ever more confusion to the question of Kōrin’s true

101 The genealogy was initially circulated as a single leaf in 1813 and expanded and published as a book in 1815. The reference to Soken is part of the 1815 edition. On Hōitsu’s interest in Kōrin and Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu, see Tamamushi, Ikitsuzukeru Kōrin, 23–36.

102 Fukui, “Kōrin no shi,” 139–140.

103 Ibid., 141.
Kano instructor.\textsuperscript{104}

While it remains inconclusive to what extent Soken himself was involved in Kōrin’s painting studies, there is no doubt that at some point Kōrin learned painting with a Kano school artist. Through a sophisticated melange of talent, politics, and the sheer quantity of its affiliates, the Kano workshops set the standard for official art throughout the Edo period.\textsuperscript{105} Ultimately, the atelier’s pupils made a business of providing painting instruction to talented and/or wealthy individuals. Already Kōrin’s father Sōken studied the Kano style as a leisurely pastime.\textsuperscript{106} Sōken instructed his children in the arts, such as calligraphy, and his son likely received a painting education similar to his father.\textsuperscript{107}

The sketches in the Konishi Archives at the Kyoto National Museum tell of the mechanisms at work in Kōrin’s early artistic training, evincing definite exposure to Kano-related subjects and stylistic elements (Fig. 1.38). Clearly by Kōrin’s own hand, many of the sketches reveal the dualism of native and Chinese-style modes found in paintings of the early modern

\textsuperscript{104} While modern scholarship has built uncritically on Fukui’s early assumption, another pioneer of the study of Kōrin’s art, Aimi Kōu, gave Soken little presence in his own analyses. At most, he says, Kōrin might have been influenced by Soken in his choice of colors, though he leaves the implications of this rather vague. See Aimi, “Kōrin,” 113. Additional theories bring forth different other seventeenth century painters. For instance, \textit{Wakan shoga ichiran} (Overview of Paintings in Japanese and Chinese Styles; 1771) suggests Kano Yasunobu, a largely discredited possibility. Yasunobu was based in Edo and resided in Kyoto only during short intervals. At Kōrin’s first trip to Edo in 1704, Yasunobu had long since passed away. The late Edo-period anthology of painters, \textit{Honchō kokin shoga binran} (Compendium of New and Ancient Calligraphy and Painting of this Realm; 1813 and 1818), written by the Kyoto-based Kawazu Sanbaku (d. 1807) and published posthumously, opts for Kano Tsunenobu. The entry on Kōrin in \textit{Honchō kokin shoga binran} contains significant factual errors, not least in mistaking Kōrin’s dates of life, suggesting that its author lacked sufficient insights into Kōrin’s life. These two options gained little traction beyond the Edo period, mainly in the wake of Sakai Hōitsu’s publication \textit{Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu}. Fukui, “Kōrin no shi,” 138–141.


Kano atelier. The sketches survey the methods a painter had to master: Buddhist painting; landscape painting; and paintings of Chinese figures. Instead of nurturing virtuosity, these studies were intended to equip pupils with the technical foundations expected of a seventeenth-century painter. Among the sketches, we find subjects and modes from the Kano school that were handed down in model books.

One such scroll with painting models by Soken’s pupil, Yamamoto Sōsen (1679–1760), contains elements that appear again in Kōrin’s sketches and, selectively, in Twelve Months (Fig. 1.39). For instance, his Twelve Months reflects similar idiosyncrasies in the plum tree as in Sōsen’s scroll. Although Sōsen’s signature dates the scroll to the year 1740, the artist is careful to label the models as copies of the “Tan’yū style” (Tan’yū-ryū), a painting tradition from which Kōrin handpicked certain elements like those ink washes and other “boneless” methods (mokkotsu), a style that omits outlines, that Tan’yū introduced into such native subjects as the twelve months. Sōsen probably received a similar model book from Soken, and Kōrin appears to have had some exposure to the style found among such precedents.

Still, Kōrin was discriminating in which of the Kano studios’ stylistic particularities he kept and which he discarded. In fact, he shunned most of the features found in Sōsen’s model book and the Kano-related sketches in the Konishi Archives, such as the crisp contours of landscape elements and figures, only to devote himself to boneless techniques and soft, inky brushwork. Kōrin’s selection process and his step-by-step divergence from the paintings of Soken find their earliest manifestation in Twelve Months.

Soken himself painted different versions of screens depicting Birds and Flowers of the

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108 The swirling water, taken from Chinese paintings, and the rolling hills found in images by the Tosa School illustrate Kōrin’s familiarity with mainstream trends in painting of the seventeenth century.
Twelve Months after Teika, including two pairs in the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco and Yale University Art Gallery (Fig. 1.40), respectively. The two works follow common conventions for this theme, pairing each picture with a waka from Teika’s Shūi gusō. In Yamamoto Soken’s San Francisco screens we find two inscribers who correspond with those in Kōrin’s work: Konoe Iehiro and Nakano in Michishige. Iehiro also inscribed other works by Soken, such as a pair of tsukinami screens. Although still young, Iehiro appears to have played an early role in artistic patronage at the imperial court of emperor Higashiyama (r. 1687–1709). As Endō Motoko notes, a commission of screens with birds and flowers of the twelve months, intended as ground for courtiers’ inscriptions on the topic, appears in Iehiro’s journal, Iehiro kō-ki. Soken maintained professional, and perhaps personal, relationships with a network of culturally influential courtiers that were also important for Kōrin’s own artistic career. However, Soken’s screens at the Asian Art Museum were painted around 1703 and postdate Kōrin’s work by half a decade, thus ruling out a direct connection between the two. The Yale screens, on the other hand, were painted between around 1690 and 1692. Thus, the screens are relatively close in time to Kōrin’s Twelve Months—made between 1696 and 1699—and provide a reliable basis for analyzing Kōrin’s relationship to Soken.

The two works show several differences. Soken’s screens are painted in a pure Kano style
with distinctive, controlled ink outlines delineating such floral subjects as leaves and tree trunks, creating an impression that is closer to the Konishi Archives’ Kano landscape sketches than to any other work by Kōrin. In his Twelve Months, on the other hand, Kōrin chose to largely omit outlines in favor of broad, soft strokes that serve to create ink surfaces rather than the sharper, smaller strokes in Soken’s paintings (Fig. 1.41 and 1.42; Fig. 1.43 and 1.44). In the same way, Soken’s assertive brushwork, which employs dark hues of ink to create relatively naturalistic representations, contrasts with Kōrin’s light tones that blend into abstract interplays of individual strokes. The works reveal how both artists approached their subjects in different ways; where Soken created vivid likenesses, Kōrin formulated a display of his versatility with brush and ink.

While Kōrin seems to have had some exposure to the style that Soken taught his pupil Sōsen, by the time he painted Twelve Months, Kōrin’s style had absorbed different other elements, suggesting that if Kōrin studied with Soken, he did so only at an earlier point in his life.

Contemporary documents support this assumption.

The Nijō records mention Soken for the first time in 1700, although Kōrin had frequented Tsunahira’s salon since 1689. It seems that the painters operated in different social circles throughout the 1690s, the time when Kōrin painted his Twelve Months. In the Nijō records, Kōrin and Soken appear together only after 1703, while Kenzan and Soken call on Tsunahira on


113 The date of Soken’s first appearance in Nijō-ke nainai gobansho hinamiki is 1700/01/09. He is referred to as Kano Sūma here. Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 51.
different earlier occasions together. Kōrin, rather than Kōrin, may have been affiliated with Soken at the time, a fact that could explain the presence of an undiluted Kano style in Kōrin’s early ceramics.

There is no other textual evidence that suggests that Kōrin and Soken knew each other prior to 1703. Given the meticulous preservation of documents in the Konishi Archives, the complete absence of Soken’s name or any suggestion of a teacher-pupil relationship in other sources makes the likelihood of Kōrin’s apprenticeship with the Kano artist speculative at best. If Kōrin studied with Soken, he did so before the 1690s, prior to Kōrin’s association with the Nijō family.

Generally speaking, however, Soken cannot be completely ruled out as an early teacher of Kōrin; a similar unaltered Kano style is reflected in Kōrin’s sketches, though not in his paintings. Timing also corroborates the claim that Soken could have instructed Kōrin before the 1690s. Soken received his hokkyō title in 1687, roughly ten years before Kōrin painted his Twelve Months, making Soken a painter established enough to take on pupils. Soken may have been responsible for Kōrin’s study of Kano modes before the 1690s, such as those represented by his sketches in the Konishi Archives. Kōrin, however, seems to have turned away quickly from such pure reflections of Kano style. Soken could have laid the initial foundations for Kōrin’s paintings, but both artists’ stylistic dissimilarities indicate that Soken’s eventual traction in Kōrin’s work was spotty, even if he actually taught him. Instead, Kōrin’s Twelve Months reflect

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114 Ibid., 55.

115 A set of twelve dishes with pictures of the twelve months after Teika was painted in the Kano mode. The set is owned by the MOA Museum and an inscription by Kenzan dates it to 1702, the time when both Ogata brothers appeared increasingly with Soken.

116 The names of Kōrin’s Noh teachers and related documents, for example, survive in considerable numbers. See Chapter Two.
some reliance on a different set of Kano modes, namely those of the Kyoto-based Kano atelier, or Kyō-Gano. For his *Twelve Months* screens, Kōrin seems to have turned in part to Kano Einō, the third head of the Kyoto Kano school, and his son Eikei to find stylistic inspiration.

**Kano Einō and Eikei**

In the tightly knit social sphere of Kyoto, Kōrin kept company with different Kano artists who painted similar themes for a comparable pool of clients. Kōrin’s contemporaries, the Kyoto Kano school painters Einō and Eikei, also capitalized on the pronounced interest in seasonal *waka* poetry that was prevalent in court circles during the Genroku era.¹¹⁷ Kōrin’s exposure to Eikei as a direct competitor may have guided his early approach to painting that appears in his *Twelve Months* screens.

The peak of Eikei’s activities overlapped with the beginnings of Kōrin’s artistic career during the 1690s. In 1694, Nijō Tsunahira summoned Kōrin and Eikei as part of a large retinue to be presented with monetary gifts that were customarily given at the end of the year.¹¹⁸ Eikei also received commissions from Tsunahira and his wife, the imperial princess Masako (1673–1746), an honor that he shared with Kōrin. For example, in 1686, Eikei was called to paint *fusuma* for the newly constructed quarters of Masako as one of Tsunahira’s wedding presents. In 1699, Eikei received a commission from Nishi Honganji, a temple whose later head priest, Jūnyō (1673–1739), was a brother of Tsunahira and already apprenticed with its current abbot. Kōrin himself

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¹¹⁸ Another unknown Kano painter, Kano Shinzaburō, is also recorded. Shinzaburō’s name ceased to appear in the Nijō records about a year after Eikei’s last visit, suggesting that he belonged to the Kyoto Kano school. See Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 46. Eikei appears first in the Nijō records in 1676/07/22, at age fifteen. See Igarashi, “Kano Eikei no kenkyū,” 11.
maintained close connections with the upper-tier clergy of Nishi Honganji; he attended a Noh performance with Tsunahira in 1694 and met the abbot and Jūnyo there.\footnote{See the discussion of Kōrin’s relationship with the abbacy of Nishi Honganji in Chapter Two.}

Tsunahira and Nishi Honganji were main pillars in the professional lives of Kōrin and Eikei. Soken and Kōrin appear together only after 1703 in the Nijō records; Einō, Eikei, and various Ogata family members attended the same events held by Tsunahira by the mid-1690s, the time just before Kōrin painted his *Twelve Months*.\footnote{The Nijō records do not refer to the Kano painter by the name Einō, but instead use his alias Kano Nuinosuke. Igarashi speculated that Einō passed on this name, designating the head of the Kyoto Kano atelier, to Eikei once he inherited the leadership by 1684. This appears to be a valid assumption, since Einō largely ceased to paint after 1684 and devoted himself to more theoretically-minded work, namely compiling his *Honchō gashi*, completed in 1678 and printed in 1693 under that title. The Nijō, who associated mainly with active painters, would likely have sought Eikei’s company over the retired Einō. See Quitman E. Phillips, “Honchō gashi and the Kano Myth,” *Archives of Asian Art* 47 (January 1994): 46–57. Igarashi Kōichi, *Kyō-Gano sandai ikinokori no monogatari: Sanraku Sansetsu Einō to Kujō Yukiie* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2012), 200–201.} As he did for Kōrin, Tsunahira acted as the sponsor and social link between the Kyoto Kano school and the upper echelons of Kyoto’s intellectual elite. The frequency with which Kōrin called on Tsunahira suggests that he lobbied for his sponsorship beyond the realm of social interaction; around the latter half of the 1690s, Kōrin had successfully cultivated Tsunahira as a patron and powerful advocate of his artistic talent. Tsunahira’s preference for Eikei around the 1690s might have stimulated Kōrin to adjust his style to that of the Kano painter in order to solicit Tsunahira’s favor—a precarious enterprise since paintings of such conservative subjects like in *Twelve Months* needed to adhere to common expectations while also ideally providing some visual stimulus. Such an agenda required Kōrin to carve out an artistic niche for himself and build a central role among the court’s web of patronage, a position then occupied by the Kyoto Kano workshop.

Kōrin had developed a distinctive interpretation of the Kano modes of his time, which suggests how he might have received painting instruction by the early 1690s or before and not at
the time he made *Twelve Months*. At the time of his interaction with Einō and Eikei, Kōrin was well on his way to formulating a personalized visual language that eventually gained him aristocratic favors that led to his receiving the *hokkyō* title in 1701. In light of his increasing artistic emancipation by the 1690s, Kōrin likely did not undergo direct instruction with another painter. Kōrin’s attempts to formulate a visual language that was close to the Kyoto Kano but not the same were stimulated by competition rather than apprenticeship. Einō and Eikei were not only a part of aristocratic circles of patronage, the two painters also made versions of the *Hatakeyama shōsakutei shika*’s definition of the twelve months—a relatively rare subject compared with the more prominent birds and flowers of the *Twelve Months* laid out by Teika. The two Kyoto Kano artists supplied a solid point of reference for an emerging painter such as Kōrin.

Einō seems to have largely retired from painting by 1684, and Eikei took over as the fourth head of the Kyoto Kano workshop. Kōrin’s *Twelve Months* and Eikei’s rendering of the same subject share similarities that are subtle enough to prevent accusations of imitation. The compositions in both works differ, and in most cases the artists’ similar handling of the brush bring about contrasting results. However, the two pieces are stylistically close enough to suggest a connection. The two works emphasize the effects of ink as their main visual ingredient. For example, in the image for the first month, Kōrin and Eikei compose the craggy plum branches in a similar staccato brushwork whose correspondence extends down to the hue of the ink. Comparable correlations pervade both artists’ screens in which soft strokes of light ink formulate trees, flowers, and landscapes (Fig. 1.45; 1.46).

In his effort to establish himself as a painter, Kōrin relied on recognizability. The
cauldron-shaped seal in *Hotei Playing Kemari* is reminiscent of the Kano studio’s set of trademarks. The most prominent user of such a seal was Kano Motonobu (1476–1559), who occupied a monumental place in the minds of the Edo period intelligentsia and was respectfully called “old hōgen” (*ko hōgen*). However, the equally grand Kano Tan’yū also carried the *hōgen* title and used cauldron-shaped seals, as did many other Kano painters throughout the Edo period, among them Kōrin’s contemporary and artistic peer, Kano Eikei. Kōrin’s early oeuvre shares substantial overlap with Eikei, and the Kano artist signed his own rendering of the *Twelve Months*, a subject painted by Kōrin, with a cauldron-shaped seal and his signature emanating like smoke from it, just like Kōrin’s signature and seal in *Hotei Playing Kemari* (Fig. 1.47; 1.48).

The corresponding lives of Kōrin and Eikei, and their similar lineup of clients likely caused some rivalry. This competition may have led to Kōrin appropriating elements of the Kyoto Kano practice into his earliest screen painting. Some inscribers of the *Hatakeyama shōsakutei shika* paintings by Einō and Eikei correspond with those of Kōrin’s *Twelve Months* screens; Eikei’s *Twelve Months* screens include inscriptions by Takatsukasa Kanehiro, Nakano’in Michishige, the latter’s son Michimi, and Seikanji Hirosada. All four also inscribed Kōrin’s work, showing how the painters navigated the same pool of patrons.¹²¹

Although it was common in Kyoto’s tightly knit cultural sphere to have overlapping

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¹²¹ Tatara, “Kano Einō Jūnikagetsu kai zu byōbu ni tsuite,” 62–63, 67. Earlier, in 1694, Kōrin, Kenzan, and Eikei together attended an audience with the Fifth Princess. Madenokōji Atsufusa, the inscriber of the *waka* for the twelfth month in Kōrin’s *Twelve Months* screens, was also present. Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 46.
contacts, the presence of Takatsukasa Kanehiro here is conspicuous. As Minister of the Left, Kanehiro was one of the most exalted courtiers of the day. Gaining his favor must have been paramount in Kōrin’s quest to establish himself as an artist. Kōrin and Eikei’s screens of the same subject were both completed around the same time and were used as vehicles for the calligraphy of a very similar set of court nobles; Kanehiro was one of the highest-ranking inscribers for both screens. Kanehiro’s uncle Kōken, the abbot of Sanbōin, was also well-acquainted with Kōrin and Kenzan since the brothers performed Noh for him 1675. Einō also received commissions from Kōken and visited him multiple times between 1668 and 1674, always bringing courtesy gifts.

Here again it was Nijō Tsunahira, a cousin of Kanehiro, who acted as a connecting agent between the Ogata brothers and the upper echelons of court nobility. The three courtiers visited Kenzan in 1693 and, given Kanehiro’s influential position, Kōrin’s bestowal with the hokkyō title by the imperial court may have been supported by Kanehiro and Tsunahira. It is striking that the author of Kōrin’s hokkyō certificate, Washino’o Takanaga (1672–1736), attended banquets and other social gatherings at Tsunahira’s residence together with Kōrin in the years leading up

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122 The imperial court at the time was a tightly interwoven web of family connections in which the most prominent families were related to one another through complex ties of marriage and blood. Takatsukasa Kanehiro’s uncle, Kujō Kaneharu (1641–1677), was the biological father of Tsunahira. Kanehiro was also a nephew of Kōken, the abbot of Sanbōin, for whom Kōrin performed Noh as a youth. Thus, by the mid-1690s Kōrin was known among multiple levels of the court aristocracy. Kanehiro, as one of the most senior courtiers in Kōrin and Eikei’s respective projects, was accorded prominent positions within the two pairs: the twelfth month in Eikei’s screens and the first month in Kōrin’s work. Each courtier who inscribed the Twelve Months screens by Kōrin likely knew at least the name of the man who painted them.

123 These gifts included fan paintings, various types of food, and a souvenir from a trip to Edo. See Igarashi, Kinsei Kyōto gadan no nettowaaku, 116.

124 For 1693/10/06 Nijō ke nainai gobansho hinamiki records how Tsunahira stopped by Kenzan’s place during a visit to Ryūanji, accompanied by former chancellor (kanpaku) Takatsukasa Fusasuke and his son, minister of the left Takatsukasa Kanehiro.
to Kōrin’s hokkyō bestowal. Tsunahira clearly enjoyed showing off Kōrin to his illustrious guests, many of whom would emerge as important agents in shaping Kōrin’s fortunes at court, and his future career as an artist.

Emura Tomoko has discovered that Washino’o Takanaga purportedly studied painting with Kano Einō. The validity of this claim is uncertain, yet the frequency with which Einō is brought forth as the painting instructor for courtiers of Kōrin’s time—Takanaga is not the only one—implies that the Kyoto Kano style continued to receive favor among the aristocracy, a fact that may have stimulated Kōrin to adopt elements of it into his own early oeuvre.

With the completion of Twelve Months, Kōrin had proved his cultural and painterly erudition to qualify for continuous favors from the court that instigated a series of painting commissions immediately after the pair of screens. All of the works that Kōrin made for aristocratic sponsors after Twelve Months are conspicuous in their use of expensive materials such as silk, azurite, and malachite. Such costly resources reflect the confidence and benevolence that Kōrin’s art and persona had engendered over a period of little more than a decade. Kōrin’s study under a Kano master and his competition with the Kyoto Kano appear to be a calculated move to solidify relations with the court at a crucial and desperate time in his life.

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125 Between 1697 and 1699, Washino’o Takanaga attended a total of twelve gatherings at Tsunahira’s residence when Kōrin was also present. At one occasion, in 1697/03/04, the courtier and Kōrin alone were the guests. Kōrin performed otogi at most of the twelve gatherings, suggesting how his talents as a performer may have contributed to his bestowal with the hokkyō title. See Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 48–52.

126 The 1883 biography of painters, Fusō gajin den, claims that Takanaga received painting instruction with Einō. See Emura, “Neoi no bungen,” 279–280.

127 Fusasuke, the father of Kancheiro, was the younger brother of the Sanbōin abbot Köken for whom Kōrin and Kenzan performed Noh in 1675. See Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 45 and Igarashi, Kinsei Kyōto gadan no nettowaaku, 170. See also Chapter Two. In the time between the mid-1690s and before 1704, Kōrin received several possible commissions from aristocrats, such as his portraits of the poets Sōgi and Botanka Shōhaku; the Irises screens (Nézu Museum, Tokyo), perhaps ordered by the temple Nishi Honganji; and Cormorant Fisher (Seikadō Bunko Art Museum).
By around 1694, Eikei suddenly disappeared from the Nijō records, leaving only two possible explanations: either he found new patrons or fell out of favor with Tsunahira. Shortly after, Kōrin painted his *Twelve Months*, a work that shows a secure handling of the brush and is reflective of a painter who was well on his way to craft personal expressions through a blend of different styles. No doubt Tsunahira was aware of both Kōrin’s distinctive interpretation of Kano paintings, and the artist’s ambition to establish himself as an independent atelier. As a result, the aristocrat may have shifted his favor away from Eikei who, in contrast to Kōrin, never attained the *hokkyō* title.

For seventeenth-century contemporaries, the classical era of Teika and that of the medieval poet Sōgi and the Hatakeyama gathering were an ancient past that formed a deep-rooted presence in the lives of the aristocracy. The medieval period provided a proxy through which earlier culture was read and appreciated. This friction of temporal remoteness and intellectual proximity required a particularly delicate approach to visualizing the past. Artists needed to adhere to a standard that was conservative enough to provide the air of an imagined antiquity while still inserting new stimuli to freshen up the old with a contemporary flair. In a sense, the picture needed to be both recognizable and subtly allusive. The past was relevant to the present and acted as an antique, ideal mirror through which to understand and value contemporaneous affairs.

The successful completion of Kōrin’s earliest painting projects likely paved the way for his receipt of the *hokkyō* title in 1701. Successive commissions such as *Sōgi, Hotei Playing Kemari*, and *Twelve Months* established the artist as a fully recognized painter and enabled him
to pursue the arts as his main vocation. While Kōrin sold broadly and worked for aristocrats and upscale commoners alike, his earliest surviving works are embedded in the aesthetics of the court and its long-standing literary and artistic traditions. Over the centuries that Kyoto was the hub for imperial governance, these traditions permeated into the city’s consciousness and assumed part of its local identity. Kōrin, born and bred in that capital, was as much a reformer as he was a traditionalist. As we shall see in the following chapter, he inhaled that local legacy, digested it, and on its basis eventually forged distinctive forms of painterly expression, constantly testing the relationship of the literary and the pictorial arts.
Chapter Two: Painting Flowers

A flower may be just a flower or, in other cases, it may be the bearer of different cultural meanings. By drawing from literature and theater, this chapter investigates the potential connection between different artistic genres—lacquer, pottery, and painting—that are manifest in one of Kōrin’s most enigmatic works, a pair of screens entitled *Irises* at the Nezu Museum, Tokyo (Fig. 2.1). The screens are emblematic of the interconnectivity between various arts in Kōrin’s oeuvre. While relying on visual simplicity and the effect of malachite green and azurite blue, the work alludes to a range of artistic and cultural references. Kōrin painted *Irises* shortly after he received the *hokkyō* title in 1701, but the screens mark a significant turn away from earlier works, such as *Twelve Months*. A lack of documentation and clear provenance prior to the late nineteenth century leaves us to speculate about the work’s meaning and patrons.

A reading through the Noh theater may supply a link to the screens’ possible patron, the temple Nishi Honganji. In this context, I present the theory that the unusually thick application of dark azurite in *Irises* establishes a connection to color symbolism in the Noh drama *Kakitsubata*, a conjecture that is supported by the pottery of Kōrin’s brother Kenzan. In this way, *Irises* becomes part of a lineage of different interrelated media that exemplifies Kōrin’s thorough education in literature, performance, and the visual arts.

The arts in the early modern period formed an interconnected web, where all aspects in one way or another were related to each other. In Kōrin’s case, each art form played a role in his development into a quintessential man of culture. Ihara Saikaku’s popular novel, *Nihon eitai kura* (Japanese Repository of Permanence; 1688), not without some sarcasm, tells of the scion to a rich merchant family who surrounded himself with the best teachers of his time: Kanamori
Sōwa (1584–1656), a leading figure in seventeenth-century chanoyu, instructed him in tea; Nishiyama Sōin (1605–1682) was his renga teacher; and the Kobatake troupe taught him Noh.¹ The fictional bon vivant portrayed by Saikaku found his match in the young Kōrin, who profited from a similar education.

The ninth-century Tales of Ise, the literary source for the iris flower, looked back on a multifaceted history in the arts, which contributed to the complexity of Irises. The painting’s success is manifest in the significant number of artworks that Kōrin devoted to the same subject throughout his career. This chapter takes a look at the different agents that may have impacted Irises and subsequent renderings like Irises at Yatsuhashi, kept at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Fig. 2.2). Two of Kōrin’s most important works, Irises and Irises at Yatsuhashi unveil the complex cultural mechanisms at work in the artist’s attempt to transfer the faculties of different arts to painting.

I. A Sea of Irises

In Kōrin’s time, irises were the floral symbol for the fifth month and a signifier for the ninth chapter of the Tales of Ise.² The chapter—the source for the play Kakitsubata—is one in a series of episodes in which the protagonist of the tales, traditionally identified as the courtier Ariwara Narihira (825–880), travels eastward (azuma kudari), to the Kantō region of Japan. There, he and his companions encounter the delta of the Azuma river that is traversed by eight bridges (yatsuhashi) with irises blooming in the marsh. The scenery inspired the protagonist to

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² Fujiwara Teika’s definition of the twelve months early on established the sweetflag, a variant of irises, as the flower for the fifth month.
compose a lyrical response expressing his gloom at being far away from home. The poem used the five syllables of the Japanese word for iris, *ka-ki-tsu-ba-ta*, as the first syllable for each line.³

*Irices* takes up this episode of the *Tales of Ise* and reinvents it in one of the most baffling paintings of Japan’s early modern period. The expanse of iris flowers continues to captivate viewers and opens up a window onto Kōrin’s artistic practice during the first years of the eighteenth century.

**An Unusual Pair of Screens**

Impressed with his two round “Koresuke” (or “Iryō”) seals and inscribed with “Hokkyō Kōrin” in the abbreviated fashion of Kōrin’s earliest paintings, the screens present striking images of flowers in thick malachite and azurite. Kōrin pre-planned the composition carefully. Scientific analysis has shown how the gold leaf was applied around the main clusters of irises and not underneath the pigment.⁴ Kōrin sketched out the composition beforehand in thin lines of

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³ The poem reads:
I have a beloved wife,
Familiar as the skirt
Of a well-worn robe,
And so this distant journeying
Fills my heart with grief.


ink and pigment, and applied the gold prior to embarking on the laborious process of brushing layer upon layer of costly mineral pigments.5

As was the case with other commissions, Kōrin eventually seems to have altered the composition. He painted some individual flowers and parts of them, particularly in the upper portions of both screens, directly onto the gold leaf. The lower, denser clusters were painted on the screens’ backing paper, with the gold pasted around them. Kōrin revisited his works often. A scroll depicting seasonal flowers in ink and light colors, painted around 1705, is sprinkled with gold dust around most of its floral subjects except for the second plant, which he painted on top of the gold dust (Fig. 2.3).6

The rich green and blue colors in *Irices* generate in the viewer the sensation of sitting amidst a sea of flowers. Instead of filling in the pigments in a mechanical fashion to build up dark hues, each stroke corresponds to the shape it represents. Kōrin used sharp, elongated brushstrokes for the leaves in malachite and broad, wavy ones for each petal of the iris blossoms. This way, he created an almost sculptural tactility that evokes the glossy luster of real irises. Adding to their sophisticated brushwork, in his composition Kōrin followed largely geometric principles. In spite of the seemingly scattered arrangement, the main row of iris blossoms in the right screen, for example, is positioned along a horizontal axis in the upper part of the pictorial space. Their stalks, on the other hand, form four V-shaped clusters that seem like columns supporting the abundance of azurite flowers above them. In the left screen, Kōrin organized the

5 See Ibid. Azurite and malachite were mined in Japan since at least the Heian period (794–1185). However, domestic production was not perfected before the early eighteenth century. Such circumstances necessitated the import of large quantities from China, making azurite and malachite extremely costly pigments. See Tsuruta Eiichi, “Ganryō no rekishi,” *Shikizai kyōkaishi* 75, no. 4 (April 2002): 49–50.

6 On the *Flowers of the Four Seasons* scroll, now cut up and divided among different private collections, see Chapter Three.
flowers along a total of roughly six short vertical lines, each ending just above the lower center of each panel in the screen.

Although the flowers in each screen of the pair are separated into four main groups, each work creates a distinctively different impression. The right screen displays the luscious iris flowers at the eye level of an early modern viewer of average height. When seated before them—as would have been the case in premodern indoor settings—the viewer sees the flowers hover above his head. By contrast, in the left screen Kōrin organized the irises in the lower half of the picture plane, inviting the viewer to sit before them and feel immersed in a luxurious sea of azurite and malachite. The low expanse of irises embraces the beholder and creates the sensation of sitting among the flowers at the shore of the Azuma river.

An even more captivating feature of the screens is their play with repetition; two groups of iris blossoms are repeated in each screen. However, the iris clusters are similar but not identical, suggesting that rather than using a stencil, Kōrin drew them freehand following painting models. The meticulously calculated arrangement determines the screen’s impact on its beholders and engages them in a game of recognizability and concealment. When looked at closely, the screens’ iris flowers reveal the individual recipe that Kōrin used for each of them. No part was painted with the same kind of stroke, just as in nature no flower is the exact copy of another. By combining the carefully calculated repetition of the iris clusters in both screens with a naturalistic rendering, Kōrin endowed the work with a visual tension that stimulates the viewer to respond to its peculiar structure.

Kosugi Ichio was the first to identify the repetitive clusters of flowers in *Irises*, which led him to propose that Kōrin made use of paper stencils, akin to the kinds used in textile making—a technique that Kōrin could have been familiar with through his family business, the Kariganeya. See Kosugi Ichio, “Kakitsubata zu byōbu ni mirareru kata no shiyō,” *Sansai* 130 (September 1960), 35–38.
Kōrin’s placement of the repeated flowers within the pictorial frame is conspicuous. In the right screen, he made sure to position two similar clusters of irises directly on the folds that customarily separate the panels of a screen: the arrangement of irises in the first two panels reappears in a slightly lower position in the fourth and fifth panels of the same screen (Fig. 2.4). The first and second panels fold inwards, while the fourth and fifth fold outwards. In so doing, the alternating angles serve to obscure the two iris clusters’ repetition, rather than emphasizing them. This compositional feature encourages the eye to revisit the work again and again in order to make sense of the puzzling resemblance among the flowers.

Kōrin followed a corresponding strategy in the pair’s left screen: the arrangement of flowers in panels one and two is immediately repeated in the second and third panels (Fig. 2.5). Although placed right next to each other, the difference in height of both clusters renders their patterns inconspicuous and prevents immediate recognition. By arranging the replicated flowers along the first three panels, they are visually separated by the in- and outward movement of the screen’s folds, the same technique used in the right screen. It appears that Kōrin sought to create a similar tension of concealment and exposure in both paintings.

Such repetition helped to enhance the recognizability of Kōrin’s style and created optical stimuli for viewers, two effects that the painter employed throughout his career. The painting tradition of the Tawaraya and the studio’s head, Sōtatsu, also made extensive use of this method in their figure paintings. Kōrin might have adopted this approach through his study of the Tawaraya atelier’s style, which he began around the time he painted *Irises*. Kōrin’s reliance on repetition as a visual tool may also be a vestige of his family business, the Kariganeya, which

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8 See Chapter Three.
operated as the exclusive supplier of robes to the retired empress Tōfukumon’in and her household. Textile patterns regularly employ repetition and rely on recognition as a means to foster a brand image associated with a particular designer. Several design books of the Kariganeya, surviving in the Konishi Archives, provide a glimpse of how prevalent repeated patterns—also of irises—were among the fashion world that Kōrin was exposed to (Fig. 2.6). The iris flower and the eight bridges were popular motifs for textiles during the Edo period: a Noh robe formerly in the collection of the Maeda clan of Kaga domain carries this motif, and also a set of three sketches for a design of a long-sleeved garment (furisode) by a Maruyama school painter survive (Fig. 2.7; 2.8). Such works exemplify the popularity of the motif among an early modern audience, a fact that might have motivated Kōrin to revisit his family’s heritage for creating one of his first and most striking screen paintings.

Iris, whose date of production falls into the initial years of Kōrin’s professional career as a painter, illustrates the impact of his father, Ogata Sōken, and the Ogata family trade. Kōrin’s renown during the Edo period was in large parts determined by “Kōrin patterns,” which appeared in design catalogues for kimono from the early eighteenth century (Fig. 2.9). It is unknown whether Kōrin was personally involved in the making of such designs, but the public association of Kōrin’s oeuvre with textile patterns establishes a link between Kōrin’s artistic persona and the Kariganeya.

9 The relationship between Iris and stencil use among the Kariganeya has been emphasized by different scholars. See, for instance, Nakabe Yoshitaka, “Kakitsubata zu byobu no kokusaisei,” in Kokuhō Kakitsubata zu: Kōrin Genroku no isai (Tokyo: Nezu Bijutsukan, 2005), 88–89.

In its use of repetitive patterns, *Irises* represents a radical turn away from his first screen painting, *Twelve Months*. Possibly painted shortly after Kōrin received the *hokkyō* title in 1701, *Irises* was made just a few years after *Twelve Months*. Yet the visual impact of the two works is drastically different. If viewed together, they illustrate the high degree of artistic versatility that Kōrin had achieved during the early years of his professional career. Kōrin likely arrived at the Nezu screens not in an ad hoc decision, but through a lengthy process in which he drew from a combination of cultural contexts and artistic precedents. Ultimately, *Irises* marked the beginning of a full-fledged new body of works that left a lasting impact on Kōrin’s artistry, client base, and personal mindset.

**Unidentical Twins: *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi***

Kōrin painted the Nezu screens shortly after 1701, when he was recognized as a painter by the court. With the pair, the iris flower rose to being one of Kōrin’s signature subjects. Until his death in 1716, he created a number of other works that take the subject as their main motif. For example, the signature and seal, as well as the painting style that Kōrin used in *Irises* closely resemble those in a hanging scroll at the Osaka Municipal Museum of Art that was originally

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11 Yamane has argued that the screens were produced within the window of just one or two years after Kōrin received the *hokkyō* title in 1701. The screens bear a round relief seal reading “Koresuke” (also “Iryō”) 伊亮—employing an alternate choice of characters than his early “Koresuke” 惟亮 seals—that appears exclusively on works with the “Hokkyō Kōrin” signature, which postdates 1701. However, it seems that Kōrin used the seal until around 1704. Also, the signature in *Irises* abbreviates Kōrin in a similar way as in Kōrin’s pre-*hokkyō* works discussed in Chapter One. Kōrin ceased to employ this cursified style only by around 1704. *Irises*, thus, must have been made sometime between 1701 and 1704. Igarashi, on the other hand, has followed Yamane and vouched for the narrow upper limit of 1702 for Kōrin’s use of the seal. See, for instance, Yamane, *Kōrin kenkyū ni*, 187–188 and Igarashi, *Kyōto gadan no nettowaaku*, 167.
mounted on drawers (*kobusuma*) in a *tokonoma* niche (Fig. 2.10). The works’ similarity indicates that they were produced close in time.¹²

Another screen painting, albeit of unknown whereabouts and attributed by means of a later inscription to Sōtatsu, may further reflect the popularity of the motif among Kōrin’s clients.¹³ The composition of the two-panel screen in colors on gold, surviving only in a black-and-white photograph, corresponds with two sections in the right screen of *Irices* and Kōrin has been suggested as their possible painter.¹⁴ The irises in the right panel of the lost screen match the rightmost panel of *Irices*; the left panel corresponds with the flowers in the fifth and sixth panels. However, they are no exact match (Fig. 2.11; 2.12; 2.13). It is impossible to establish the screen’s authenticity, but scholars have proposed that both the two-panel screen and the Osaka hanging scroll postdate *Irices*, which seems to have set a precedent for other paintings.¹⁵

Yet the possibility remains that the lost screen, if indeed by Sōtatsu or the Tawaraya atelier, may have preceded Kōrin’s works and provided a model for Kōrin’s own renderings of the iris flower. Among the sketch books of the early nineteenth-century Sumiyoshi family we find a study of a painting of irises that is attributed to the Tawaraya (Fig. 2.14). The work apparently bore a round “Inen” ᵃⁿ seal associated with Sōtatsu’s atelier, a fact that increases the likelihood that Sōtatsu or a follower could have painted the two-panel iris screen. Unfortunately,

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¹² Besides Kōrin’s Metropolitan Museum *Irices at Yatsushashi*, the Osaka hanging scroll, and sketches of irises, in color (plant-based green and light purple pigment) and monochrome (Kyoto National Museum), two fan paintings (Hatakeyama Museum and Yamato Bunkakan) survive.

¹³ The work was authenticated by Ishida Yūtei (1721–1786), a painter who taught Maruyama Ōkyo (1733–1795), among others.


however, the screen and the original of the Sumiyoshi sketch do not survive, making a clear attribution impossible. Still, we cannot rule out the possibility that for Kōrin’s iris paintings, too, Sōtatsu may have supplied a prototype.

The continuity of Kōrin’s iris paintings is best reflected in *Irises at Yatsuhashi*. The pair of six-panel screens bears a “Hokkyō Kōrin” signature on the right screen and “Seisei Kōrin” on the left. The latter signature, in addition to the round “Masatoki” seal impressed on both screens suggest that Kōrin painted the work during the last half-decade or so of his life, after he returned to his native Kyoto from Edo around 1709. The screens depict an array of iris flowers with voluptuous blossoms in azurite blue on slender stalks in malachite green that are painted in a brushwork similar to *Irises*. The hue of the blue and green colors in both works and even their pattern of wear correspond. The right screen in each pair—prior to modern restoration work—show a stronger loss of pigment, indicating that each was more frequently used and the screens were often put out separately (Fig. 2.15; 2.16).

In order to lay out the composition in *Irises at Yatsuhashi*, Kōrin drew the outlines in ink, traces of which can still be found in the work today. This feature correlates with *Irises*, where restoration work has revealed how the painter first laid out his arrangement of flowers in thin lines of ink and malachite before filling in the pigment (Fig. 2.17; 2.18; 2.19). Noguchi Takeshi has shown how some clusters of irises in the Nezu screens are repeated in *Irises at Yatsuhashi*. The bundle that is replicated in the right screen of the Nezu pair matches a group of flowers at the center of the right screen of *Irises at Yatsuhashi*, extending from the third to the fourth panel;

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a second cluster, connecting the second and third panels of the right screen in *Irises*, finds its counterpart in the upper portion of the sixth panel of the right screen in the Metropolitan Museum work (Fig. 2.20; 2.21). The same visual strategy is reiterated in the left screens of both pairs, though to a lesser extent. Here, a clump of four flowers in the upper portion of the fourth panel in *Irises* finds its duplicate in the upper fourth panel of *Irises at Yatsuhashi*. Some flowers of the fifth and sixth panel of the Nezu screen conform with irises in the upper part of the fifth panel in the Metropolitan Museum painting (Fig. 2.22; 2.23). Certain overlaps, especially in the right screen, are more straightforward than others and they reveal a remarkable consistency between Kōrin’s iris paintings.

No doubt Kōrin kept a collection of models, which he safeguarded throughout his career. He continued this practice in other floral paintings, too. In a late letter to his son, Konishi Juichirō, Kōrin asks to see a screen of chrysanthemums—presumably by the artist’s own hand—to sketch it, illustrating the painter’s labors to compile reference models for later works.¹⁸ This practice not only facilitated studio production among Kōrin’s late oeuvre, but helped cultivate the kind of trademark image that is reflected in the so-called “Kōrin patterns” in the world of early modern fashion.

In terms of color and materials, *Irises at Yatsuhashi* most likely relies on *Irises* as its conceptual forbear, but its most conspicuous difference is the prominently placed, abstract bridge. Painted in ink with patches of malachite, the bridge traverses the screens’ composition and connects both works, reaching from the upper right screen towards just a few inches beyond the center of the left. Also, in *Irises at Yatsuhashi* Kōrin painted his composition of flowers in

¹⁸ The letter is translated later in this chapter.
mineral pigment onto a ground of shell-white, a feature not used in *Irises*, where most of the painting is done directly onto the paper ground.\(^{19}\) Adding white to mineral pigments seems to have been an accepted practice in early modern painting.\(^{20}\) The stalks in malachite green, however, appear to lack a shell-white foundation. Kōrin seems to have used the same technique for the bridge, where shell-white may have provided a basis for the ink (Fig. 2.24). Also in the flowers, this ground layer probably served to provide traction for the azurite blue, which Kōrin applied in visibly thinner layers than in *Irises*, albeit resulting in a similarly dark hue. The corresponding colors in *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi* exemplify how the Nezu screens served as a chromatic template for later large-scale renderings of the ninth episode of the *Tale of Ise*.

The painting process in both works, however, differs: Kōrin drew the composition of *Irises* onto the paper surface of the screens, with gold leaf applied around the main composition of flowers, while in *Irises at Yatsuhashi* he added the painting directly onto the ground of gilded paper. Here the gold covers the entire surface of the pair. The approach used to paint *Irises* is singular among Kōrin’s works and makes the Nezu screens an anomaly among the painter’s oeuvre. This special feature of *Irises* could also result from the fact that the screens were Kōrin’s earliest expensive commission. In sketching out the composition on an inexpensive ground first, Kōrin might have wanted to leave space for errors. Patrons could have been reluctant to supply him with a fully gilded screen, a challenge the artist would not have faced in later commissions, such as the Metropolitan Museum screens, when he was more established. Kōrin’s earliest screen

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\(^{19}\) Recent scientific analysis conducted by the Metropolitan Museum of Art has unveiled how Kōrin appears to have applied a ground layer of shell-white onto which he added azurite and malachite. See Marco Leona and Jennifer Perry, “Beneath the Blue: A Scientific Analysis of Kōrin’s *Irises at Yatsuhashi*,” *Impressions* 37 (March 2016): 129–139 and Carpenter, *Designing Nature*, 24–25.

\(^{20}\) For example, Tosa Mitsuoki (1617–1691) writes in his *Honchō gahō taiden* that adding shell-white to azurite blue is adequate for creating a lighter hue. See Sakazaki Shizuka, ed., *Nihon kaigaron taikei*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Meicho Fukyūkai, 1979), 35.
paintings—Twelve Months and a pair of six-panel screens with autumnal plants—were both executed on a paper ground.21 Thus, the technique used in Irises is reminiscent of this early trait of Kōrin’s oeuvre. Scientific analysis has revealed that a second late work by Kōrin, the screens Red and White Plum Blossoms, which are thought to postdate Irises at Yatsuhashi by a few years, were also painted directly onto the gilded ground, evincing how Kōrin discarded the technique used in Irises in his late oeuvre (Fig. 2.25).

Both works’ size—with 150.9 x 338.8 cm Irises is more squat than Irises at Yatsuhashi at 163.7 x 352.4 cm—creates a contrasting first impression. This difference in visual effect is amplified by the arrangement of the flowers. In Irises, Kōrin positioned the irises to correspond with the screens’ folds, a compositional feature that reveals his keen awareness of the physicality of the work. In the right screen of Irises, for example, the first two panels along with the fourth and sixth panels carry groups of irises that form an elongated oval shape which, by way of the screen’s respective in- and outward folds, generate the sensation of gigantic, three-dimensional flowers meandering up and down. The plasticity thus created stands in delicate contrast with the flat nature of the flowers’ overall painterly rendering. In Irises at Yatsuhashi, Kōrin employed the ink bridge—an equally flat object that gains three-dimensionality through the screens’ folds—to foster an illusion of depth. The shadows caused by light falling onto the folds of the standing screens clad the bridge’s zigzagging pattern in areas of dark and light that make the composition appear to twist back- and forward in space.

Another feature that distinguishes both works are the flowers’ proportions. In keeping with the narrow rectangular panels of Irises at Yatsuhashi, Kōrin rendered most flowers in

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21 The pair of screens was introduced by Yamane, who dated them to the late 1690s. Their present whereabouts are unknown. Yamane Yūzō, “Kōrin hitsu Akikusa zu byōbu ni tsuite,” Bijutsu kenkyū 206 (September 1959): 26–35.
roughly the same height. In *Irises*, Kōrin distributed plants of varying sizes, allowing the viewer to experience the irises at different vantage points in the same pair of screens. *Irises at Yatsuhashi*, by contrast, feels more like a panorama of irises viewed at a slight distance, while the Nezu screens place the beholder amidst the marshes surrounding the flower.

Kōrin also transformed his rendering of the iris flowers in *Irises at Yatsuhashi*. He replaces the plump, stylized blossoms in *Irises* with slender, wavy petals in a seeming attempt to endow his irises with an even stronger naturalism. Sketches of irises in the Konishi Archives are closer to the flowers in *Irises at Yatsuhashi* than in the Nezu screens, suggesting that, after he painted *Irises*, Kōrin may have sought to enhance the level of lifeliness in his signature motif by studying irises in nature (Fig. 2.26).

*Irises* represented a new stage in Kōrin’s artistic career and the work provided the threshold to an entire category among the artist’s oeuvre. The screens established the iris flower as one of Kōrin’s most oft-painted subjects. They formed the foundation for paintings like *Irises at Yatsuhashi*, which are the product of Kōrin’s late years when he was an accomplished painter with a functioning atelier. The evolution from *Irises* to *Irises at Yatsuhashi* reflects not just Kōrin’s development as a painter, but it may provide evidence of Kōrin’s shifting network of patrons and his move away from the aristocratic sponsorship of his early years to a new clientele in Edo.
Questions of Provenance

Nothing certain is known about the patrons of *Irises*, but auction records indicate that the screens were at the Kyoto temple Nishi Honganji during the early twentieth century.²² Ernest Fenollosa mentions that *Irises* was owned by the temple as early as 1882.²³ Although the early modern art market was free-flowing and works constantly oscillated between patrons, temples guarded their possessions. Especially large-scale works, such as screens, rarely left their monastic owners, if not for extraordinary circumstances. The general prosperity of Nishi Honganji throughout the early modern period and the temple’s close personal ties to Kōrin have led scholars to speculate that *Irises* was commissioned by the institution’s abbacy.²⁴

Kōrin was friends with the aristocratic head of the temple, Jakunyo (1651–1725), and his pupil and successor, Jūnyō. He met the two priests through the Noh theater a few years before he made *Irises*. In 1694, the courtier and patron Nijō Tsunahira took Kōrin to Nishi Honganji to attend a Noh performance.²⁵ Given Tsunahira’s high social rank, the men were likely seated together with the head abbot, Jakunyo. Jūnyō was Tsunahira’s younger brother and, as the abbot’s prime acolyte and future successor, he must have been with them; Kōrin was no doubt

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²² An auction catalogue from 1917/04/01 records *Irises* as a “famous treasure” (*meibutsu*) of Nishi Honganji. At that occasion, the work was sold to the industrialist Nezu Kaichirō (1860–1940), whose collection formed the foundation for today’s Nezu Museum. Scholars today believe that *Irises* was commissioned for Nishi Honganji and remained at the temple from Kōrin’s day until the wake of Japan’s modernity.

²³ Fenollosa writes: “In Japan great Kōrin screens are many, but among the finest are the great iris screens on gold, shown in 1882 by the Nishi Honganji temple at the first loan exhibition of the art club.” Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, 514. See, also, Nakabe Yoshitaka, “Kakitsubata zu byōbu no kokusaisei,” in *Kokuhō Kakitsubata zu: Kōrin Genroku no isai* (Tokyo: Nezu Bijutsukan, 2005), 86.


²⁵ The event is known by way of a courtesy visit by Kōrin to Tsunahira’s residence, recorded for 1694/10/03 in *Nijō-ke vainai gombanshō hinamiki*. The artist thanked Tsunahira for taking him to view Noh performances at Nishi Honganji the previous day. “Ogata Kōrin came to express his gratitude [to his lordship] for taking him to view Noh together yesterday at Nishi Honganji”尾形光琳昨日者西門跡江御供仕御能拌見難有奉存候由為御礼来. Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shirō,” 46.
introduced to Jakunyo and Jūnyo on that occasion, if not earlier. Kōrin associated much with Tsunahira, the period immediately before he received the hokkyō title and painted Irises. Their close relationship is reflected in their visit to Nishi Honganji, a considerable honor for a commoner like Kōrin.

Kōrin’s friendship with Jakunyo and Jūnyo blossomed at the time. Their relationship is best illustrated by a strange, now-lost painting in which Kōrin recorded a dream of Mt. Fuji in 1699 (Fig. 2.27). Struck with the notion that the vision was an omen for the journey to Edo that his friend Jūnyo was supposed to undertake a month later, Kōrin hastened to the temple to report the dream to Jakunyo. Also in the dream, the abbot advised Kōrin to produce a painted record of the mountain, which he did. In the morning, the artist, now awake, grabbed brush and paper and drew his dream. The painting is a personal manifesto to the friendship between Kōrin and Jakunyo and Jūnyo, and in light of the timing of Jūnyo’s journey to Edo, Irises may well have functioned as a symbolic emblem of the eastern regions—the site of the irises and eight-bridges.

We have seen in the preceding chapter that Kōrin was immersed in court circles during the early years of his activities as a vocational painter. This way, the Nezu screens probably exemplify the aristocratic sponsorship that determined Kōrin’s earliest paintings: his portraits of Sōgi and Botanka Shōhaku, Hotei Playing Kemari, and Twelve Months. It is not too far-fetched to assume that Irises could have emerged at the backdrop of Kōrin’s close association with Nijō Tsunahira and his brother Jūnyo at Nishi Honganji. Kōrin’s personal connections to the temple

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26 Jakunyo also had close family ties to Tsunahira. The abbot was the nephew of Kujō Kaneharu, the biological father of Tsunahira, cementing Tsunahira’s instrumental role in connecting Kōrin with the highest tiers of Nishi Honganji.

27 Kōrin’s Dream Fuji was first introduced in 1920 by Fukui Rikichirō. However, the whereabouts of the work are unknown and its authenticity uncertain. See Fukui Rikichirō, “Kōrin no yume,” in Fukui Rikichirō bijutsushi ronshū ge (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2000), 197–209.
draw a relationship between the two that coincided with the time he might have painted *Irises*.

Temples were grand sponsors of the arts and large edifices like Nishi Honganji required considerable numbers of paintings to outfit their many buildings and subsidiary temples. *Irises* was not the only painting of that subject at the temple. An auction catalogue of 1913 records a single six-panel screen of irises along a stylized stream as part of a pair of paintings with birds and flowers of the four seasons. The work is now in the collection of Asia Society, New York (Fig. 2.28). Aside from *Irises*, at different auctions held in 1917, the temple also sold several other paintings and lacquer works attributed to Kōrin, including a painting of geese and one of Fukurokuju. The number of works linked to Kōrin’s name attests both to the substantial collection of his works at Nishi Honganji and the enthusiasm for his art among modern collectors. Although the premodern connection of *Irises* and Nishi Honganji remains speculative, the final part of this chapter will propose another theory how, by way of the Noh theater, *Irises* could fit into the religious belief system of Nishi Honganji.

While *Irises* was likely made under aristocratic sponsorship during the first half of Kōrin’s career, *Irises at Yatsuhashi* embodies features of Kōrin’s late patronage. The exact provenance of the Metropolitan Museum screens is obscure, but they may be linked to the Fuyuki family, an Edo-based dynasty of wealthy lumber merchants. The clan was the only known premodern owner of an iris painting by Kōrin. In 1822, the painter Kita Takekiyo (1776–1857) sketched two pairs of screens by Kōrin in his study book: a work coupling Mt. Fuji with a vista of pine islands (*matsushima*), as well as a pair of iris screens with a zigzagging bridge that

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29 The two works are mentioned in auction records of March and May 1917, respectively.
closely resembles the Metropolitan Museum paintings (Fig. 2.29). Takekiyo’s notes record that he sketched both works on the same day, indicating that they were kept by the same Edo-based owner. Two pairs with that subject were also reproduced in Sakai Hōitsu’s second edition of Kōrin hyakuzu of 1826 (Fig. 2.30). In an undated letter, while researching for the Kōrin hyakuzu, the Hōitsu pupil Suzuki Kiitsu (1796–1858) mentions seeing a pair of screens depicting Mt. Fuji and Matsushima owned by the Fuyuki.30 Since both pairs appear together in both painters’ reproductions, it seems that the Fuyuki also owned the iris screens seen by Takekiyo and Hōitsu.

However, based on differences she observed between Hōitsu’s reproduction of Irises at Yatsuhashi in Kōrin hyakuzu and the Metropolitan screens, Tamamushi Satoko has argued that the work referred to by Hōitsu represents a different, now lost painting by Kōrin.31 Yet the recent discovery of a pair of screens depicting Mt. Fuji and pine islands in a stormy sea supports the claim that the screens reproduced by Takekiyo and Hōitsu are indeed the Metropolitan Museum work (Fig. 2.31). Scholars’ opinions are divided on the question of authenticity, but the newly discovered work—especially in the ink brushwork in the screen depicting pine islands—shows clearly recognizable idiosyncrasies of Kōrin’s hand.32 Discrepancies with Kōrin’s style, in particular in the right screen depicting Mt. Fuji, could result from an increased studio involvement that is characteristic of most large-format works produced after the painter’s return from Edo around 1709.33


33 See Chapter Three.
In light of their corresponding signatures, there is little doubt that the sketches of the screens depicting Mt. Fuji and pine islands by Takekiyo and in Hōitsu’s Kōrin hyakuju
represent the newly discovered work (Fig. 2.32; 2.33; 2.34). Also, Kiitsu himself inscribed the screens’ accompanying box, indicating that the Fuyuki-owned work he referred to in his letter was the newly discovered pair. Comparing the Metropolitan Museum Irises at Yatsuhashi and the Mt. Fuji and Matsushima screens with their counterparts in Kōrin hyakuju, it becomes clear that the differences between original and reproduction in print (on which Tamamushi based her claim) were a common phenomenon (Fig. 2.35). Rather than providing ground for discrediting the identity of a work, such discrepancies resulted from the inherent difficulties of transferring the qualities of one medium to another.

By acknowledging stronger similarities she observed between Takekiyo’s sketches and the Metropolitan Museum Irises at Yatsuhashi, Tamamushi has since partially revised her earlier assessment. She conceded that Takekiyo likely sketched the Metropolitan Museum screens and not some different, now lost example. In addition, the early nineteenth-century Kaganroku (Record of Glancing at the Past; National Diet Library, Tokyo), authored by Kitamura Nobuyo (1784–1856), includes sketches of three iris flowers alongside copies of Kōrin’s signatures “Hokkyō Kōrin” and “Seisei Kōrin,” both of which appear in a similar way in Irises at

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34 Kōrin signed the right screen “Last of the Semigawa School” 蝶川末派 and the left screen “Painted on Request by Ōyūin” 志友人求画之. The signatures appear in an unsigned list in the Konishi Archives, which Kenzan probably compiled for Kōrin after his return from Edo. Both screens also bear “Hokkyō Kōrin” as part of each signature, as well as Kōrin’s round “Masatoki” seal. See Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō, 180.


36 The layout of the bridge in Takekiyo’s rough sketch and the arrangement of the iris flowers are compellingly close to Irises at Yatsuhashi. See Tamamushi Satoko, “Shashi to tōjin he no akogare: Yatsuhashi zu no juyō to tenshō,” Shikun 5 (2013): 73–96.
Yatsuhashi (Fig. 2.36; 2.37). Kaganroku labels them as “signatures of the Yatsuhashi screen(s) in Fuyuki ownership” 冬木所持八橋屏風落款. In light of these Edo connections and the discovery of Kōrin’s Mt. Fuji and Matsushima screens, which Takekiyo and Höitsu reproduce together with Irises at Yatsuhashi and which were kept by the same owner, we learn that both artists saw the Metropolitan Museum work in the Fuyuki collection around the early nineteenth century. Later, however, the screens changed ownership. A 1880 exhibition catalogue records the screens as the possession of Matsudaira Naritami (1814–1891), lord of Tsuyama domain. The work seems to have remained with Naritami until 1919.

Among all this evidence of the pair’s nineteenth-century provenance, the question remains whether Kōrin made the work for the Fuyuki family in the first place. Though Kōrin’s surviving correspondence does not mention any patrons from Edo’s bourgeoisie, Aimi Kōu suggested that Kōrin may have received early training in the tea ceremony together with a certain Fuyuki Goroemon. Goroemon may have been Fuyuki Masachika (d. 1703), the clan’s head at the time. Although definite proof of their connection has yet to be found, these classes, supposedly

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37 Tamamushi, however, has argued that the signatures in Kaganroku and Irises at Yatsuhashi are no exact match and therefore defy a direct connection. See her Toshi no naka no e, 82–83 and “Shashi to tōjin e no akogare,” 85–87.

38 The modern provenance of the screens is complicated by the fact that Irises at Yatsuhashi is referred to as owned by the Ikeda family of Tottori domain in the 1919 auction catalogue of their sale. The Ikeda and Matsudaira families were closely linked by marriage and the Ikeda appear to have kept Irises at Yatsuhashi at the time of the auction, but did not own it. An entry in the diary of Takahashi Yoshio (1861–1937), who attended the auction, notes Matsudaira Narimitsu (1897–1974), the son of Naritami, as the owner of the pair. He writes: “[…] Among the Ikeda family pieces, displayed in the large room (ōhiroma) on the second floor, were Kōrin’s sweetflag screens (ayame no byōbu), owned by Lord Matsudaira Narimitsu […]” 池田家の蔵品は二階大広間に光琳菖蒲の屏風（松平斎光男所蔵）. The Ikeda family, however, is recorded as the owners of Kōrin’s Taigong Wang screen, also auctioned off on that occasion. See Takahashi Yoshio, Manzōroku Takahashi Sōan nikki 7, ed. Tanaka Shūji (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1990), 203 and Noguchi, “Yatsuhashi zu byōbu kō,” 56–57.

conducted by the fifth head of the Omotesenke lineage, Zuiryūsai Sōsa (1650–1691), could have established an early connection between the painter and the Fuyuki. *Hon’ami gyōjōki* contains a detailed passage on the Fuyuki with special emphasis on their collecting activities, suggesting that the Hon’ami and the Fuyuki must have known each other quite early, even before Kōrin’s time.⁴⁰ Kōetsu’s grandson, Kōho (1602–1682), knew Kōshin Sōsa (1613–1671), the fourth generation head of the Omotesenke. For example, Kōho attended a gathering specially held for him by Kōshin in 1640.⁴¹ Also, the Ogata owned a house at Takagamine, the colony founded by Kōetsu that was home to Kōho and his descendants until the early 1700s.⁴² By means of this connection through real estate alone, there remains little doubt that up to their teens the Ogata sons could have been in frequent contact with Kōho, then the head of the Hon’ami clan. The Hon’ami could have helped facilitate an early connection between Kōrin and the Fuyuki through tea.

Although Kōrin’s works entered the collection of the Edo-based Fuyuki, the clan initially resided in Kyoto. During the Genroku era, Masachika frequently stayed in Kyoto over extended periods of time and remained there until his death. In fact, he was the last Fuyuki family member to be buried in Kyoto; afterwards the family fully relocated to Edo, the site of the mainstay of

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⁴² Sōken left the house to Kenzan in 1687. See Appendix Document I / 5. Kōho died in 1682 and was buried at Takagamine. It is highly possible that he was somehow involved in the upbringing of the Ogata brothers. Kōno Motoaki, “Kenzan to Kōrin: kyōdai gyakuten shiron,” in *Kenzan no geijutsu to Kōrin* (Tokyo: NHK Puromōshon, 2007), 9.
their business. Masachika’s presence in Kyoto at the time of Kōrin’s early activities as a painter there could have led to relations with the Fuyuki family prior to Kōrin’s Edo activities.

The Metropolitan Museum screens postdate *Irises* by about a decade. Carrying the “Hokkyō Kōrin” signature—with a clearly written kō character—as well as the late “Masatoki” seal, it appears that Kōrin painted *Irises at Yatsuhashi* after his return from Edo around 1709. Kōrin could have made use of the extensive logistics network in place during the early modern period to ship the screens to their possible Edo patrons. He had ample experience with long-distance commissions through early sales of lacquer and his brother Kenzan’s ceramics. In light of this evidence, Kōrin could have made the screens for the family, an assumption supported by their mutual zeal for tea culture.

The Fuyuki surely had a liking for works that omit the figural representation of a classical narrative’s protagonist, such as in *Irises at Yatsuhashi*. The 47th volume of *Kaganroku* records their ownership of a medieval lacquer box depicting the *Ivy Lane* episode from the *Tales of Ise*. There, the main figures are omitted and alluded to by means of an ownerless backpack, a visual strategy akin to *Irises at Yatsuhashi* (Fig. 2.38; 2.39). Such medieval lacquer objects had a profound impact on Kōrin’s art by way of his ancestor Hon’ami Kōetsu, who employed their stylistic and thematic techniques to create radically new expressions in lacquer. The conceptual relationship between representational strategies in lacquer and screens like *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi* offers insights into Kōrin’s artistic considerations and their resonance with his

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44 The family were also the owners of another work by Kōrin, the so-called *Fuyuki kosode*, where Kōrin painted autumnal plants in ink and light color onto a ground of white satin. See Yamane, “Ogata Kōrin hitsu Shiraji akikusa moyō byakue kosode,” 18–25.
possible clients. In the following section, we will examine this connection and analyze the role of lacquer works in fostering the reduced visual spaces of *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi*.

**II. Kōrin and Lacquer**

The strategy of creating reduced, allusive images of a single floral subject was rooted in traditions of medieval paintings and the decor of lacquer objects. The developments in lacquer designs during the late Muromachi and early Edo periods brought forth abstract representations of literary and theatrical content through so-called absence patterns (*rusu moyō*, or *rusu mon'yō*). Such patterns omitted the human protagonists of their original literary sources, and replaced them with evocative imagery that relied on the suggestive power of symbols. By way of Kōrin’s lacquer works, counted among the earliest art objects that he made, this section argues that this medieval approach to abbreviated imagery paved the way for works like Kōrin’s *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi*.

**Absence Patterns**

In *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi*, Kōrin followed an established tradition of isolating and amplifying a given aspect from a larger cultural context. As his artistic precedents for the screens and other works, Kōrin appears to have turned once again to medieval models. Absence patterns of the ninth chapter of the *Tales of Ise*—an episode that Kōrin frequently painted and that also was the source for *Irises*—appeared as early as the Kamakura period. The artist of a fourteenth-century handscroll with monochromatic line drawings (Itsuō Art Museum, Osaka; Fig. 2.40) that were subsequently inscribed with a sutra text, selected the eight bridges and irises as the main
motif for depicting the ninth chapter of the Tales of Ise. A theory maintains that the painter here betrays an indebtedness to early medieval commentaries on the tales.\textsuperscript{45} The most representative of these commentaries are the early Kamakura-period Reizei family tradition (Reizei-ke ryū Ise monogatari shō) and the commentary Waka chiken shū. Early medieval commentaries wove excessively allegorical theories for identifying protagonists of the Tales of Ise and understanding elements of the plot.\textsuperscript{46} Eventually the early commentaries became the basis for many Noh plays on monogatari like the Tales of Ise. This resulted in significant shifts of emphases and meaning in theater vis-à-vis the narrative’s base text.\textsuperscript{47} For instance, while the renga poet and Tales of Ise commentator Sōgi’s reading of the eight-bridges episode is concerned above all with the poetic

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Uchida, Kōrin maki-e no kenkyū, 204–205.
A fragment of the same scroll that the Itsuō Museum piece belonged to, now at the Tokyo University of the Arts, shows two courtiers gazing in the direction of the irises. Itō Toshiko has argued that the image was part of the yatsuhashi episode, forming a sequence with the next image of irises and eight bridges. Chino Kaori, however, has suggested that the two courtiers are part of the seventh chapter of the Tales of Ise, “Returning Waves,” proposing that yatsuhashi scene is an absence pattern. Whatever the final interpretation, the scene of the irises and yatsuhashi differs from all other fragments of the scroll, where human figures are customarily embedded in the surrounding scenery. Even if the two figures belong to the same episode, the irises and bridges stand isolated from the figures and form a presence of their own. See Itō Toshiko, Ise monogatari-e (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1984), 2–29 (for reproductions), 10–40 (on the work) and Chino Kaori, Emaki Ise monogatari-e, Nihon no bijutsu 301 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1991), 38–41. On an in-depth analysis in English, see Joshua S. Mostow, Courtly Visions: The Ise Stories and the Politics of Cultural Appropriation (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 39–75. Mostow agrees with Chino’s reading of the above-mentioned scene as a representation of the seventh chapter of the Tales of Ise, thus supporting a reading of the irises and eight bridges as an absence pattern.
Kanda Yūko, on the other hand, paid attention to the impact of Noh plays in commentaries of, for instance, the Tales of Ise. By the early modern period, Noh plays, which emerged from commentarial culture, in turn acted as points of reference for different new commentaries. See Kanda Yūko, Nō to kočūshakusho (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 2010), 90–117.
\item Chino Kaori has demonstrated how paintings of the Tales of Ise had by the medieval period already shifted emphases to minor aspects of the base narrative or include features that are not mentioned part of the original texts. See Chino, Emaki Ise monogatari-e, 33–34.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
implications of Narihira’s famous verse about the iris blossoms, *Waka chiken shū* generally infuses the *Tales of Ise* with a religious dimension. This religiosity is taken up by the Noh play *Kakitsubata*, which presents Narihira as a divine avatar and identifies the poet and amorous man as the Bodhisattva of Song and Dance (*kabu no bosatsu*). *Kakitsubata* above all emphasizes the iris flowers over the human protagonists of the *Tales of Ise*, a focus we see reiterated in works like the Itsuō Museum scroll and, ultimately, in Kōrin’s renderings of the ninth chapter of the *Tales of Ise* in *Irises*. Such visualization of presence through absence marks the forebear of Kōrin’s reduced pictorial spaces.

By the Muromachi period, absence patterns similar to the Itsuō scroll had found firm footing in the visual canon of lacquer works, whose decorative system relied mainly on floral, landscape, and patterned motifs. By way of minimal representation with maximum suggestive power, lacquer imbued classical subject matter with an ambiguity that Kōrin eventually adapted in his iris subjects. A *suzuribako* (box for holding an ink stone and other writing utensils) from the Muromachi period, owned by the Hatakeyama Memorial Museum, Tokyo, is one of many objects that illustrate a scene from the ninth chapter of the *Tales of Ise*—the Ivy Lane (*tsuta no hosomichi*)—through absence patterns (Fig. 2.41). Instead of depicting Narihira and his companions, the box replaces the protagonist with the backpack—an unmistakable token of

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48 The *Tales of Ise* became an integral part of seventeenth century culture and Sōgi’s reading was an important aspect in the tales’ early modern reception. Botanka Shōhaku compiled lectures delivered by Sōgi during 1477 and 1491 under the title *Shōmonshō*, or *Ise monogatari shōmonshō*. The work, edited under Sōgi’s guidance, impacted subsequent commentaries, such as Hosokawa Yūsai’s *Ketsugishō* (1596), the most influential commentary of the Edo period. There, Sōgi does not dwell on the iris flowers at all and lays out how Narihira’s poem encapsulates the sadness of travel and parting with those left behind. Katagiri Yōichi, *Ise monogatari no kenkyū Shiryōhen* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1969), 146–150 (*Waka chiken shū* on the ninth chapter), 596–599 (*Shōmonshō* on the ninth chapter).

49 Kawai Masatomo has also suggested a relationship between such medieval absence patterns and Kōrin’s sparse pictorial spaces. See Kawai Masatomo, “Kaiga to ochō bunka no shiten kara,” in *Kokuhō Kakitsubata zu byōbu: hozon shāri shunkō kinen* (Tokyo: Nezu Bijutsukan, 2005), 102–103.
travel—of their guide, a monk. The travel equipment is set amidst an abundance of ivy leaves against the background of a hilly landscape, signifying the literary locale of the Ivy Lane. This representational strategy shifts the focus of the episode away from the story surrounding the human protagonist, Narihira, to a landscape setting whose evocative power lies in the seasonal scenery that provides hints of what cannot be seen. This process was not limited to the Tales of Ise but encompassed other monogatari and created a type of reduced imagery that was close to the symbolic language of literature and the Noh theater. In this way, works in lacquer combine a variety of cultural references. For example, Uchida Tokugo has argued that Kinuta maki-e suzuribako (Tokyo National Museum; Fig. 2.42), a lacquer writing box with the lid design of a pillow surrounded by autumn reeds below a full moon encompasses multiple poetic and theatrical referents. “A pillow of reeds” (kusa makura) is a poetic trope that frequently appears in waka. The inside of the lid, however, shows a scene of two women beating cloth, which in combination with the lid’s scenery is a reference to the Noh play Kinuta that deals with the sad fate of a woman waiting (illustrated through the cloth-beating) for her lover (symbolized by the empty pillow). This strategy reflects the interconnected web of the premodern Japanese arts, where poetry, classical literature, and theater were tightly linked and drew inspiration from one another. Kōrin’s artworks are indebted to this intertwined quality of the classical tradition. By turning to his ancestor Hon’ami Kōetsu, a prolific designer of lacquer objects, who drew

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50 The Tawaraya tradition to which Kōrin was artistically indebted took a similar approach to this Tales of Ise episode in one of their screens. The work, owned by Shōkokuji in Kyoto, is impressed with a seal reading “Inen,” the trademark of the Tawaraya atelier and bears and inscription by the courtier Karasumaru Mitsuhito (1579–1638), who added writing to different other works by the atelier.

51 Uchida Tokugo, Suzuribako no bi: maki-e no seika (Tokyo: Tankōsha, 2006), 46–47. For a translation of the play, see Tyler, Japanese Nō Dramas, 156–170.
inspiration from medieval traditions in lacquer Kōrin embraced absence patterns and equivocal imagery in his own works.

**Kōrin’s Lacquer Works and Kōetsu**

Kōrin’s great-granduncle Kōetsu employed the abbreviated content and shifting emphases of late medieval lacquer in his own work. Though none of his lacquer pieces are signed, evidence from Kōetsu’s letters suggests that he was a prolific designer of lacquer objects and, by way of his artistic legacy, had a significant impact on Kōrin. Kōetsu had a passion for Noh and, like Kōrin, he also performed onstage. His lacquer works, such as a suzuribako entitled *Woodcutter*, whose subject matter was linked to the Noh play *Shiga*, reveal how Kōetsu’s own exposure to Noh permeated into his designs (Fig. 2.43). Another example by Kōetsu, a box depicting a pontoon bridge in gold and lead inscribed with a poem from the tenth-century anthology *Gosen wakashū* on the lid, also relates to the Noh drama. By including a bridge alluded to in the play *Funabashi*, literally “pontoon bridge,” the piece reiterates Kōetsu’s

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52 Uchida Tokugo has summarized some of the major cultural references embodied by the figure of a woodcutter. Among them are references to Sawarabi, the forty-eighth chapter of the *Tale of Genji*, which is illustrated by a woodcutter in a seventeenth-century scroll at the Burke Collection, New York; Buddhist connotations found in poetry; and a box inscription by the late Edo-period painter Suzuki Kiitsu, who linked the work to a poem by the Heian-period poet and warrior Minamoto Yorimasa (1104–1180). Kiitsu’s inscription reads: “[Poem by] Yorimasa Ason. Descending [the hills], he shoulders cut wood, not knowing if the mountain peak is engulfed by clouds or cherry blossoms. Inscribed by Seisei Kiitsu”. Another argument, brought forth by Uchida, associates the woodcutter with the Heian-period poet Ōtomo Kuronushi, one of the thirty-six immortal poets and an important association with the woodcutter in theater—he appears in the play *Shiga*—and vernacular culture by the early modern period. See Uchida, *Kōrin maki-e no kenkyū*, 133–136 and his *Suzuribako no bī*, 18–21.

53 The poem inscribed in Kōetsu’s characteristic calligraphy reads:

Crossing the pontoon bridge
in Sano along the eastern route
no one knows of
my deep memories.

See Uchida, *Suzuribako no bī*, 78–79.
commitment to Noh-related absence patterns in his lacquer works (Fig. 2.44). Uchida lays out how the bridge at Sano functioned as a famous literary site in medieval poetry and found its way into the Noh play Funabashi. Here, too, poetry and theater are connected and brought together in the suzuribako. The box, together with Woodcutter, shows that poetry and theater formed a symbiotic relationship that is reflected in Kōetsu’s works. Kōrin, in his own lacquer designs, continuously referred to decor conceived by his great-granduncle, drawing inspiration from Kōetsu’s use of absence patterns and allusive literary imagery. To Kōrin, Kōetsu acted as a filter to absorb late medieval and early Edo period innovations into his own oeuvre.

Kōrin produced lacquer works from as early as the 1690s and went on to do so until his death in 1716. A suzuribako displaying an image of stylized golden waves among rugged silver rocks is one of his most overt references to Kōetsu (Fig. 2.45). Ashide, calligraphy embedded in the depicted seascape, dispersed on the outer and interior surface of the suzuribako’s lid, quotes a poem by Fujiwara Toshiyuki (d. ca. 901) and identifies the scene as the shore of Sumiyoshi. Another inscription, by Kōrin himself, on the accompanying box reveals how he made the work with his ancestor Kōetsu’s style in mind.

Made after Kōetsu, a resident of the Daikyoan at Takagamine. Hokkyō Kōrin (cypher).

鷹峯大屋敷住物光悦造以写之 法橋光琳（花押）

54 Uchida, Kōrin maki-e no kenkyū, 137–156.
55 Edo-period posterity understood Kōrin, among other readings of his art, as a prolific lacquer designer. For instance, Inaba Tsūryū (1736–1786) in his Sōken kishō (Prized Sword Decors) of 1781 praises Kōrin’s proficiency in lacquer design. See Appendix Document VIII / 3.
Kōrin’s will of 1713 shows that a lacquer artist lived in one of the painter’s Kyoto properties as a tenant. The unidentified lacquerer named Kohei may have also worked for Kōrin. See Appendix Document II / 19.
56 See Uchida, Suzuribako no bi, 88.
The site of Sumiyoshi is the setting for several works associated with Kōrin. Two nearly identical screen paintings and a fan painting of the same subject illustrate Kōrin’s devotion to the subject (Fig. 2.46; 2.47; 2.48). The Noh play Hakurakuten is commonly cited as the source for all three paintings.\(^{57}\) In response to works by Kōetsu, Kōrin condensed the larger context of Sumiyoshi into a seemingly simplistic display of a wave-ridden shore, the poetic hallmark of the site of Sumiyoshi. His three paintings of Hakurakuten are also set amidst a stormy sea. In his suzuribako, however, Kōrin omitted any figures associated with the place, creating a seascape whose poetic and theatrical associations become blurred. The ambiguous nature of the seashore stands as a signifier for both poetic and theatrical content.

Yamane has drawn attention to the stylistic similarities between the waves as a marker for Sumiyoshi in the screen paintings and the suzuribako.\(^{58}\) Kōrin generates a connection between the screens and the suzuribako by rendering the waves in a corresponding fashion. As a result, the works transcend the boundaries between painting and lacquer. In its abbreviated space, the scenery Kōrin’s Sumiyoshi-related works exemplifies the visual strategy found in lacquer works by Kōetsu and, later, Kōrin. Absence patterns and works with reduced figural content, such as Kōetsu’s Woodcutter, create pictures that play with disguised content through drastic reduction of representation, a key feature of Kōrin’s paintings and lacquer works alike.

\(^{57}\) The association of the Yamato Bunkakan fan and the Noh play Hakurakuten was first made in “Kōrin ga haritsuke tebako kai,” Kokka 558 (May 1937): 139. See also Kōno, “Kōrin to nō,” 53–56 and Emura, “Kōrin ga ni okeru nō no eikyō ni tsuite,” 24.

The play is set at the shore of Sumiyoshi, a famous poetic site, where the Chinese poet Bai Juyi (J. Hakurakuten; 772–846) attempted to set foot onto Japanese soil, seeking to engage the first native into a poetry contest by whose outcome Bai Juyi would judge the cultural erudition of the Japanese as a whole. Bai Juyi subsequently was intercepted by the deity of Sumiyoshi, the god of poetry, in the guise of a fisherman who beat the Chinese poet and made him return home with nothing but awe for the Japanese’s cultural learning.

\(^{58}\) See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ni, 210–212.
Kōrin studied Kōetsu’s Noh libretti (*utaibon*) and lacquer pieces and adapted features of both for his own works. For example, Kōrin’s inscription on the box accompanying a *suzuribako* depicting a courtier on horseback beneath a blossoming cherry tree demonstrates that he had access to the Hon’ami collection by stating that he made the work after a lost example by Kōetsu, allegedly kept by the Hon’ami family at the time (Fig. 2.49). ⁵⁹

Modeled after a work by Kōetsu, owned by the Hon’ami. Hokkyō Kōrin (cypher).

The style of Kōrin’s box inscription corresponds with that of his Sumiyoshi lacquer box quoted earlier, suggesting that they were produced around the same time. ⁶¹ The inscription tells us that Kōrin not only modeled his works in lacquer after those by Kōetsu, but that he actively sought out surviving examples. Kōrin seems to have maintained a close connection to the Hon’ami clan as part of his own family. During Kōrin’s lifetime, the Ogata still maintained a house at Takagamine, the community founded by Kōetsu, providing Kōrin with easy entry to the treasures and council of Kōetsu’s descendants. ⁶² Given the close relationship between the Ogata and the Hon’ami, Kōrin seems to have enjoyed convenient access to Kōetsu’s artistic legacy and assimilated a wide portion of it into his own oeuvre. In Chapter One, we have seen from Kōrin’s early signature style that he consciously modeled it after that of Kōetsu, turning to his ancestor relatively early in his career, around the 1690s. Even though Kōrin’s lacquer works are difficult

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⁵⁹ Emura Tomoko has shown how a variety of Kōrin’s sketches for lacquer works, preserved as part of the Konishi Archives, correspond with printed mica designs used as paper decor in Kōetsu’s Noh libretti. See Emura, “Kōrin no maki-e seisaku to kaiga ni tsuite,” 111–124

⁶⁰ See Yamane, “Kōrin maki-e nidai,” 12.


⁶² Ogata Sōken bequeathed the Takagamine residence to Kenzan. See Appendix Document I / 4.
to date, it is possible that he looked towards Kōetsu’s popular designs for his earliest lacquer pieces as well.

A letter addressed to the art dealer Nishimura Seiiku that is dated to around 1701 and 1703 and accompanies a suzuribako with a design of mizuaoi, a type of water hyacinth, suggests that Kōrin had access to Kōetsu-type absence patterns around the time during which he allegedly painted his Irises screens (Fig. 2.50).

Thank you for the sake yesterday. I am indebted to you for managing [the sale of my artworks]. I am also grateful to Kyūbei for his loyal services. I thank you both. Concerning the order for a suzuribako from Edo, I received the three sheets of gold. However, I will not finish it in time, so I cannot get paid for it this year. I will come by a little later today and return the money. Perhaps you could ask the district council for advice. Please kindly help me with this matter.

Twelfth month, twentieth day.

Nishimura Seiiku  Ogata Kōrin

昨日者御酒被下參
奉存候 其上彼其御
取持共參奉存候 九兵衛様へも
久々にて得御意御心入
千万參奉存候 宜御禮
奉頼候
一此すすりはここ江戸より
あつらへにて金三枚二
うけとり申候へ共 おそく
出来 当年の金子ニ
なりかね 取次よりも断被申
今日之事ニ候間 少々内へ
入候て成共 金子ニ仕度

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63 See also Documents III / 1 and III 2.

64 Oshū, the district council of elders. Townspeople commonly sought their advice and approval on business transactions. Yamane takes this as evidence that Kōrin and Seiiku perhaps lived in the same district of Kyoto, but this cannot be verified. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 72.
The Konishi Archives preserve an array of sketches intended for lacquer designs that refer to works linked with Kōetsu. Among them we find deer that Kōrin appears to have adapted from works such as *Poem Scroll with Deer* that bear calligraphy by Kōetsu (Fig. 2.51; 2.52). The sketches are varied and contain images of seasonal flora, animals, and literary subject matter, such as a design of irises and an abbreviated bridge, among others.

Kōrin steadfastly applied Kōetsu’s concept of allusive patterns, often without figures or in a stylized manner, to his renderings of the ninth chapter of the *Tales of Ise*. A *suzuribako* by Kōrin showcases the eight bridges surrounded by blossoming irises that we encountered already in works like the medieval Itsuō Museum *Tales of Ise* scroll fragment (Fig. 2.53). The motif of irises and bridges is more straightforward than the waves of Sumiyoshi above. The work’s

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65 Yamane dates the letter to sometime between 1701 and 1703. Its content refers to the completion of an order from Edo for a *suzuribako* that is believed to be the work at the MOA Museum. See Ibid., 14–18. The letter and Kōrin’s long-distance sales of works to Edo, as well as his activities there will be the subject of Chapter Three.

Also, Uchida pointed out how the design of deer intended for an *inrō* (decorated vessels used for carrying medicine) in the Konishi Archives portion at the Kyoto National Museum corresponds with a design found in *Maki-e tamei warabegusa* (Assortment of [Designs] for Lacquer), a 1705 compendium of motifs for use in lacquer objects. The deer are strikingly similar to underpaintings of a *waka* scroll by Kōetsu and Sōtatsu, indicating how Kōrin was inspired by the pictorial arts linked with Kōetsu at least by the early 1700s. See Uchida, *Kōrin maki-e no kenkyū*, 212.

66 The Seattle piece is a rare example among the large corpus of poetry scrolls with gold and silver paper designs that carries Sōtatsu’s “Inen” seal at the end, along with Kōetsu’s signatures “Tokuyūsai” 光悦筆 and “Kōetsu hitsu” 光悦筆 (written by Kōetsu). Sōtatsu is thought to be the painter behind the paper decor of the Seattle piece. The work used to be part of a scroll which was subsequently cut up. Sōtatsu also painted a similar example with a decor of cranes at the Kyoto National Museum, among other works. Kōrin also made sketches of this particular type of cranes, which are preserved among the Konishi Archives. On Kōrin’s sketches of lacquer designs see, for instance, Kano, *Kōrin geijutsu no kisō*, 59–64, 67.
intense focus on irises in mother-of-pearl and gold traversed by bridge planks in lead
unmistakably links the work to the ninth chapter of the *Tales of Ise*.

However, the setting had also assumed an autonomous identity, removed from the
narrative context of its base text. The Itsuō Museum fragment illustrates how early medieval
works may have isolated the irises and bridges in response to early commentaries on the tales.
By following the same literary model—the commentary *Waka chiken shū*—as the Itsuō scroll,
the Noh play *Kakitsubata* extracts the site of the eight bridges and the iris flower from the larger
narrative context of the *Tales of Ise* and transposed it into a religio-poetic setting.

Kōrin’s box has been dated to sometime between 1701 and 1704, when he painted
*Irises*.67 The lacquer work exemplifies how Kōrin might have thought up the visual strategy of
the Nezu screens by way of absence patterns in lacquer objects. Kōrin’s visual concept of
isolating the irises and bridge from the base narrative of the *Tales of Ise* established a selection of
images his contemporaries associated with the Noh play *Kakitsubata*. A set of ceramic dishes,
made at the kiln of Kōrin’s brother Kenzan, now at the Idemitsu Museum, contains quotes from
different Noh plays on their reverses (Fig. 2.54). In addition to ambiguous floral and landscape
subjects, all of them omitting representations of human figures, the set also contains an example
with a bridge pattern similar to Kōrin’s *suzuribako*, surrounded by irises, that bears a verse from

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67 For the dating of the piece, see Yamane, *Kōrin kenkyū ichi*, 193. In a different article, Yamane draws attention to
the painterly nature of the iris design of the *suzuribako*, further amplifying an artistic and thematic relationship
between the lacquer work and *Irises*. See Yamane, “Kōrin maki-e nidai,” 20–22.
The rendering of the pillars supporting the eight-fold bridge in Kōrin’s *suzuribako* directly reflects the shape Kōrin
employed in his hanging scroll *Yatsuhashi*, also at the Tokyo National Museum. Considering the painting’s
signature, I believe the work can be dated to sometime between 1701 (after Kōrin received the *hokkyō* title) and
1704, when he changed his seal from “Koresuke” to “Kansei.” Kōrin changed the way he depicted the eight bridges
and their supporting pillars in later works, such as *Irises at Yatsuhashi*. Thus, the *suzuribako* was probably produced
sometime around the time the artist made his *Irises* screens and the hanging scroll *Yatsuhashi*.119
the play *Kakitsubata*. The set’s association of the irises and bridge as symbols for *Kakitsubata* provides evidence of how Kōrin’s artistic circle understood absence patterns as conceptually congruous with the suggestive visual language of poetry and Noh. Kenzan’s set most likely postdates Kōrin’s *Iris*. Still, the proximity of other pieces in the set to works like Kōrin’s *Waves* screen at the Metropolitan Museum reveals a proximity between the aesthetic and compositional choices used by Kōrin and those of the Noh drama (Fig. 2.55; 2.56).

A plate in the Idemitsu set contains a painting of a stormy sea, below a full moon, which resembles the gloomy vista of waves created in Kōrin’s single screen at the Metropolitan Museum. The dish contains an inscription on its reverse identifying the front image as a visualization of the play *Ama*. The picture, on the other hand, additionally has corals emerging from the waves, which are absent in Kōrin’s screen. Paintings of waves like Kōrin’s screen were popular interior decor during the Edo period, which adorn screens and *fusuma-e* (paintings on sliding door panels) in numerous print publication throughout the period. Thus, a clear link to the Noh drama is difficult to draw here. Yet the absence of figures in each of the dishes illustrates how absence patterns were considered fit for Noh-related imagery.

Absence patterns consisting of irises and the eight bridges are common tropes in lacquer and paper decor by other artists as well. The choice of irises and the eight bridges as symbols

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68 The inscription reads: “Here, the famous Eight Bridges and the fragrant iris along the marsh edge, associating their deep purple with his love (*yukari*), ‘How is she?’ wondered the man from the capital.” The translation follows Klein, “Allegories of Desire,” 450.

The set contains ten dishes that each bear a quote from a Noh play on the back and an illustration of that quote on the front. Only the first dish, depicting the play *Okina*, lacks a quote and replaces it with a list of the titles of each Noh play illustrated in the set. This shows that Kenzan originally conceived the dishes as a set of ten.

69 Also, Chino Kaori has pointed out that the ninth chapter came to be the most frequently depicted part of the *Tales of Ise* from the late medieval period onward. See Chino, *Emaki Ise monogatari-e*, 80.

On some examples of *shikishi* with decor of irises in gold pigment, see Tamamushi, *Tawaraya Sōtatsu kingin no kazari no keifu*, 249–252.
for the play *Kakitsubata* that appears in Kenzan’s set of Noh dishes reflects the concept of absence patterns found in the Kamakura-period *Tales of Ise* scroll at the Itsuō Museum. There, early commentaries formed the point of reference for paintings and lacquer, and they functioned as sources for Noh plays. This chain of development culminated first in Kōrin’s *Irises* and eventually in *Irises at Yatsuhashi*. In these paintings, the theatrical allusion of the irises came to function as a proxy for a larger narrative. The Kenzan ware dish demonstrates how the reduced space of the irises and bridges, devoid of human protagonists, echoes the connection of symbolic pictorial language with the aesthetic concepts of Noh in the pictorial arts. We will return to this connection in the next section.

Kōrin’s oeuvre comprises widely differing possibilities of interpretation, creating a binary between embedded cultural meaning and staggering visual sensation. The expansive range of subjects in Kōrin’s lacquer works embodies this dualism much in the same way as his paintings. While the maker of the Idemitsu set of Noh plates identified the irises along a bridge as a marker for *Kakitsubata*, the rocky waves of Kōrin’s *Sumiyoshi* box, through the filter of Noh, create a reference to the stormy sea of Bai Juyi’s (J. Hakurakuten; 772–846) arrival at the shore of Sumiyoshi in the play *Hakurakuten*. The visual strategy of absence patterns and other works with reduced content like Kōetsu’s woodcutter tests the basic concepts of object-viewer relationships.

By coalescing different layers of literary, religious, and dramatic allusions into a single subject, such objects often confront the viewer with an interpretative dilemma. The subject may

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70 Yano Akiko has laid out that the subject of cherry trees, as well as willows and bridge along a stream by the early modern period became subjects of their own, after having been extracted from larger contexts. She has also drawn attention to the ensuing ambiguity of their subject matter and how clear poetic or other identifications are fended off by combining different literary motifs, such as cherry and willows along a bridge in one work. See Yano Akiko, “Tōkyō kokuritsu hakubutsukan zō Jitsugetsu sansuiizu byōbu useki no gadai ni tsuite no saikentō,” *Bijutsushi* 151 (October 2001): 1–16.
either be taken at face value, in other words as the thing that it is, such as a boat, a woodcutter, or
the eight bridges of the *Tales of Ise*. Yet the work can also function as an esoteric device whose
allusive powers only disclose themselves to the initiated and culturally erudite, who are
conversant in the same playful, suggestive language as the object’s maker. In the second
scenario, the object opens up a reciprocal space in which it employs a cultural superstructure in
order to stimulate a variety of associations, depending on the user/viewer’s background and
willingness to engage with it. Absence patterns illustrate this unison of literary, poetic, and
theatrical references in lacquer. Kōrin, who produced lacquer pieces since the 1690s, made use of
this referential framework in *Irises*, where a combination of different arts contributed to the
screens’ particular pictorial language.

**III. The Multivalence of a Flower**

In addition to the artistic inspiration that Kōrin gained from absence patterns in lacquer,
the iris flower’s presence in the Noh theater establishes one possible layer for interpreting *Irises*
and *Irises at Yatsuhashi*. In the same way as his early exposure to tea culture and ink established
artistic paths that Kōrin followed for much of his life, his training in Noh contributed to a
particular consciousness of space; the effects of allusion; the interaction between audience and
objects; and the practical aspects of technique. Given that Kōrin copied multiple cover designs of
Hon’ami Kōetsu’s Saga-bon editions of classical literature and Noh libretti, the painter likely
also read them. Kōrin’s practice of Noh schooled him in the subjects of plays, the power of
suggestive imagery, and the expressiveness of thespian gestures. His passion for the theater exceeded all his other cultural interests and was matched only by his devotion to painting.\footnote{Kōrin’s father, Sōken, laid an early foundation for this passion by bequeathing Kōrin his collection of Noh implements. The fact that these were mentioned separately suggests that the collection was a major part of the inheritance. See Appendix Document I / 1.}

The connection between Kōrin and the Noh theater was first proposed in 1916 by Fukui Rikichirō.\footnote{See Fukui Rikichirō, “Kōrin kō,” in Fukui Rikichirō bijutsushi ronshū ge (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2000), 28–83.} This notion was then taken up by other scholars like Kobayashi Taichirō, who saw in Kōrin’s work a reflection of dream states that finds its equivalent in Noh plays.\footnote{Kobayashi Taichirō, Kōrin to Kenzan, Kobayashi Taichirō chosakushū 6 (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1974), 15-199, especially 56.} Kobayashi also proposed that Kōrin’s *Irices* reflect the rhythm of music in a Noh play. In recent years, Kōno Motoaki and Emura Tomoko have spearheaded a more nuanced reading of some of Kōrin’s works through the Noh theater.\footnote{Kōno, “Kōrin to nō,” 42–72 and Emura, “Kōrin ga ni okeru nō no eikyō,” 19–38.} Kōno attempted a comprehensive analysis of different Noh-related aspects in Kōrin’s work. He proposes that Noh subjects reflected in Kōrin’s oeuvre may be bisected into two categories: direct representation of the protagonists of plays and suggestive allusion to certain plays. An example of the former category are Kōrin’s *Hakurakuten* screens and equivalent subject matter in fan format, which depict the God of Sumiyoshi and Chinese poet Bai Juyi, the two protagonists of the play *Hakurakuten*. As part of the second category, Kōno compares the subjects and narratives of specific Noh plays with works by Kōrin, such as the play *Kakitsubata* and the *Irices* screens. Emura takes a similar approach by analyzing Kōrin’s hanging scroll *Cormorant Fisher* and its connection to Noh (Fig. 2.57). Emura, however, is more careful by admitting that, rather than using Noh plays as his direct source, Kōrin may have been
inspired by aspects of Noh and his study of theater in general. My analysis follows her assessment.

These scholars, however, have ignored the existence of Kenzan’s set of Noh dishes, which draws a direct link between the dark purple color of the irises as the main theme in *Kakitsubata* and the chromatic choices made by Kōrin in *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi*. In addition, although Fukui introduced Kōrin’s personal notes on Noh plays as early as 1916, scholars have thus far not paid sufficient attention to their content and the educational impact such Noh study must have had on the young Kōrin. I hope to add to previous scholarship by examining *Irises* vis-à-vis Kenzan’s Noh dishes and Kōrin’s notes taken during his study of Noh plays in the early 1670s.

In the following pages, I propose a relationship between the Noh theater and *Irises* by analyzing the chromatic relationship between the screens and the Noh play *Kakitsubata*. In this context, I attempt to draw a connection to Nishi Honganji as the possible patron of *Irises*. I investigate how Kōrin’s early training in Noh provided a means to navigate the upper tiers of Kyoto’s society and how it instilled an aesthetic consciousness that relied on strategies of abbreviation and isolation to render complex cultural meaning.

**Early Noh Study**

Kōrin studied Noh long before he took up the brush to paint. His early Noh training supplied him with expedient means to attach himself to the uppermost tiers of Kyoto’s court.

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75 Kōno Motoaki was the first to point out a possible connection between the emphasis on dark purple (*komurasaki*) in *Kakitsubata* and the unusually dark azurite in *Irises*, but he did not explore this thought further. See Kōno, “Kōrin to nō,” 56–57.
aristocracy, the social group that would comprise the bulk of the artist’s first clients. According to Sanbōin hinamiki, the priestly journals of the Sanbōin subtemple of the Daigoji monastery, on a summer day in 1675 Kōrin performed Noh together with his brother.

Ogata Tōzaburō and Ichinojō [Kōrin] of the same name were summoned to perform divine Noh (shinrai nō) together with Shibuya Shichirōzaemon. Ichinojō was asked by His Excellency [Abbot Kōken] himself to perform before him one time [and then] another. Both performers [Tōzaburō and Kōrin] were brought before His Excellency and given a drink. Tōzaburō presented a violet fukusa [cloth used to purify tea utensils] and a chakin [a small fabric also used for purification]. Ichinojō presented three fans.76

尾形藤三郎、同市之丞、神来能渋谷七郎左衛門ニ被仰御請之為先伺公申体より、市之丞一二番勤仕申由噂申也、両人御目通御杯被下、藤三郎紫服沙一茶巾一進上、市之丞扇面三本入進上

The entry marks the first in a string of many occasions when Kōrin either performed or watched Noh. Kōrin’s debut in 1675 was followed by a series of performances at Sanbōin that year in which his brothers Tōzaburō and Kenzan (then known as Kanzaburō) took turns.77 These performances in which Shichizaemon (also, Sessai) presented the Ogata brothers one by one read as a prelude to a more significant occasion that would soon follow. Exactly a month later, the brothers could be seen in a series of performances, led by Shichizaemon, one of the most revered Noh actors of his day, that lasted over four days from 1675/09/07 to 09/10.78 Kōrin and Kenzan arrived on the seventh day and were immediately brought before the temple’s aristocratic abbot, Kōken (1639–1707), who seems to have taken a liking to the young Ogata brothers. On the tenth,

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76 The performance took place on 1675/07/23. My translation follows the transcription provided in Igarashi, Kinsei Kyōto gadan no nettowaaku, 131.

77 In 1675/08/09 only Kōrin’s elder brother Tōzaburō, the prospective heir to the Kariganeya, performed Noh with Kenzan and Shibuya Shichizaemon. The Ogata might have used this occasion to introduce the youngest son, Kenzan, to the temple. Kenzan’s given name, Kanzaburō (lit. “the third of Kan[bun]”), hints at Kenzan’s date of birth in the third year of the Kanbun era (1661–1673). This dual reference identifies Kenzan both as the third son while also including his birth year. See Ibid., 113.

78 Ibid., 131–132.
Tōzaburō and Kōrin were invited to join the abbot at an outing. The excursion was followed by a small reception of sweets and liquor, which Kenzan participated in as well.79

The Ogata brothers’ presence at the multi-day Noh event, celebrating the annual chrysanthemum festival (chōyō no sekku), marked their entry into the aristocratic circle of Sanbōin and played an early role in cementing Kōrin’s link to the court nobility. Significantly, Sanbōin hinamiki mentions the brothers only by their given names, without specifying the Kariganeya or other identifying characteristics of the Ogata family. This suggests that the Ogata were well-known among the capital’s upper class, most likely in part through their position as exclusive garment suppliers to retired empress Tōfukumon’in.

The performances apparently impressed Kōken. During the following tenth month of 1675, the brothers were again summoned and performed numerous pieces of Noh and independent dances (shimai) on three more occasions.80 They also spent the night at the temple.81 Though not specifically recorded in the Sanbōin records, the brothers must have stayed at the temple during the chrysanthemum festivities early that year, too, since most activities lasted late into the night. Sanbōin hinamiki also mentions that Kōken returned to the temple the next day, the day after the festivities, indicating that he spent the night with the Ogata brothers at the temple quarters, not his own residence.82

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79 Kōken was the son of Takatsukasa Norihira (1609–1668) and Reizei Tamemitsu’s (1559–1619) daughter. Norihira himself was a grandson of emperor GoYōzei (1571–1617). Under Gien (1558–1626), Kōken’s teacher and predecessor, the Shibuya also performed regularly at the temple. See Ibid., 92.

80 Shimai are relatively short dances that rely on passages and keywords taken from a corresponding full play and use them as signals to the actor for changing positions and to coordinate movements during the performance.

81 For the nights of the 10/07 to 10/08 and the 10/22 to 10/23, the Sanbōin records mention that both brothers slept at Daigoji’s priest quarters. Ibid., 133–135.

82 Ibid.
The long-lasting inclusion of young male adults in theater performances established ideal circumstances for the Shibuya and other theater troupes to take pupils from among the wealthy urban townspeople. The seventeenth and early eighteenth century were characterized by a deep appreciation of Noh, and the public zeal for the theater was such that young heirs (or their ambitious parents) often neglected business affairs in favor of nurturing an education in the theater, as two accounts reflect.

Families seeking decent marriages devote great costs to boosting their reputation by learning Noh [with the aim of] participating in aristocratic performances. They let their brats receive instruction and quickly allow them to play Dōjōji. Thus, their children [do] nothing but brag of themselves.

内縁をもって貴人の御能の役をつとめさせ家の面目世の外聞とむしやうに金銀いれてならひ事を伝授させ身共が猟子もはや乱道成寺をゆるされましたこと子自慢せらるる

[Excerpt from novella Seken musuko katagi (Characters of Nowadays’ Sons; published 1715).]

All the children of townspeople families are fond of the performing arts (nōgei) and learn them. To be praised during visits, they are made to accompany as musicians during playful amusements.

懇体町人の子ども能芸をこのみ習ふもの他人のあいさつに誉まま能囃子につれ行遊芸を致させ候

[Excerpt from Chōnin kō kenroku (Records on a Townsman’s Thoughts; dated 1728).]

The wealthy merchant class of the time was passionate about Noh, and peer pressure was strong. Besides its attractive aesthetic, this performance art also contained a practical side. Training with actors like the Shibuya, who were admired artists, and mingling with the highest strata of the court opened a door to lofty circles in the hierarchal society of the latter half of the seventeenth century.

Fictionality of Famous Places

Kōrin’s early education left a lasting impact on the artist, leading him to adapt its subjects and aesthetic in his paintings. Yet connections between literature, drama, and the pictorial arts in Kōrin’s case do not exist merely in the direct adaptation of the content of a given Noh play in paintings. Instead, drama and pictures correlate in more subtle ways, where the meaning of one is enhanced by the existence of the other. The cultural history of the Tales of Ise is vast and has received enormous attention by scholars in the east and the west. While Kōrin’s Irises screens have inspired a wide array of interpretations, the presence of the iris flower inextricably links the work to the ninth chapter of the Tales of Ise and Ariwara Narihira’s encounter with the irises and eight bridges in Mikawa province, the subject of the Noh play Kakitsubata.

The journey from the capital reads as a succession of events that begins with Narihira’s journey to the east; his being in the east; and eventually his departure from the east to travel northward. This process is set in motion in the seventh chapter of the Tales, when Narihira leaves the capital to escape the aftermath of a scandalous love affair. The notion effectively renders azuma kudari—the journey east—as an emblem of transience, which in turn embodies the fascination with travel in premodern times. Within the succession of the eastward travel

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84 Most recently in English, Joshua Mostow has published a comprehensive study of the reception of the Tales of Ise in word and image, ranging from the Heian to the early Edo periods. Jamie Newhard has devoted her attention to the commentarial tradition of the Tales of Ise from the Muromachi to the late Edo periods. See Mostow, Courtly Visions and Newhard, Knowing the Amorous Man.


86 The Tales of Ise give illicit love and idleness as an explanation for why Narihira leaves the capital at the beginning of chapters seven and eight. In chapter nine, the reason for Narihira’s departure from the capital is not specified. Medieval commentaries, among them Sōgi’s influential Shōmonshō, commonly offer the reason of idleness (yō nashi, lit. “nothing to do” or “idle”). See Ibid., 314–317.

87 Ichihara Sunao has drawn attention to the fast narrative pace of the azuma kudari chapters—a feat that enhances the feeling of transience in this travel section of the Tales of Ise. See his Ise monogatari kaishakuron (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 2001), 230–231.
chapters of the Tales of Ise, the irises stand synonymous with Narihira’s peripatetic fate and the
distant, poetic site associated with it.

Erudite painters like Kōrin who engaged in the arts on both a practical and theoretical
level produced their works within a shared framework of personal knowledge and cultural
expectations, whose levels of accessibility varied with each audience. As a result, a work of art
like Irises might consist of different layers of conspicuous and concealed meaning. One of the
most overt associations of Irises lies in its depiction of a specific literary site (meisho): the irises
along the eight bridges in the eastern province of Musashino. The Tales of Ise and other classical
narratives established poetic locales that existed largely in the mind and acted as fictional stimuli
for imagination. By medieval times, and especially during the early modern period, the Tales of
Ise came to represent a static tale whose famous sites mainly existed only in the poetic fancy of
literature and theater.

Early modern poets like Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694), a contemporary of Kōrin, traveled
extensively and in the process revisited the fictional classical sites, often replacing them with
actual locales encountered in their own journeys. Gradually poetry came to develop a binary
between places poets had actually visited as opposed to the fictionalized travels of the ninth-
century Tales of Ise.88 Already by the early eleventh century, a young lady, known only as
Sarashina, had expressed her dismay at seeing neither the eight bridges nor the irises praised in
the Tales of Ise when she passed by the site in Musashino.89 Sarashina’s diary is arguably the first

88 Kakimoto Mutsuo labeled poetic spaces in classical narratives as “immobile” (fudō), in other words places that do
not change and cannot be visited. See his “Bashō no azuma kudari: Ise monogatari no zanshō,” in Ise monogatari:
Kyōju no tenkai (Tokyo: Chikurinsha, 2010), 288–316, especially 289–293, 310.

89 She writes: “Only the place-name Yatsuhashi [Eight Bridges] remains; there is not the merest remnant of any
bridges, and nothing else to see, either.” Quoted after Sonja Arntzen and Moriyuki Ito, trans., The Sarashina Diary:
recorded instance of the evanescence of famous sites in the tales. This notion of doubt about the
*Tales of Ise’s* veracity found its most direct expression in the medieval poet Sōgi’s reading of the
tales, where he portrayed the protagonist, Narihira, as a historical figure but casts doubt on the
truth value of his travels. While Narihira’s eastward journey embodied the quintessence of
tavel, it is important to bear in mind that by Kōrin’s time audiences understood the narrative as a
work that fluctuated between actuality and fiction—Narihira was understood to be a historical
person entangled in fabricated events. Accordingly, pictorial renderings, including Kōrin’s
extensive corpus of *Tales of Ise*-related works, are visual interpretations of literary sites whose
cultural currency was built upon literary invention.

Pictures like Kōrin’s *Irises* acted as substitutes for the actual literary sites; for a viewer,
they gave shape to places that did not exist and enacted events that had not taken place. For
Kōrin, this conceptual background provided leeway for pictorializing episodes from the *Tales of
Ise*. No one could visit the fictional site of the eight bridges and irises, so it materialized only in
pictures. These places lived in the realm of imagination and became manifest only through
literary and pictorial creative power. The fictionality of the *Tales of Ise* was especially
pronounced during the early modern period by means of a widespread turn to the writings of
Sōgi. This trend gave birth to a tradition of images conceived a priori, such as *Irises*, in contrast
to the increasing tradition of sketching from life, an artistic practice that Kōrin studied, too. The

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90 Sōgi introduced a new consciousness of the *Tales of Ise* as a semi-fictional story. Previously, the veracity of
Narihira’s experiences was largely unquestioned until Sōgi raised doubts about the historicity of the entire story,
saying that “this monogatari is fact made into fiction.” See Jamie Newhard, “Genre, Secrecy and the Book: A
History of Late Medieval and Early Modern Literary Scholarship on Ise Monogatari” (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia

91 See Chapter One.
idea of linking the irises to an imagined literary site is conceptually similar to the imagined travels created by plays of the Noh drama.

In many plays, an itinerant priest introduces his journey to a long-forgotten site where he encounters the spirit manifestation of one or more protagonists linked to the place’s roots as a literary site. The play *Kakitsubata*, probably written by the late medieval playwright Konparu Zenchiku (1405–before 1471), tells of a priest encountering a young woman who identifies herself as the spirit of the irises, tied to this earth by her deep longing for a long-lost love, Narihira. Ultimately, by divine intervention, the spirit sheds herself of this passion and achieves enlightenment.92 The narrative is a complex weave of literary and religious references. At the immediate center of Körin’s *Irises* screens, however, stands the imagined vista of the iris flowers that the play tirelessly emphasizes throughout the plot, and which Körin chose to depict as the sole subject of his screens.

A similar set of references occurs in other paintings by Körin. Two screens and a fan painting by the artist survive that visualize the Noh play *Hakurakuten*. The play recounts the fictional visit of the famous Chinese poet Bai Juyi to Japan in order to test the poetic ability of the Japanese. Setting out by boat from China and vowing to challenge the first Japanese he encounters in a match of poetry, Bai Juyi unwittingly confronts the Sumiyoshi Deity (Sumiyoshi Myōjin) who hurries to the rescue of the Japanese and defeats the Chinese poet. Körin’s two screens, which have identical compositions, depict the Sumiyoshi Deity floating on a raft offshore with Bai Juyi heading towards him. The deity feigns surprise and turns around to see the poet approaching in a sumptuous vessel. In both screens, Körin paints the scene on paper with

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92 The play was translated into English by Susan Klein in her “Allegories of Desire,” 430–458.
gold applied in several areas—a convention reminiscent of the production process of *Irises*—
with a complex pattern of curved strokes and washes to render the stormy sea and lavish portions
of malachite green for the hilly shore of Japan. The fan renders a similar scene without the
intricate wave pattern.\(^93\)

The Noh play *Hakurakuten* opens with Bai Juyi commenting on his boat’s “path through
waves” (*namiji*) towards the mountainous shoreline of Japan, the first sight he encounters upon
reaching the archipelago.\(^94\) The poet arrives at the coast at dawn, a fitting allusion to the country
of the Rising Sun, and the play sings about the clouds at daybreak. In his screen paintings, Kōrin
recreates the scenery of a stormy sea against the background of the shoreline and golden clouds,
symbolizing the glistening sky at dawn. Soon after laying out the scenery, the play describes Bai
Juyi’s encounter with a fisherman, the Sumiyoshi Deity in disguise. Kōrin’s paintings depict
exactly this early part of the play. The artist even paid attention to the difference in vessels, since
the play specifies the Sumiyoshi Deity’s boat as small (*shōsen*). Both play and paintings also
dwell on the chance encounter of the two protagonists, which Kōrin visualized by the Sumiyoshi
Deity’s gaze toward Bai Juyi.

Similar to *Irises*, Kōrin carefully planned the *Hakurakuten* paintings to render a fictional
story, including an unspecified literary site and two imaginary main characters who symbolize
the contrastive poetic traditions of Japan and China. Yamane Yūzō first demonstrated at the
example of sketches in the Konishi Archives how Kōrin extracted pictorial elements from

no eikyō ni tsuite,” 19, 24.

\(^{94}\) My summary is based on the libretto of *Hakurakuten* in Nishino Haruo, ed., *Yōkyoku hyakuban*, Shin Nihon koten
narrative handscrolls to reassemble them in his *Hakurakuten* screen paintings (Fig. 2.58). Kōrin’s *Hakurakuten* screens, which include the Noh play’s figural protagonists, illustrate a second tradition of Noh-related imagery among Kōrin’s oeuvre that existed alongside of abstracted floral vistas such as in *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi*. Further, while the *Hakurakuten* works construct the representation of a mythical event that underlined the supremacy of the Japanese poetic tradition over that of China, *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi* enable viewers to partake in Narihira’s fictional travel to the literary site of the irises.

In many ways, Kōrin’s *Hakurakuten* screens are consistent with compositions found in lacquer works by Kōrin and Kōetsu, such as the latter’s *Woodcutter* mentioned earlier. The visual emphasis on a key scene of the Noh play *Hakurakuten* also corresponds with *Irises*, where Kōrin made a single symbolic feature substitute the content of a larger story. This combination of representation and absence is mirrored in the surviving evidence of Kōrin’s study of the Noh theater.

**Color and Belief**

By choosing to depict the iris flowers as emblems for the ninth chapter of the *Tales of Ise*, Kōrin invariably linked *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi* to the narrative strategy of Noh drama, where a single subject is isolated from its original context (here, the *Tales of Ise*) and infused with the intellectual matrix of the theater. Kōrin’s personal study notes of Noh plays, *Kadenshōshimaizuke*, tell of the suggestive language of Noh plays, where each movement possesses a

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95 Kōrin took the image of Bai Juyi in his boat from the fifteenth-century handscroll *Shūkongōjin engi emaki*, a late fifteenth-century handscroll illustrating the mythical story of the Buddhist deity Shūkōgōjīn. See Yamane, *Kōrin kenkyū ni*, 210–212.
particular representational quality. For example, in the entry for his rehearsal of the play

_Tadanori_, Kōrin writes first how the actor (and audience) must mentally visualize a vista of cherry blossoms upon beginning the performance.\(^{96}\)

Come onstage and assume the open posture (_hiraki_) to a slight degree. On, “This cherry tree,” check your positioning against the orientation pillar (_metsukebashira_). On, “From the leg-tiring mountain,” advance; on, “I pick flowers to go with my firewood,” kneel, put down the flowers, pick up the cane, and circle to the right. As written. Toward the _waki_. On, “What a silly thing for a monk like you to say,” face the _waki_. On, “Indeed, Suma Bay,” advance softly, and on, “storms in the mountain heights,” look up. On, “troubled by the sound of thunder,” circle to the left, and on, “by the winds from the bay,” open posture facing the front. On, “the blossoms of the mountain cherry,” look at a point above the orientation pillar. On, “Indeed, the blossoms are a lodging; let me show you to your room!,” toward the _waki_. Then, on, “Ah, these flowers!,” look again. On, “Having walked the day away,” face the front and kneel. On, “Oh you monks,” toward the _waki_. As written. On, “Here, sit upon a flower-throne; oh how felicitous!,” toward the _waki_. On, “It was in hopes you monks might pray for me,” face the _waki_. On, “Sleep here in the shadow of the blossoms in the moonlight,” circle to the right, and on, “he vanished, lost to sight,” perform the open posture, then exit: end of first half (_nakairi_). […]

As illustrated by Kōrin’s notes on _Tadanori_, the performer timed his stage movements after the libretto, reacting to certain key words, which he would replicate in gestures and body

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\(^{96}\) _Tadanori_ deals with a character from the Genpei wars (1180–1185) that are captured in the war epos _Tale of the Heike_. The play is set at the shore of Suma, a site heavily loaded with poetic and literary associations. The plot reveals how Taira Tadanori (1144–1184), a courtier of the Heike clan who died in the Battle of Ichinotani, is tied to the site of Suma. In reference to Tadanori’s superlative skills in poetry, the play, which is attributed to Zeami, is filled with poetic references and emphasizes the blossoms of a cherry tree that was supposedly planted by Tadanori at Suma. See Tyler, _Japanese Nō Dramas_, 264–276.

\(^{97}\) For a full translation, see Appendix Document V / 1. I thank Patrick Schwemmer for his help in translating Kōrin’s _Kadenshō shimaizuke_.

134
movements. These words, then, were given visual emphasis through corresponding motions. The resulting reciprocity between actor and audience relied on a combination of different factors: the interplay of expectation through knowledge of the plot; interpretation based on this knowledge and the realtime performance itself; and the projection of personal ideas in response to the performance by the audience towards the movements onstage. The effect of these elements depended on the isolation of select elements from the plot after which the actor coordinated his performance.

The first section of *Tadanori* as recorded by Kōrin vividly shows the poetic imagination that was part of the artist’s Noh training through specific choreographed movements. Because Noh omits most stage props, making visible, through gestures, invisible imagined vistas, sounds, speech, and other sensations like wind formed a vital role in performance. Such pantomime paired artifice with sensual stimuli, and movements needed not merely to be graceful but also representational. Each gesture possessed some concrete meaning, combining the figural with the unseen as its basic performance concept. When Kōrin looked out into the open in *Tadanori*, his gesture created a mental image of a stormy coastline lined with blossoming cherry trees. The representational force of acting, thus, resided at equal measure in the construction of imagined objects and the presentation of visible objects. The actor accordingly became a technical instrument that followed a set pattern of movements, which brought to life a microcosm of scenic and literary vistas. The references created in this process required a reciprocity between audience and performer that Kōrin replicated in a significant number of his paintings, and above all in the *Iris* screens.
Although Kōrin left no personal notes on the play Kakitsubata, we can recreate a reliable picture of the performances he may have rehearsed by looking at libretti extant today. As a relative of the Hon’ami with a family mansion at Kōetsu’s Takagamine colony, Kōrin likely had access to copies of the Saga-bon Tales of Ise, Noh libretti, and Sōgi’s commentary on the Tales of Ise, Shōmonshō, all published by Kōetsu. In fact, the characteristic mica decors of the Saga-bon publications reappeared in Kōrin’s oeuvre, providing prove of his exposure to Kōetsu’s publications. For example, Kōrin tried to reproduce the leaf-print decor found on the covers of several Saga-bon, among them the Shōmonshō copy at the Dai-Tōkyū Library, Tokyo (Fig. 2.59; 2.60). Kōrin also sketched a significant number of Saga-bon cover decors, which are preserved in the Konishi Archives. We may assume that he was not only inspired by the aesthetic aspects of the Saga-bon, but also by their content.

The libretto for Kakitsubata, published by Kōetsu, may have provided Kōrin with access to the play. Kakitsubata is structured around a series of key works, such as “dark purple” (komurasaki), “irises,” and “glisten” (hikaru), among others. In the same way as in Tadanori, Kakitsubata’s anatomy of phrases structures the performance and reduces the complex narrative of the original episode of the Tales of Ise. Their literary origin and meaning is initially deleted and disclosed only through further context. The dark purple color of the irises is a theme repeated throughout the play. Kōrin’s screens echo in painting the rich color of the iris flower that is emphasized in theater. The full play Kakitsubata, with which contemporary

98 The Saga-bon libretto (“special edition” version, or tokusei bon) for Kakitsubata, compiled by Kōetsu with Kanze Kokusetsu (1566–1626) and held in the collection of Hōsei University’s Nogami Memorial Nō Theatre Research Institute, offers a reliable picture of early Edo-period performances of the play. The libretto’s wording corresponds almost verbatim with the text of Kakitsubata published, for instance, in Itō Masayoshi, ed., Yōkyokushū, vol. 1, Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1983), 259–266

99 Janet Goff has commented on similarly modified contents of the Tale of Genji through the Noh drama. See Goff, Noh Drama and The Tale of Genji, especially 45–86.
audiences were no doubt familiar, speaks of the singularity of the iris blossoms, whose uncanny color sets them apart from other plants.

Naturally, the flowers that make this place famous are dyed purple one shade deeper than ordinary flowers, to which they must not be compared; these *kakitsubata* alone deserve your special attention, as you would know if you were a traveler of any sensitivity.¹⁰⁰

The last part of the play then commences with the line “[…] left planted by the house of an old fence of iris; its color alone remains of old […],”¹⁰¹ equating the hue of the irises with a retrospective view of the past that stands in line with the flower’s role as an imagined literary site discussed earlier; the dark purple color of the iris embodies memory, attachment, and poetic longing. If viewed in this light, Kōrin’s choice of deep azurite conjures the meta-image brought forth by the Noh piece.

Kōrin chose an unusual array of materials for his *Irises* screens. The pairing of the mineral pigments azurite and malachite endows the blossoms with a preternatural luster that is impossible to achieve with other materials. Kōrin’s sketches of irises in the Konishi Archives illustrate how the artist experimented with shapes and colors to find the optimum to represent the flower.¹⁰² In one of these sketches, Kōrin leaves the flower in ink while in another he colors it with plant-based purple pigment, revealing how he seems to have tested the effects of different colorants only to resort to a combination of expensive mineral-based pigments in all of his iris

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¹⁰¹Ibid., 387.
¹⁰²See Kano, *Kōrin geijutsu no kisō*, 55.
paintings (Fig. 2.61). It is possible that Kōrin used azurite blue in thick layers to match the language of the Noh play. The sensation created through Kōrin’s unprecedented intensity of azurite visually reproduces the dark purple color that is the bearer of literary memory in the play *Kakitsubata*.

In Kōrin’s case, azurite represents the closest approximation of the lush, deep purple of the irises in *Kakitsubata* (Fig. 2.62). The emphatically dark shade required many layers of pigment, reflecting how the artist sought to create as deep a hue as possible.\(^\text{103}\) *Kakitsubata* finds its visual reflection in Kōrin’s *Irises* through a chromatic link between theatrical and pictorial representation; the depth and darkness of the flowers’ color is emphasized only in the Noh play and in Kōrin’s screens, not in the original text of the *Tales of Ise*. In fact, the main text of the *Tales of Ise* does not dwell much on the color of the irises at all, a feature that is limited to the Noh play. In addition, Tamamushi Satoko has shown how classical poetry often highlights the sheen of irises in the light.\(^\text{104}\) The last portion of *Kakitsubata* creates a similar image. At different times, the libretto emphasizes rays of light that evoke a sensation of glistening irises; an impression that in painting can only be achieved through the crystalline sparkle of thickly applied azurite. To grasp the context of this complex interrelationship, it is important to consider the potential spiritual aspects of *Kakitsubata* that may be reflected in *Irises*.

*Irises* may have been produced for Nishi Honganji, a temple to which Kōrin maintained close personal ties years before he painted the screens. Nishi Honganji, founded in 1602 by

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\(^\text{103}\) Kōrin’s younger contemporary Nishikawa Sukenobu (1671–1750) writes in his *Gahō saishikihō* (Methods of Applying Colors) how azurite was a comparatively thin pigment that, if applied in few layers, created light hues. He also writes how the use of azurite required a professional hand. See Sakazaki Shizuka, ed., *Nihon kaigaron taikei*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Meicho Fukyūkai, 1979), 74.

\(^\text{104}\) Tamamushi, “Shashi to tōjin e no akogare,” 76.
shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), was closely connected to the court and absorbed much of its culture. Noh was among the arts most associated with the temple and played a vital part in Nishi Honganji’s blend of the visual and literary arts with religiosity. The temple still houses one of Japan’s oldest Noh stages that survives from the Momoyama period (1573–1600).

Against this background, shortly after 1701, Kōrin is thought to have painted 
*Irises* for the temple. Drama connected Kōrin to Nishi Honganji, and the religiosity found in Noh plays conformed with the particular take on Buddhist faith of Nishi Honganji’s Jōdo Shinshū school of Buddhism. In this way, the screens may also reflect the personal relationship that Kōrin maintained to the abbacy of Nishi Honganji.

The play *Kakitsubata* draws a picture of the dark color of the irises as the visual marker for the deep attachment of the flower’s spirit, a blemish by Buddhist standards that prevents a believer from attaining enlightenment. The play emphasizes the literary connotation of purple as a color that is synonymous with attachment. The same hindrance to karmic salvation is embodied in the concept of *yukari*, an emotional bond between two people, which is symbolized by the color purple in the play. *Yukari* is the main theme of *Kakitsubata*, where the female spirit of the iris flower longs for a lost lover. The early eighteenth-century ceramic dish by Kōrin’s

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105 For a summary of the patronage of the arts by Nishi Honganji and its predecessors, such as Ishiyama Honganji and Yamashina Honganji from the medieval to the early modern periods, see Miyazaki Enjun, “Shinkō to bi,” in *Nishi Honganji: sono bijutsu to rekishi* (Kyoto: Tankō Shinsha, 1961), 158–199. See, also, Kagotani Machiko, *Geinōshi no naka no Honganji: nō, kyōgen, chanoyu, hana no bunkashi* (Kyoto: Jishōsha Shuppan, 2005), especially 50–124, 199–216.

106 During the modern era—such as at an auction of 1917/11/07—the temple sold off substantial numbers of its collection of Noh masks, costumes, and other implements. The significant amount of Noh-related objects put up for sale illustrates the importance of the theater in the temple’s history.

107 In the *Tale of Genji*, for example, Genji’s lifelong wife is named Murasaki, triggering an association of the color with the mutual bond of deep affection shared by two kindred spirits. Earlier than that, in the ninth-century imperial poetic anthology, *Kokin wakashū*, poems link *murasaki* to *iro*, meaning both color and (erotic) ardor. A similar association is also drawn in *Kakitsubata*. Klein, “Allegories of Desire,” 391–395.
brother Kenzan, representing the play *Kakitsubata*, quotes exactly that key passage of the Noh play which speaks of the bond between two people—*yukari*—symbolized by the dark purple color of the fragrant iris flower.\(^{108}\)

Here, the famous Eight Bridges and the fragrant iris along the marsh edge, associating their deep purple with his love (*yukari*), “How is she?” wondered the man from the capital.\(^{109}\)

The piece is the only example in Kenzan’s set of ten Noh dishes that mentions a specific color. No other quotes from Noh plays on the remaining dishes contain a similar chromatic specificity. This aspect highlights the *Kakitsubata* dish’s special connection between the deep color of the irises sung in the Noh play and their depiction on the dish and, by extension, in Kōrin’s *Irises*. The picture on the dish is similar to *Irises*. Here, too, the potter sought to create a dark blue tone for the flowers. The dish and its accompanying quote tell us how Kōrin’s circle considered a vista of irises a visualization of yearning and attachment.

Through the female spirit of the irises, *Kakitsubata* dwells on the salvation of flowers, inanimate beings, and in a way constitutes a religious defense of plants (*sōmoku*).\(^{110}\) Though the iris flower lacks a mind (*kokoro nashi*), the play invests it with a passionate spirit that instills the plant with personal agency and faith, two basic features of sentient beings. As a sentient being,

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\(^{108}\) The dishes were originally owned by the Maeda family, lords of Kaga domain (present-day Ishikawa), a clan renowned for their zeal for the Noh theater. Hon’ami Köetsu was close to the Maeda, as is evident from a number of letters where Köetsu and the Maeda retainer Imaeda Shigenao converse about Noh practice. On the provenance of Kenzan’s set, see Idemitsu Bijutsukan, ed., *Ninsei Kenzan: kyō no kōgei* (Tokyo: Idemitsu Bijutsukan, 2014), 117.

\(^{109}\) Translation from Klein, “Allegories of Desire,” 450.

the iris, then, may attain salvation. This last section of the play, depicted in the dish and Kōrin’s screens, illustrates the transition of the iris spirit from a being of longing and attachment to achieving the ultimate goal of all devout beings: salvation and the ability to break free from the cycle of rebirth and suffering.

The Jōdo Shinshū school, of which Nishi Honganji was a head temple, interpreted the salvation of non-sentient beings, such as plants, in a way that differed from most other schools. Jōdo Shinshū’s founder, Shinran (1173–1262), believed faith—in his interpretation complete reliance in the benevolence of Amida, the Buddha of the Western Paradise—to be the sole means for salvation.111 Kakitsubata echoes the belief in external agency in aiding a non-sentient being to attain enlightenment. The drama also thematizes the realization of the iris spirit’s own sinful nature, the condition for receiving divine intervention. If viewed at the backdrop of the religious doctrine practiced at Nishi Honganji and those found in Kakitsubata, Kōrin’s Irises may reveal similar religious nuances.

The iris spirit in Kakitsubata consists of a three-fold structure that envelops the (female) self of the flower; the spirit of the Nijō empress, object of Narihira’s unhappy love affair and his reason for leaving the capital; and Narihira’s manifestation as the Bodhisattva of Song and Dance.112 Eventually, the plot culminates in the salvation of the iris spirit through the agency of Narihira as a bodhisattva.

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111 Shinran’s doctrine of salvation through the agency of other power is explained in, for instance, Alfred Bloom, “Shinran’s Philosophy of Salvation by Absolute Other Power,” Contemporary Religions in Japan 5, no. 2 (June 1964): 119–142 and Paul O. Ingram, “Hōnen’s and Shinran’s Justification for Their Doctrine of Salvation by Faith through ‘Other Power,’” Contemporary Religions in Japan 9, no. 3 (September 1968): 233–251.

112 The identification of Narihira as a divine avatar dates back to the Kamakura-period commentary Waka chiken shū. Ōtani Setsuko has argued that Narihira’s spirit as one aspect of the three-fold structure of the iris spirit creates a specific narrative structure in Kakitsubata that is different from other plays on the Tales of Ise. See Ōtani, “Nō Kakitsubata no kōzō,” 382–388.
to the east, dawn’s
glimmering clouds
of pale purple
kakitsubata
whose heart of enlightenment
unfurls (kokoro hirakete)
truly, in this moment
trees, grasses and all the earth
acquire with her
enlightenment’s fruit […]]

The flower which previously lacked a mind (kokoro nashi) received support by divine agency
that opened its mind (kokoro hirakete), a requirement for any being to break the cycle of rebirth.

To Shinran, the absence of cognitive faculties in plants prevented them from achieving
salvation on their own. Still, as Fabio Rambelli points out, Shinran contended that, through the
aid of a Buddha, plants could also ascend to Buddhahood. This principle corresponds with the
narrative of Kakitsubata. We have seen earlier how the play begins by emphasizing the rich
purple color of the flowers and identifies them as a quality that sets the iris apart from its floral
peers. Once the iris achieved enlightenment through Narihira’s divine intervention, clouds of
“light purple” (asamurasaki), a color commonly associated with divine blessing, appear. The
play thus establishes symbolic colors for the states of pre- (dark purple) and post-salvation (light
purple). In Kōrin’s screens the rich azurite of the iris blossoms arguably echoes the pre-salvation
state of the iris spirit that results from her bond, yukari, with Narihira. The bond is declared in
Kakitsubata and quoted on the ceramic dish mentioned earlier, linking dark purple and
attachment with a vista of irises in painting. Placed in the context of Nishi Honganji, Kōrin’s
screens may have functioned as a mnemonic of the power of celestial intervention on the path to

114 Shinran recorded this view in his Yuishinshō mon’i. See Rambelli, Vegetal Buddhas, 28.
salvation. This notion connects the work, by way of the Noh drama, with the doctrine of the Jōdo Shinshū, as well as Nishi Honganji’s Jakunyo and Jūnyo, whom Kōrin first met through the theater.

The proximity of Nishi Honganji’s clergy to the aristocracy supports the suggestion that the screens were originally made for the temple. In the organizational structure of Jōdo Shinshū, each leader of the school and head of Nishi Honganji claimed direct consanguinity with Shinran. As the abbot of Nishi Honganji, Jakunyo was also a de facto descendant of Shinran and the leader of the Jōdo Shinshū school. The ultimate execution and interpretation of the school’s doctrine lay with him. Thus, a painting produced for him and for his temple by a close friend would have been likely to portray some aspect of the religious precepts in an imaginative way that alluded both to aspects of their friendship and to the religiosity of the temple.

Kōrin was no stranger to more overt religious imagery; among the Konishi Archives we find a sketch of a raigō painting, with Amida descending from the Pure Land, accompanied by two Bodhisattvas, to collect the soul of a deceased (Fig. 2.63). When Kōrin was in dire financial circumstances during the 1690s, he also also bought an Amida altar (Amida dō) from an antique dealer. There is no doubt that the sketch of the raigō painting—possibly copied from an earlier painting—is by Kōrin’s own hand and, accordingly, it manifests the painter’s study of Pure Land symbolism that perhaps found its abstracted manifestation in one among the many layers of meaning embedded in *Irises*.

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116 See Appendix Document I / 19.
Between 1675 and 1701, Kōrin watched or partook in twenty-four recorded Noh performances. Continuing his perennial engagement with theater, from 1701 to 1704, Kōrin painted other works with immediate connections to Noh, attesting to his artistic engagement with drama at the time that he made *Irises*. Noh and painting are reciprocal arts that both rely on the responsiveness of their audience. The aesthetic consciousness that Kōrin developed through his devotion to Noh, tea, and poetry all depended on imagery that could have profound cultural, religious, personal meaning. In this way, Kōrin created works, like *Irises*, where the abstract converges with the concrete. This pairing of complex cultural referents and pure visual stimuli, as well as Kōrin’s use of the pictorial and performing arts as a networking tool, are symptomatic of Korin’s particular take on established subject matter that is, I believe, reflected in *Irises* and other works by the artist.

**After *Irises***

In absence of documentary evidence, a connection between *Irises* and the Noh theater remains conjecture. Yet a number of Kōrin’s paintings share a direct or indirect connection to Noh plays. The Nezu pair represents an early work by the painter. Though the screens are only ten years apart, *Irises at Yatsuhashi* is emblematic of the last half decade of Kōrin’s relatively short career. In this way, the Metropolitan Museum screens likely do not rely much on the religiosity that could have played a part in the making of *Irises*. Produced during the height of Kōrin’s artistic productivity, *Irises at Yatsuhashi* embodies the emphasis on striking images that

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117 It is unclear when exactly Kōrin began using the name “Masatoki,” the seal used in *Irises at Yatsuhashi*. But he used it mainly in late letters, such as in a round relief seal “Hosei Masatoki” impressed on his will to Tayo, his wife, and his son Konishi Juichirō, both dated to 1713. See Appendix Documents II / 18 and 19.
determines the painter’s late oeuvre. Yet, reflecting the quick succession of paintings during Kōrin’s two decades as a painter, *Irises* and *Irises at Yatsuhashi* follow a similar conceptual pattern.

In most iris paintings (sans his sketches in the Konishi Archives) Kōrin employed a decidedly dark hue of azurite, imbuing the iris flowers with the glossy luster sung in the play *Kakitsubata*. Kōrin’s decision to include the eight bridges in his later pictures of irises—a feature also found in his lacquer box of the subject—adheres to the visual language of the Noh theater. The play *Kakitsubata* uses the iris flower as its protagonist and mentions the eight bridges as an additional narrative prop. Still, as we have seen in Kenzan’s Noh dish, the irises and the eight bridges form a unity in the reception of the play in the arts. The absence of a bridge in *Irises* can be read as an evocative tool. Kōrin’s design encourages the viewer of the screens to imagine himself amidst the flowers, traversing an imaginary bridge. While *Irises* may represent an inside view of the iris-growing marsh, *Irises at Yatsuhashi* offers a removed view of the entire spectacle. The irises remain the central feature, while the bridges can be either depicted or imagined.

In the same way as Kenzan’s Noh dish associates the assemblage of irises along the eight bridges with *Kakitsubata*, Kōrin’s *Irises at Yatsuhashi* draws the same connection to the symbolism created by the flower. The emphatically dark hue of the iris flower that pervades all of Kōrin’s surviving paintings of it echoes the passage of *Kakitsubata* quoted on the back of Kenzan’s ceramic plate. *Irises*, thus, established a standard for a significant part of Kōrin’s oeuvre that visualizes the iris flower with a potential link to its theatrical manifestation.
Kōrin continued to be invested in Noh; his last known performance took place at a New Year’s performance (utaizome) in 1714 at Nijō Tsunahira’s residence. With Kōrin’s lifelong devotion to the theater Irises, his most revolutionary work, marked the inception of a major category within Kōrin’s body of works that began with the iris motif but was not limited to it. In the same way as Kōrin made the iris flower a keystone of his oeuvre, he selected chrysanthemums as another core floral subject.

In a letter dated to 1704 to his friend Ueshima Gennojū, Kōrin reports how he finished a screen painting of chrysanthemums soon after his arrival in Edo. Apparently, Edo patrons considered chrysanthemums a subject that Kōrin excelled in, making sure to commission a work soon after the painter had relocated to their city. The role of chrysanthemums as another of Kōrin’s signature subjects finds further evidence in a second letter. Sent to Juichirō, Kōrin’s son who was adopted into the Konishi family of Ginza (silver mint) officials, the painter asked to have a six-panel screen of chrysanthemums sent to him.

Please also give my best to Chihō. It has been a while and I hope business is going well. For my part, since a day or two I have started to get better, so please don’t worry. Concerning one of the three inrō [we discussed] the other day, the frontal design of tsubaki and young pines should reach around to the backside. The other two were sent back and I will make new ones instead. Could you lend me the single six-panel screen with chrysanthemums that you have, so I can compare it with my sketchbook? Kindly send it today, so I receive it tomorrow. It is an old screen.
Second month, eleventh day.
The promised Karasumaru ware piece should be ready by tomorrow.

To Konishi Juichirō Ogata Kōrin

118 The event is recorded in both Tsunahira kō-ki and Nijō-ke nainai gobansho hinamiki for 1714/01/20. Tsunahira kō-ki mentions how Kōrin performed Tōhoku and Umegae, while Nijō-ke nainai gobansho hinamiki records Eguchi instead of Tōhoku—two plays with a focus on cherry blossoms. Kōno, “Kōrin to nō,” 50–51.

119 The letter is translated in Chapter Three. For its dating, see Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 78–79.
Kōrin intended to copy the work, which may have been by his own hand. Dated to his final years, the letter tells much about Kōrin’s relationship with his son and his practice of revisiting earlier works. Kōrin requested the screen from Juichirō to match it with his own sketches, possibly either to produce a new work of the same subject or to assemble a model book to cement his personal legacy. Either way, he considered chrysanthemums an important part of his oeuvre. In fact, no other painting subject appears twice in Kōrin’s correspondence; even irises, for example, are not mentioned at all.

A number of sketches of chrysanthemums in the Konishi Archives evince Kōrin’s study of the flower. Experimenting with different shapes, some in the layout of fan paintings, Kōrin devised chrysanthemums with stylized, circular flowers and blossoms with more naturalistically rendered petals (Fig. 2.64). Some of these sketches were perhaps copied directly from the screen that Kōrin requested from Juichirō, while others may have functioned as references for surviving

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120 Appendix Document III / 11.

121 Juichirō was Kōrin’s illegitimate son with a woman by the name of San, who was employed in Kōrin’s household. Through the agency of Kuranosuke, Juichirō was adopted by the Konishi family of silver mint officials and eventually instituted as their heir. Juichirō and his descendants preserved the Ogata family’s documents, which now comprise the Konishi Archives. Yamane dates the letter to around 1715 and 1716, so shortly before Kōrin’s death. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 95–96.
paintings by the artist. Several finished paintings of chrysanthemums in the form of screens and fans survive.

Other works include examples of chrysanthemums as part of larger compositions, such as Kōrin’s early pair of screens at the Suntory Museum. Each screen in the pair incorporates a prominently placed cluster of chrysanthemums in moriage, a technique of built-up surface with shell-white at their center. Kōrin painted the leaves in ink with veins in gold pigment, a method he would employ in later works. One such example is Kōrin’s pair of six-panel screens with blossoms also sculpted in shell-white and leaves in ink and malachite, respectively (Fig. 2.65).\textsuperscript{122} The flowers, done exclusively in repetitive shapes though lacking repeated patterns of clusters of flowers, create a stylized panorama whose visual effect resembles that of Kōrin’s Irises screens. By rendering the blossoms and a mannered stream between them in moriage the artist creates a plasticity and surface topography that is akin to the thick application of azurite in Irises.

The Chrysanthemums screens carry Kōrin’s early “Koresuke” seal together with “Hokkyō Kōrin” signatures. With the third to sixth strokes of the kō character forming a single, winding line, Kōrin brushed his signature in a similar way to that of Irises and another painting of the Tales of Ise at the Tokyo National Museum (Fig. 2.66; 2.67). The hanging scroll, Yatsuhashi, depicts Ariwara Narihira and two courtiers gazing at the iris flowers and eight bridges in a manner that is close to that of Tawaraya Sōtatsu (Fig. 2.68). All three works also share the same “Koresuke” seal, suggesting that they were produced close in time. Evidently, by producing works of the Tales of Ise with figures and without in a variety of formats, Kōrin explored different possibilities of depicting literary and theatrical content during the first half-a-decade of

the eighteenth century. Since Kōrin probably abandoned the round “Koresuke” seal before he left for Edo in 1704, we may assume that the Chrysanthemums screens originated during a narrow window of less than five years after 1701, shortly after Irises.

The choice of subject in both works is seasonal; chrysanthemums stand for the ninth month in autumn, and irises symbolize the fifth month and the beginning of summer. Defining seasonality by means of a single flower that is charged with literary meaning conforms to the conceptual handling of seasonal flowers in the Noh theater. Water and chrysanthemum flowers were used as proxies for the play Kiku jidō. The play takes up a Chinese legend in which the King of Wei sends out an embassy to find a mythical current, referred to in the play as “potion water” (kusuri no mizuwa), granting ever-lasting life. Eventually, his scouts encounter a young boy who claims to be 700 years old. The boy reveals that if one writes two verses of the Lotus Sutra on a chrysanthemum leaf and drinks the morning dew of it, one shall never die.123 Although the play deals with the emperor’s quest for longevity, it renders the chrysanthemum flower as the central instrument to achieve this goal. By the combined power of the flower and devotion to the Lotus Sutra, one may gain a drastically elongated lifespan. Just like in Kakitsubata, a floral protagonist symbolizes religious devotion alongside a core element of human desire; while the iris in Kakitsubata is a symbol for karmic attachment through love, the chrysanthemum flower in Kiku jidō exemplifies the preternatural fear of death and the desire to transcend the human condition.

Chrysanthemums, often depicted by a stream, appear in the arts since at least the Muromachi period. Similar to the play Kakitsubata, renderings of the legend covered in Kiku

jidō are often found in absence patterns, especially in lacquer (Fig. 2.69). Such works commonly feature an abundance of chrysanthemum flowers, sometimes with an additional stream of water depicted. For his renderings of chrysanthemums, Kōrin may have taken medieval lacquer works as his model. In fact, Kōrin himself drew a chrysanthemum design intended for a lacquer box (Fig. 2.70). Also, a tray by Kōrin at the Yamato Bunkakan, with a stylized stream decorating the main body and embossed chrysanthemums on its rim, combines the same markers of Kiku jidō as in his screens (Fig. 2.71). We have seen earlier how Kōrin pursued a corresponding pattern of references for his Irises screens, where medieval precedents may have also been his source of visual inspiration.

In his Chrysanthemums screens, Kōrin creates a similarly allusive scenery of flowers as in Irises and Irises at Yatsuhashi. The painter made the latter pair of screens half a decade or so after Chrysanthemums. We may thus assume that Chrysanthemums represents an intermediary stage between the pure flowerscape of Irises and the more concrete reference to the Tales of Ise in Irises at Yatsuhashi. Compositionally, the body of sculpted water in Chrysanthemums could have functioned as a precursor to the bridge in Irises at Yatsuhashi. In their evocative, reduced pictorial quality, all of these works share similarities with the narratological modus operandi of Noh that is manifest in Kōrin's own study of the theater.

Rehearsed by Kōrin in 1675, Tadanori—a play where Taira Tadanori (1144–1184), a warrior from the Tales of the Heike, attains salvation through the posthumous recognition of his poem on cherry blossoms—supplied Kōrin with early access to the weave of classical literature with religious ideology in many Noh plays. The play also thematizes a poetic flower as a way to gain a desired outcome, reminiscent of Kakitsubata and Kiku jidō. Kōrin’s ancestor Kōetsu in his
collection of libretti for the Kanze school placed *Kakitsubata* among the *mondō* (lit. “question and answer”) category, a classification of plays that rely on a back and forth rhythm of conversation between actors on stage.¹²⁴ *Tadanori* belongs to the same category and Kōrin’s study of the play introduced him to the explanatory nature of *mondō* plays, an early training that may have informed his work on *Irises, Chrysanthemums*, and similar works of art. *Mondō* plays often focused on religious topics that required an exegetical treatment to illustrate matters of faith and their link to literary subjects for the audience. Accordingly, *mondō* works necessitated a high level of engagement with the audience due to their dense descriptive plot lines, a feature that corresponds with such ambiguous paintings as *Irises, Chrysanthemums*, and *Irises at Yatsuhashi*.

The multivalent layers of meaning embedded in the iris flower open up a plethora of possible readings for Kōrin’s *Irises* screens, a fact that contributes to the long-lasting appeal of the work. The screens may connect to the Noh theater, while simultaneously adhering to the seasonal and literary superstructure that guided much of Edo period’s visual culture. The same notion extends to the tradition of his chrysanthemums screens. The purity of the white color of chrysanthemums was as visually striking as the dark hue of irises, sung in *Kakitsubata*. The seventeenth-century tea manual *Nanpōroku*, for example, articulates the intriguing charm of an arrangement of entirely white chrysanthemums placed in the *tokonoma* during a tea gathering.¹²⁵

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The omission of human figures in favor of floral vistas traverses Kōrin’s entire body of large-format works. Theater, alongside other trends of performance and literature, namely linked-verse poetry and literary manuals and digests, from the Muromachi period took in elements of classical literature. These elements were then isolated and dissected from their original context, highlighting specific aspects of the original or creating completely new frames of reference. Such activities successively reduced the multifaceted content of the original works, while at the same time they pinpointed and also redefined major aspects of these pieces. This often meant adjusting something to immediate needs and tastes. The process is reflected in Kōrin’s *Irises. Tadanori*, which Kōrin studied during the 1670s, put strong emphasis on Buddhist connotations and the historicity embedded in classical literature by using the image of a luxuriant spring vista. Kōrin transposed this visual concept to painting in his *Irises* screens whose single-flower motif may be imbued with references to theater, literature, and Buddhist philosophy alike. The abbreviated space transforms the representation of the iris flowers into an allegorical mirror that pairs stunning visual sensation with a display of cultural narrativity through a single painted object.

However, *Irises* and, eventually, *Irises at Yatsuhashi* are not just abstract paintings imbued with abstract references. Kōrin might have arrived at his visual concept through absence patterns in lacquer and other decor methods like underdrawings on *shikishi*. These works hark back to a long tradition of pictorial abbreviation and reformulation of narrative content, positioning the two pairs of screens among established trends of allusive imagery. The velvety luster of the blossoms and their flat but naturalistic rendering, albeit in stiff mineral pigments, betrays the binary of representation and abstraction that received considerable attention in Kōrin’s works. The artist continued his engagement with the dualism of naturalistic and non-
representational features in painting. In the following chapter, we will explore how Kōrin embraced an abstract painting technique—tarashikomi—with a concrete purpose, that of soliciting clients in Edo shortly after he painted *Irises* and *Chrysanthemums*. 
Chapter Three: Edo and Tarashikomi

In this chapter, I will describe how Kōrin used a specific technique, tarashikomi (lit. “dripping in”), established by the early seventeenth-century painter Tawaraya Sōtatsu and his atelier, as part of an interregional aesthetic language (Fig. 3.1). I will show how tarashikomi impacted the arts of Kōrin from the early 1700s, before it eventually became the core of his late oeuvre. In the process, I will argue that Kōrin adopted tarashikomi with a specific timing—just prior to his move from Kyoto to Edo—and agenda—to transpose a locally specific technique—with the aim of soliciting new patrons and establishing an artistic footing in Edo.

We will come to understand yet another facet of Kōrin’s engagement with the faculties of painting, where he appropriated the preconceived regional identity of a technique as part of his own artistry. Kōrin and his clients seem to have considered tarashikomi to be an artistic method that was part of the culture of Kyoto and the Kansai region. But the technique also flourished in regional hubs and was therefore not alien to Edo audiences. Although scholars often characterize Edo aesthetics as determined above all by Kano modes, we will see how the city received an early influx of Sōtatsu’s pictorial culture. Against this background, I will illustrate how precedent facilitated Kōrin’s entry into new social and aesthetic circles there.

I. Tarashikomi

This section traces the hazy origins of tarashikomi and seeks to establish a theory on how and when Kōrin inserted the technique into his own stylistic repertory. I will lay out the different theories of how tarashikomi came to assume a major position in Tawaraya Sōtatsu’s paintings. In the process, we will understand that Kōrin’s turn towards the Tawaraya style coincided with the
artist’s growing friendship with the Ginza official Nakamura Kuranosuke, a time that immediately preceded Kōrin’s first departure for Edo in 1704. Kuranosuke, who was active in both Kyoto and Edo circles, probably played a role in channeling Kōrin toward the Tawaraya style and tarashikomi, after becoming his benefactor.

**Uncertain Roots of a Technique**

Even though tarashikomi is arguably one of the core features of Edo period visual culture, the technique was not given a name until modern times. The term tarashikomi, meaning “spilling in” or “dripping in,” was most likely coined in the modern age, appearing first sporadically around the early Shōwa era (1926–1989). Eventually Tokugawa Yoshiyasu’s 1948 book Sōtatsu no suibokuga (Ink Paintings by Sōtatsu) fixed tarashikomi in art historical vocabulary, roughly 350 years after Sōtatsu first used the technique. The thriving early modern tradition of treatises on art and art history remained silent on tarashikomi, and it seems that Edo period commentators saw little need to create a label for it. This is surprising since the technique’s diffusive pools of added and reduced ink and pigment formed one of the most conspicuous hallmarks of early modern painting. 

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1 The term tarashikomi appears first in 1932 in two articles on Sōtatsu by Tanaka Kisaku and Tani Shin’ichi. Both scholars use it referring to a blend of different layers of ink and malachite in works with floral motifs. Tanaka Kisaku, “Tawaraya Sōtatsu hitsu Maki hinoki zu byōbu,” Bijutsu kenkyū 2 (February 1932): 28–29 and Tani Shin’ichi, “Sōtatsu hitsu Akikusa zu byōbu ni tsuite,” Kokka 505 (1932): 329–335. However, it only became part of established art historical scholarship with Tokugawa’s book on Sōtatsu’s ink paintings in 1948. Tokugawa was the first to connect tarashikomi with the pooling effect found in printed paper decors in mica and similar visual effects in Kōetsu’s lacquers. Postwar scholars like Yamane Yūzū followed Tokugawa’s lead in linking tarashikomi with mineral-based pigments, such as gold and silver, and staining effects of printing with these materials. Tokugawa Yoshiyasu, Sōtatsu no suibokuga (Tokyo: Zayu Hankōkai, 1948). See also Tamamushi, Tawaraya Sōtatsu kingin no kazari no keifu, 49–50, 87.

2 Having begun with the early seventeenth century Sōtatsu and ranging to the nineteenth-century painter Suzuki Kiitsu, the technique eventually became a main trope of Nihonga, the modern-day reinterpretation of traditional Japanese painting.
Yukio Lippit describes tarashikomi as a process of “ink staining” that is both abstract and representational. Especially in connection with the work of Sōtatsu, several other commentators have emphasized the method’s planar qualities and its reliance on surface, as opposed to line and other conventional ways of applying ink with a brush. The prerequisite for tarashikomi was a slow-permeable ground, achieved through sizing with dōsa, an animal glue with added alum. Metallic surfaces such as gilded paper were another carrier of choice. The ground needed to retain at least some—if only very little—absorbency for the ink or other pigments to bind. Tarashikomi’s reliance on near complete insolation of the painting ground necessitated a high level of calculation and preparation for exercising the technique.

Tarashikomi depends on ink as its basic component with a range of pigments—malachite, azurite, gold, silver—that may be added to it. Effects are achieved by reduction through addition, a method that is as simple as it is effective. The painter drops small amounts of clear water or ink onto an already applied, still wet ink layer, causing a migration of pigments away from the center of the dripped-in area. The pigments eventually gather and form a fissured perimeter of darker ink around a lighter middle (Fig. 3.2). As a result, the intensity of hues at the center lighten by darkening its contours. In other words, pigment is not physically erased but transposed to outer areas where it converges. This process creates a paradox that contrasts with the inert nature of paintings as static things. Once applied, pigment commonly remains immobile and stays where it

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was added. Not so with tarashikomi, which relies on the migratory force of pigments, caused by their physical reaction to one another.

Although the technique’s origins remain unclear, Sōtatsu and his Tawaraya atelier are generally accepted as the first to have used it. Like many great inventions, tarashikomi might have been conceived by chance, yet art historians devoted considerable energy to tracing its possible beginning. The two main theories on tarashikomi search for its first use in both Japanese and Chinese painting. Building upon Tokugawa Yoshiyasu’s early interpretation, Yamane located the birth of tarashikomi in printed paper decoration by the Tawaraya that use gold and silver (kingindei). In Yamane’s chronology, Sōtatsu, inspired by his 1602 restoration work on the twelfth-century sutra Heike nōkyō, initially engaged in a collaboration with Kōetsu that lasted to about the mid-1610s. Sōtatsu, he concluded, began as a painter in gold and silver, a characteristic trait of eya, or professional picture workshops that proliferated in Kyoto at the time. During the first two decades of the seventeenth century, both artists produced a number of works in which the Tawaraya atelier provided the paper decor and Kōetsu added poems from classical anthologies in his characteristic calligraphy.

Among many different works, a scroll with sequences of deer in gold and silver mist—now cut up and dispersed among several collections—encapsulates the aesthetic potential of

5 Yamane, Sōtatsu kenkyū ni, 163–202, especially 170–173.

6 In 1164, Taira Kiyomori (1118–1184), leader of the Heike during the Genpei Wars and one of the protagonists of the medieval war epos Tales of the Heike, conferred a set of thirty-two scrolls of the Lotus Sutra to Itsukushima Shrine near Hiroshima. The set was subject to different earlier restoration efforts before Fukushima Masanori (1561–1624), lord of Hiroshima domain, instigated extensive repairs (or rather redesigns) that gave the scrolls the appearance by which they are known and treasured now. From an inscription on its accompanying box we learn that the set was restored again in 1648. However, the main labor and most substantial change to its design occurred during the 1602 endeavor.

early seventeenth-century metallic paintings (Fig. 3.3). Sōtatsu’s signature is nowhere to be found in any of these works; only a lone “Inen” seal is placed at the end of the deer scroll, claiming Tawaraya authorship. Such painted gold and silver motifs probably coincided with their counterparts in print. The paper was heavily sized, creating a pristine white plane as the base for imprinted motifs. A fragment at the Tokyo National Museum reveals how the impression of the printing blocks caused the pigment to form gelatinous agglutinations, instilling the motifs with a sensation of permanent fluidity (Fig. 3.4). Such splashes of gold and silver informed Yamane’s idea that tarashikomi originated in an attempt to reproduce similar effects in ink. Tarashikomi in all its manifestations, whether in monochrome ink or mixed with other pigments, produces an uncannily liquid impression that is akin to kingindei. But the heavy gradations in hue of tarashikomi intensify their visual impact and, in combination with their fissured rims, arguably differ from gold and silver pigments.

A considerable number of ink paintings produced by the Tawaraya are extant today and Yamane believed they postdate paintings in kingindei. Most bear either the signature “Hokkyō Sōtatsu” or “Sōtatsu Hokkyō”, indicating that they were painted after Sōtatsu

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8 Nakabe Yoshitaka has analyzed the modular character of the prints’ production process. Each section had a separate set of moveable woodblocks, akin to moveable type (katsugi) used in printing script by the early Edo period. See Nakabe Yoshitaka, “Tarashikomi no hensen,” in Sōtatsu to Rinpa no genryū, Rinpa bijutsukan 1 (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1993), 122–132.

9 Yamane, Sōtatsu kenkyū ni, 170–173.

10 Yamane considers works in kingindei to date from the Keichō era (1596–1615) onward, while Sōtatsu’s ink paintings range from the late Keichō to the Kan’ei eras (1624–1644). See Yamane Yūzō, Sōtatsu kenkyū ichi, Yamane Yūzō chosakushū 1 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1994), 195–232 and Yamane, Sōtatsu kenkyū ni, 163–202.
received the *hokkyō* title around the 1620s (Fig. 3.5). Unlike their gold and silver counterparts, which fall exclusively into the time when Sōtatsu was alive, ink paintings in a variety of forms, subjects, and formats carry on into the late seventeenth century, also after Sōtatsu’s death. Eventually, ink, and with it *tarashikomi*, became a main component of figure paintings and floral vistas associated with the Tawaraya.

On the basis of such paintings, Tsuji Nobuo drew attention to *tarashikomi*’s technical and visual resemblance to paintings by the Chinese artist Xu Wei (1521–1593; Fig. 3.6). Although no evidence suggests that his works entered Japan during or shortly after his lifetime, Xu Wei used similarly sized paper and exceedingly wet brushwork that is, technically, not *tarashikomi*, but visually close to it. Sōtatsu and Xu Wei also share a preference for boneless style, a technique that omits outlines and was much propagated in early modern art treatises.

While it is difficult to pinpoint the source for *tarashikomi*, the technique may have emerged in Sōtatsu’s oeuvre even prior to the printed *kinginpei* paper designs; in fact, his *Heike nōkyō* frontispieces of 1602 already contain examples of it (Fig. 3.7). The painting adorning the

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11 Sōtatsu may have received the honorary *hokkyō* sobriquet sometime after he took part in the restoration project of Yögen’in 1621, but before 1630 and his copy of the *Saigyō monogatari emaki*. See Yamane Yūzō, *Sōtatsu* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1962), 203.


14 Given the frequency with which a reoccurring array of images of the *Heike nōkyō* appear in art historical publications, it is astounding that the presence of *tarashikomi* in one of the sutra’s illustrations remained so far unnoticed.
Zokuruibon scroll contains a forested shoreline in gold pigment with trees in tarashikomi in ink and malachite. Tarashikomi here is applied only in minuscule areas that are difficult to discern, yet the surfaces of all five tree trunks in the picture consist of it. The diffused planes of ink and malachite form borders of migrated, dark ink that are characteristic of the technique in the later Tawaraya studio practice.

The presence of tarashikomi in Sōtatsu’s earliest presumed work indicates that the artist probably developed the method early in his career, prior to his collaboration with Kōetsu. It apparently existed alongside his paintings in kingindei, rather than emerging in a later imitation of the pooling effects of printed motifs in gold and silver. The same kind of tarashikomi, in ink and malachite as in the Heike nōkyō, was used to render trees in later Tawaraya works, such as shikishi with scenes of the Tales of Ise, forming a continuous tradition of the technique from 1602 onward. These works will feature in the following section, since Kōrin probably assimilated tarashikomi through similar small-format works and employed the method exclusively to render the surfaces of trees, following Sōtatsu’s earliest use of tarashikomi.

Turn to the Tawaraya

Tarashikomi was both an abstract surface technique and a means of representation. While Sōtatsu used it to draw the velvety silhouettes of oxen (Bulls at Chōmyōji, Kyoto; Fig. 3.8) or the dew-drenched leaves of flowers on a misty morning (Lotus Pond and Waterfowl Fig. 3.9), tarashikomi was also inherently non-representational. The visual effect created by

"tarashikomi"’s light-dark contrast nurtures the illusion of perpetual wetness and tactility and creates the sensation of a kinetic topography inside a painting.

The Tawaraya established two basic variations of the *tarashikomi* technique: a monochromatic and a duo-chromatic form. The monochromatic form relies exclusively on ink and is a prevalent feature in paintings by Sōtatsu himself. Followers of the Tawaraya atelier seemingly deemed it fit for most subjects, ranging from plants to human figures and animals. The duo-chromatic form of *tarashikomi* (in ink and malachite, or sometimes gold), on the other hand, uses the technique’s representational faculty in a different way, that is to depict wooden surfaces. As we have seen at the example of the *Heike nōkyō*, the earliest form of *tarashikomi* might have been the combination of ink with malachite. Within the Tawaraya studio, this visual tactic was frequently used to limn the moss-covered bark of trees. Significantly, Kōrin’s earliest work in *tarashikomi* also makes use of this color combination—a practice that he would remain faithful to and develop in many of his works.

The first five or so years of the eighteenth century marked Kōrin’s intensive adoption of the style of Sōtatsu and the Tawaraya atelier. The beginning of this process can be gleaned from the *Plants of Autumn* screens’ awkward use of *tarashikomi* (Fig. 3.10). A few years later, Kōrin produced a series of works that exemplify how the artist turned to the substantial numbers of Tawaraya fans and small-format paintings to take in the Tawaraya mode. A pair of screens with motifs of Fujiwara Teika’s definition of the twelve months (hereafter *Teika Twelve Months*; Fig. 3.11) is one of the earliest large-format examples for Kōrin’s espousal of Tawaraya-related painting styles.

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16 Nakabe Yoshitaka proposed that the pooling effects found in gold and silver pigment should also be added to the concept of *tarashikomi*, alongside the method’s ink tradition. See Nakabe, “Tarashikomi no hensen,” 122–132.
Kōrin painted *Teika Twelve Months* between around 1701 and 1704 and the screens mark the artist’s departure from his earliest twelve months paintings covered in Chapter One. Postdating those works by less than a decade, *Teika Twelve Months* is illustrative of Kōrin’s constant search for new forms of expression and his perpetual desire to reinvent himself as an artist. The screens create a hybrid among the watery surfaces of *tarashikomi*, the abbreviated, stylized forms of the Tawaraya, and the crisp naturalism of Kano-school depictions of birds. The Kano’s artistic devotion to the careful representation of birds’ plumage and the meticulous reproduction of their glossy palette of colors is manifest in multiple studies by Kōrin’s own hand. This fusion of representational and abstract techniques became one of Kōrin’s trademarks from the early 1700s onward, and *Teika Twelve Months* is an early display of this conceptual refashioning of Kōrin’s approach to painting.

In Kōrin’s lifelong quest for artistic reformulation of older traditions, *tarashikomi* provided a means of proclaiming himself as a painter who was both on the cutting edge and indebted to tradition. For example, the countless offshoots of the Tawaraya tradition perpetuated the pooling of ink and malachite in depictions of plants in Edo-period visual culture. Kōrin paired these abstract features that were emblematic of Tawaraya paintings with the naturalism he learned while apprenticing with a teacher from the Kano school, symbolizing his turn away from his conservative models of the 1690s to a more experimental approach to painting.

The *Teika Twelve Months* screens bear Kōrin’s round relief seal reading “Koresuke”—an

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17 The screens fall within the time of Kōrin’s bestowal with the *hokkyō* title in 1701 and his abandonment of the “Koresuke” seal around 1704. Yamane dates *Cormorant Fisher*, also at the Seikadō Bunko Art Museum, which bears the same seal and a very similar signature, to between 1701 and 1704. See Yamane, *Kōrin kenkyū ichi*, 119.

18 On Kōrin’s Kano studies, see Chapter One.
alternate spelling of one of his earliest pseudonyms. Kōrin used this seal from around 1701 to 1704. Each image is allotted a separate screen panel that bears the “Koresuke” seal; the paintings of the first and twelfth months each have an additional “Hokkyō Kōrin” signature. In the seal, Kōrin’s semiotic choice already reflects how he aligned himself with the Tawaraya tradition. Sometime around 1701, Kōrin designed his pseudonym and round “Koresuke” (also “Iryō”) seal after the circular “Inen” seal found in large numbers of paintings by Sōtatsu and his followers (Fig. 3.12; 3.13).

Although Kōrin had experimented with tarashikomi in earlier works, namely his Plants of Autumn screens, Teika Twelve Months represents his earliest, most overt quote of the Tawaraya style. The screens are suffused with elements—frontal images of abbreviated houses, ink-malachite tarashikomi, stylized water patterns—found in their greatest concentration in small-format works of the Tawaraya. Kōrin probably embraced these traits by way of fans and shikishi, small format paintings for which Sōtatsu and his studio were famous. The peculiarly compartmentalized shape of the hut in Kōrin’s painting of the first month in Teika Twelve Months

19 See Chapters One and Two.

20 Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 214.

21 A second theory maintains that Kōrin adopted the first character of “Koresuke” from the name of the professed founder of the Ogata lineage, Iharu 伊春. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 59.

The concept of a Tawaraya workshop with Sōtatsu as the leading painter was suggested first in the context of the 1951 exhibition Sōtatsu Kōrin-ha at the Tokyo National Museum and its accompanying catalogue. The exhibition also advanced the idea of a “Inen” workshop tradition that succeeded Sōtatsu and the Tawaraya. The “Inen” pseudonym and seal were used by Sōtatsu and other painters of the Tawaraya, such as his successors Tawaraya Sōsetsu and Kitagawa Sōsetsu. It became a trademark symbol impressed on a variety of paintings with floral subjects, tarashikomi, and repetitive figures and compositions, mainly taken from medieval handscrolls. See Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, ed., Sōtatsu Kōrin-ha zuroku (Kyoto: Benrindō, 1952).

22 An oft-cited anecdote in the novella Chikusai (circa 1621–1623) records different famous businesses of the capital. It writes that “for fans, it is the Kyoto Tawaraya. [There] they paint lavish scenes of the Yūgao chapter of the Shining Genji” あふきは都たわら屋かひかるけんしのゆふかほのまえふくをあかせてかいたりけり. See Yamane, Sōtatsu, 246.
finds its equivalent in a Sōtatsu fan painting at Daigoji (Fig. 3.14; 3.15). Although their compositions differ, the cottage in the works by Kōrin and Sōtatsu match in both painters’ style and choice of colors. The two works also share similar plum trees, rendered in tarashikomi, which strengthen a possible connection. Sōtatsu arguably painted more than one such painting, but Kōrin may have had the chance to see this fan painting, mounted together with others on two screens at Daigoji, where he performed Noh for the abbot in 1675. It is not known whether Kōrin had much interest in painting before the 1690s, but he may have remembered such a masterpiece for future reference. With his close relationship to the abbacy, the painter could have revisited the work later.

*Teika Twelve Months* reflect this referential strategy, where Kōrin would take a work by Sōtatsu or another artist as his model and modify it in his own image. As a result, the screens create a synergy between Kōrin’s use of the Kano style in the 1690s to his artistic recalibration to the Tawaraya in the early 1700s. For example, the birds depicted betray Kōrin’s apprenticeship with a Kano painter and his use of the atelier’s model catalogues, while a majority of plants, especially the bark of the craggy plum trees in the first and twelfth months replicate traits typical of the Tawaraya (Fig. 3.16). In the second month, Kōrin even chose to combine in the same habits of rendering mossy branches of the Kano—round patches of malachite with a perimeter of white dots—with that of the Tawaraya—tarashikomi in ink and malachite. The screens established this synthetic approach to painting, which would remain a determining ingredient throughout Kōrin’s body of works. In fact, one of his late works, the screens *Red and White Plum Blossoms*, displays a fusion of the Kano and Tawaraya styles that corresponds with *Teika Twelve

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23 See Chapter Two.
Months (Fig. 3.17; 3.18). In Teika Twelve Months, Kōrin’s secure handling of the brush reveals an astute painter who had seen and mastered a heterogeneous stylistic palette; he pairs meticulous detail in the birds while he wields his brush with more freedom in the Tawaraya-esque elements. Following at most a few years after his masterpiece Irises, the screens herald the breadth and profundity that the espousal of Sōtatsu’s style would contribute to Kōrin’s oeuvre.

In the years leading up to his departure for Edo, Kōrin painted many variations of tarashikomi in different formats. Teika Twelve Months likely represents Kōrin’s earliest complete large-scale work in tarashikomi. Yet his first dated example took on the shape of a tiny detail in Kōrin’s portrait of Nakamura Kuranosuke (Fig. 3.19). The work is one of Kōrin’s best-known paintings and it epitomizes the painter’s relationship with Kuranosuke and his significant reshuffling of patrons at the time. The silver mint official seems to have played a role in stimulating the painter to select the aesthetics and painterly mechanisms of the Tawaraya as core aspects of his style.

Kuranosuke was Kōrin’s junior by ten years. Still, in spite of their age difference, both men maintained a friendship that lasted from around 1700 until Kōrin’s death in 1716. It remains unclear when they met, but the earliest evidence of their relationship is Kōrin’s appointment as an official to the Osaka copper mint (dōza) in 1701. The post was probably facilitated by Kuranosuke who wielded considerable power over early modern Japan’s currency system. The year after, both men drafted a contract where Kōrin agreed to take in Kuranosuke’s newborn

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24 Yamane speculated that Kuranosuke and Kōrin began associating sometime around 1700. In a letter dated 1701/05/15, he was called together with another official, Ikeda Denshichi, to report on the amount of copper kept at the mint’s storage facility at Izumiya. Kuranosuke, together with Kōrin and other officials, was busy inspecting the Dōza’s Osaka mansion and other properties a little later that same year. Yamane Yūzō, “Kōrin to Nakamura Kuranosuke: Kōrin hitsu Nakamura Kuranosuke zō o chūshin ni,” Kokka 1023 (May 1979): 7–22, especially 17–18.
daughter, Katsu, and educate her for five years. Katsu would later marry Kōrin’s illegitimate son, Juichirō, who was himself adopted by the Ginza official Konishi Hikokurō, an acquaintance and colleague of Kuranosuke. As we learn from Kōrin’s will, this agreement was also brokered by Kuranosuke who quickly assumed a protective role in Kōrin’s life. This comradeship with Kuranosuke coincided with a sharp decline in Kōrin’s visits to the Nijō family, following his receipt of the hokkyō title in 1701.

Around the early 1700s, Kōrin’s circle of patrons and personal associates seems to have shifted towards his own peers, the urban wealthy. As we will learn later from a letter Kōrin sent from Edo, he often felt exhausted by dealing with the lofty and powerful, so, perhaps, he turned away from the aristocrat Nijō Tsunahira, one of Kōrin’s earliest benefactors, to find more relaxed associations among members of his own class. While Kōrin and Kuranosuke no doubt were close friends—the painter made repeated sentimental references to the official in his letters and will—incessant money problems led Kōrin to carefully craft the contract for Katsu’s fosterage.

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25 In 1915, Fukui Rikichirō was the first to scrutinize the relationship between Kōrin and Kuranosuke. He drew attention to the 1702 contract to give Kuranosuke’s daughter into Kōrin’s fosterage and the importance of Kuranosuke as Kōrin’s patron. See Fukui Rikichirō, “Ogata Kōrin no shōgai ni tsuite,” in Fukui Rikichirō bijutsushi ronshū ge (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2000), 96–97, 102. Fukui’s piece was originally published in the journal Mitsukoshi in 1915. Later, Aimi Kō showed that the close relationship between Kōrin and Kuranosuke might have affected Kōrin’s activities in Edo between 1704 and 1709. He argued that Kuranosuke paved the way for Kōrin with introductions to various high-ranking warriors, such as Ogiwara Shigehide (financial advisor to the shogunate; 1658–1713), the Sakai, and the Tsugaru. The latter two families, especially the Sakai, are assumed to be among Kōrin’s major patrons in Edo. Aimi, “Kōrin azuma kudari kō (naka no ichi),” 28–29. The contract is preserved in two identical drafts for Kōrin’s side, and another for Kuranosuke. See Appendix Documents II / 12 to 15.

26 See Appendix Document II / 18. Juichirō also appears under his earlier given name, Shinjirō and under his name as head of the Konishi house, Hikokemon.

27 In light of Kōrin’s many visits to Nijō Tsunahira’s mansion and their close relationship, Fukui argued that the Nijō were instrumental in supporting Kōrin’s receipt of the hokkyō title. Fukui, “Ogata Kōrin no shōgai ni tsuite,” 95. See also Chapter One. For a translation of the hokkyō certificate, see Appendix Document I / 23. Kōrin continued to conduct courtesy calls on Tsunahira during special annual festivities and, for instance, when he returned briefly from Edo in 1705/03/20. See Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 56.
Previously, Kōrin had been reluctant to take care even of his own children, so money and a favor to Kuranosuke to deepen their connection may have been at the core of the agreement to take in Katsu.\(^{28}\) Kōrin even solicited professional counsel on the terms of the agreement in 1702, apparently in an attempt to make sure he got the best from this deal.\(^{29}\)

However, the two men’s relationship was symbiotic. The financially stricken Kōrin gratefully received Kuranosuke’s support while offering him some aristocratic glamour that might have been the only thing lacking in the Ginza official’s affluent life. For example, in 1703 Kōrin and Kenzan took Kuranosuke for an audience with Tsunahira—a privilege that perhaps was intended as a reciprocation for the many favors the artist had received from Kuranosuke.\(^{30}\) An audience with a relative of the emperor must have left a strong impression on a status-conscious man like Kuranosuke—strong enough, at least, to further pull Kōrin into his circle of favorites and culminate in Kuranosuke’s commission of a portrait from Kōrin.

The 1704 portrait—datable through an inscription by the astrologer Nakane Genkei (1662–1733)—marks a peak in the two men’s relationship. The painting is a case in point for Kōrin’s devotion to the Tawaraya style at the time and his appropriation of a potpourri of visual features from the atelier. Kōrin transforms Kuranosuke into a counterfeit figure extracted from Tawaraya monogatari paintings by assembling in and around Kuranosuke’s image an assemblage

\(^{28}\) A cluster of documents, encompassing the entire 1690s, speak of at least four illegitimate sons who Kōrin fathered with four different women. In each case, he either entrusted the care to each respective mother or gave the children into fosterage with third parties. See Appendix Documents II / 1 to 8. See also Chapter One.

\(^{29}\) See Appendix Document II / 15 for a translation of the legal advice sent by letter to Kōrin by an unidentified person named Morimura Izaemon.

\(^{30}\) At that occasion, as a gift at the end of the year, Kuranosuke was given a set of ten decorated shikishi with a preface authored by Kōrin. The audience is recorded for 1703/12/26. Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 55.
of traits he found in such works.\textsuperscript{31} While Kuranosuke is clad in the \textit{kamishimo} garb of an Edo-period man of status, his whitened face, with its removed expression, and distinctively crimson lips evokes the appearance of such literary characters as Ariwara Narihira in \textit{shikishi} by Tawaraya painters (Fig. 3.20).

A similar anatomy can be found among classical subjects of the Tosa atelier, which Kōrin adapted in paintings like \textit{Akikonomu} (Fig. 3.21). Such works evince the stylistic proximity of \textit{monogatari}-related works in different painting traditions. The sculptural hands with tapering, elongated fingers—another feature of Tawaraya paintings—also remind us of the Buddhist paintings Kōrin copied that are preserved among the Konishi Archives (Fig. 3.22). Kuranosuke displays an array of personal items, such as a richly decorated sword tucked into his garb, befitting his official stature and self-conscious personality. Kōrin made Kuranosuke a hybrid of a classical \textit{monogatari} figure and a contemporaneous dandy at the dusk of the Genroku era. The sumptuousness of the Ginza official’s attire and the implements of status—sword, scroll, and fan—all serve to elucidate Kuranosuke’s wealth and cultural erudition. They illustrate the character of a proud and ambitious man with a keen awareness of his social status.

The portrait is not only one of the few dated works by Kōrin, it also contains a small but poignant example of \textit{tarashikomi}, showing how the technique seems to have been part of the aesthetic and self-fashioning of the urban upper classes to which Kōrin and Kuranosuke

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{31} Yamane, who provided the most thorough analysis on the portrait thus far, underlined the work’s eclecticism. Yamane, “Kōrin to Nakamura Kuranosuke,” 10–12.
Kōno Motoaki has pointed out the duality of stylization and naturalism in the Kuranosuke portrait. The accuracy and devotion to detail in the sitter’s attire is contrasted by the stylized nature of the sitter’s physical features. Kōno, \textit{Ogata Kōrin}, 102–103.
Emura Tomoko examined the prominent (yet largely flaked-off) crests on Kuranosuke’s garments as a self-conscious display of confidence and stature. She identified them as apricot leaves. Based on sketches in the Konishi Archives, she surmised that Kōrin designed crests professionally. Emura Tomoko, “Kōrin to mon: Kōrin no ishōsei to Kōrin kankei shiryō,” in \textit{Kokuhō Kakitsubata zu: Kōrin Genroku no isai} (Tokyo: Nezu Bijutsukan, 2005), 100–104.
\end{flushright}
belonged. The fan before Kuranosuke’s knees reveals the motif of a tree and waves on gold ground with the trunk rendered in minuscule tarashikomi of ink and malachite (Fig. 3.23). Though lacking clearly rendered blossoms, the added specks of darkened vermillion—a characteristic of Kōrin’s plum blossoms—suggest that the painter intended to create a plum tree along a shore.\textsuperscript{32} The most prominent example of the subject and the culmination of Kōrin’s flower paintings in tarashikomi are the Red and White Plum Blossoms screens (Fig. 3.24). Kōrin rendered the trunks of both plum trees in the screens exclusively in tarashikomi of ink and malachite. In so doing, he created the sensation of two fluid trees that seem to reach out to merge with the stylized rivulet beneath them. In combination with the Tawaraya references found in Kuranosuke’s figure, the portrait constitutes a landmark in the painter’s espousal of Tawaraya methods.

Kōrin’s embrace of the painting style of Sōtatsu and the Tawaraya coincided with the peak in his relations with Kuranosuke. As we have seen, the painter received substantial favors from Kuranosuke from at least 1701, the time when Kōrin turned to the Tawaraya for formulating a new artistic expression in Teika Twelve Months and Kuranosuke’s portrait. Sōtatsu in his own days received his main patronage from the imperial court, but in light of Kōrin’s precipitous withdrawal from aristocratic circles at that time, his adoption of the Tawaraya style must have been guided by its appeal to Kyoto’s upper-tier bourgeoisie that duplicated aristocratic

\textsuperscript{32} Kōrin’s polychromatic renderings of plum trees largely consist of a similar build-up: a blend of ink and malachite in tarashikomi; sepals in dark vermillion or ink; and blossoms in shell-white, sometimes with pistils in gold or ink.
appetites for their own identity building. With his training in the pastimes and painterly tastes enjoyed at court, Kōrin was a fitting mediator between the urban wealthy and the fulfillment of their longing for aristocratic aesthetics.

Kōrin, the Ogata, and Sōtatsu

In the Kuranosuke portrait, Kōrin adorned the fan laid before the Ginza official with tarashikomi of ink and malachite, a choice of pigments that Tawaraya painters used extensively in small-format works. Kuranosuke, a style-conscious man, was well known for his extravagant, narcissistic character that led posterity to remember him with a fashion anecdote. Kuranosuke, in the guise of a Tawaraya monogatari figure, with a tarashikomi-decorated fan beside him, conveys how he may have considered such an object to be a fashionable accessory and made sure to aptly display it as a trope of his taste.

As a part of court culture, Sōtatsu was also popular among wealthy townsmen and his works fetched high prices in Kōrin’s time. On an unspecified date, Kōrin sold several items in his personal collection—probably heirlooms from his father Sōken—among them a single two-panel

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34 The popular novella Okina gusa (1791) by Kanzawa Tokō (1710–1795) contains the story how Kōrin devised a dashing kimono ensemble for Kuranosuke’s wife in order for her to impress at a fashionable gathering of wealthy townswomen.
screen (katte byōbu) by Sōtatsu. The screen achieved by far the highest price—one hundred-eighty monme silver, a substantial sum—revealing the popularity and monetary value of Sōtatsu’s paintings in the early eighteenth-century art market. Unfortunately, however, the sales receipt does not mention the screen’s subject, and, as we have seen earlier, references to tarashikomi in written sources are perpetually absent.

The fact that Kōrin extracted elements from Tawaraya fan paintings in his Teika Twelve Months and used tarashikomi in the fan in Kuranosuke’s portrait suggests that small-format works played a leading role in his adopting the technique, which, conversely, he later used predominantly in screen paintings. Tawaraya artists produced fans and shikishi with similar tarashikomi in substantial quantities, and these paintings could have provided Kōrin with one point of access to the technique. One such example is a set of shikishi of the Tales of Ise (hereafter Ise shikishi, or shikishi).  

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35 See Appendix Document 1 / 21 for a translation of the sales record. Kōrin sold these pieces, among them a Shigaraki ware vase, painted dishes, lacquer trays, and other items, to a business named Kamenokōya. Noguchi Takeshi showed that the Kamenokōya was one of many thriving art dealers that emerged around the second half of the seventeenth century. See his “Kōrin gagyō no kenkyū,” 248–257.

36 Although the document bears no date, Yamane dates the letter to around 1701 to 1703 when Kōrin was in financial trouble. However, judging from Kōrin’s signature, the document could date from anytime between 1692 and 1704. The letter is part of the documentation accompanying a suzuribako with designs of mizuaoi at the MOA Museum, covered in Chapter Two. See Yamane, “Kōrin maki-e nida,” 11–28, especially 14–16 and Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 72.

37 It is unclear whether the works—presently 59 known leaves in total—were produced as a set. The MOA leaf, for instance, has a tree with an ink and malachite blend that is very much akin to Kōrin’s fan painting. There are close to a dozen other instances where a similar tarashikomi was used to adorn trees in particular. The total 59 known leaves were produced at different times and by different hands. For an analysis of the different styles found in this set, see Kim Jeong Ah, “Sōtatsu-ha Ise monogatari-e shikishi no kōsatsu,” Bijutsushi 139 (February 1996): 12–30. The dates suggested for each respective shikishi range from around 1629–1636 (Masuda bon, chapter 58; inscribed by Karasumaru Mitsuhiro) to 1637–1643 (shinshutsu bon). On the former dating, based on an analysis of Mitsuhiro’s calligraphy, see Kasashima Tadayuki, “Sōtatsu Ise monogatari zu shikishi o megutte: shinshiryō kara no ichi shiron,” Idemitsu bijutsukan kenkyū kiyō 12 (2007): 107–122, especially 120. On the latter, based on painting style, see Nakamachi, “Shinshutsu no Sōtatsu-ha Ise monogatari-e shikishi,” 13. See also Kawada Masayuki, “Sōtatsu Ise monogatari zu shikishi no genjō,” in Sōtatsu Ise monogatari zu shikishi (Tokyo: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2013), 149–155.
Each leaf of the set is inscribed with a quote from the *Tales of Ise* and in many cases their calligrapher’s identity is recorded on the reverse. For instance, an illustration of the 45th chapter, *Yuku hotaru*, reveals the name “Ogata” on its verso, leading Yamane Yūzō to suggest Ogata Sōken, Kōrin’s father, as its possible inscriber (Fig. 3.25). Sōken wrote in Kōetsu-style calligraphy—the prevalent script used by most calligraphers throughout the *shikishi* set—and he occupied a prominent position in court circles as a man of learning with a particular erudition in the *Tales of Ise*. This knowledge led to his participation in other court- and Ise-related art projects. The Konishi Archives also contain other pieces of Sōken’s calligraphy, some of which were written on paper with gold underpaintings in the Tawaraya style, arguing for Sōken’s connection to the Tawaraya atelier.

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39 Yamane also speculated that parts of the set were commissioned by Kōrin’s grandmother Ichijū’in for Sōken’s coming of age ceremony. See Yamane, “Den Sōtatsu hitsu Ise monogatari zu,” 7–21. Few other prominent Ogata family members could have boasted enough cultural esteem to participate in such a project. For example Ogata Sōhaku, Kōrin’s grandfather, died in 1631 making him an unlikely possibility. See Hayashi Susumu, “Masuda-ke bon Sōtatsu Ise monogatari zu shikishi no seiritsu,” in *Sōtatsu Ise monogatari zu shikishi* (Tokyo: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2013), 173.

40 Sōken inscribed a screen with paintings of the *Tales of Ise* and his name as a calligrapher continued to be remembered throughout the Edo period; he is mentioned in the early nineteenth-century *Koga bikō*, begun in 1850 by Asaoka Okisada (1800–1856). Okisada writes: “Sōken learned calligraphy from Hon’ami Kōetsu and wrote in his style” 学書本阿弥光悦書法得光悦. Yamane Yūzō suggested that Kōetsu himself might have taught Sōken. But Sakai Hōitsu proposes in his *Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu*, published in 1813 and 1815, that a calligrapher named Kojima Sōshin might have been another of Sōken’s instructors. See Yamane, “Ogata Sōken,” 91–96, especially 92.

41 The dating of the *shikishi*, however, is problematic. If Sōken’s leaf was produced around the same time as those inscribed by, for instance, Karasumaru Mitsuhiro, which is dated to around the 1630s, Sōken, who was born in 1620, would have been only in his early teens and unfit to work alongside such illustrious, senior calligraphers. Accordingly, the Sōken-inscribed leaf probably postdates that by Mitsuhiro and was inscribed at least a decade later. The gaps in age of the inscribers generally reflect the temporal (and stylistic) diversity of the Tawaraya’s *Ise shikishi*. For example, the dates of Ryōshō (1622–1693), prince abbot of Manshuin and grandson of emperor GoYōzei, who inscribed a leaf depicting chapter nine of the Masuda bon, correspond almost exactly with the life of Sōken. The calligrapher for the Masuda bon’s chapter 68, Hino Terumasa (1577–1637), like Mitsuhiro, had already died when Sōken and Ryōshō came of age and inscribed their *shikishi*. Igarashi, “Sōtatsu Ise monogatari,” 159.
Aside from high-profile townsmen like Sōken, many of the calligraphers in the set were associated either by blood or marriage with emperors GoYōzei and GoMizuno’o, thus hailing from the uppermost strata of the aristocracy. The Tawaraya produced works that display a heavy involvement of the highest levels of court society with subjects taken directly from the court’s classical tradition. This reveals how the studio had become a vital element of imperial visual culture. From its probable beginnings in the *Heike nōkyō* project of 1602, *tarashikomi* had entered Kyoto’s aristocratic tradition.

Rather than representational or poetic meaning, *tarashikomi* emphasized surface and style. In other words it created visible traces of a painter’s hand and brought ink to an aristocratic visual tradition that was accustomed to the reliable forms of *tsukuri-e* (lit. “constructed pictures”). Such works instilled court painting with the formalism of reoccurring styles and compositions, which the Tawaraya adapted and infused with innovations like *tarashikomi*. Later Edo-period commentators drew attention to this eclectic blend of the expected and the new, between court painting and innovative traits in Kōrin’s paintings. In his preface to the first edition of Sakai Hōitsu’s *Korin hyakuzu* of around 1815, the Confucian scholar Kameda Bōsai (1752–1826) writes:

[…]\ Ogata Kōrin was proficient at painting. For long he turned away from the set patterns and cavities of court painting, and he brought forth fresh forms. […]

[…]\ 尾形光琳工於續事。脱院院畫之窩窟。別出一種之機杼。[…]

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These “fresh forms” encompassed *tarashikomi*—a technique embraced by Hōitsu—which Kōrin helped establish as one of the core methods of early modern Japanese-style painting.\(^{43}\)

Kōrin transposed the aesthetic he found in *shikishi* and fans to his own works. A *shikishi* by the Tawaraya atelier, belonging to the same set as the leaf inscribed by Sōken, depicts the *Utsuyama* episode of the ninth chapter of the *Tales of Ise*, which enjoyed particular popularity in the seventeenth century; it provided the basis for an oval fan by Kōrin at the Freer Gallery of Art (Fig. 3.26; 3.27).\(^{44}\) The fan probably dates to sometime between 1702 and 1704, and thus was produced relatively close in time to the Kuranosuke portrait, at the height of Kōrin’s early devotion to the Tawaraya mode.\(^{45}\) The painting reveals that, by the first half of the 1700s, Kōrin had access to works from the *shikishi* set in which his father had participated. The Freer fan, however, does not reproduce the faint pooling that is dispersed throughout the rocky ridges of the mountain path found in the *shikishi*, showing how Kōrin may have considered *tarashikomi* a technique best fit to render plants and ligneous surfaces—an association that is mirrored in other Tawaraya atelier fan paintings.

A gilded wooden box with fans pasted onto its surface at the Yamato Bunkakan, for example, includes two fans illustrating what Kōrin considered the best use for *tarashikomi*—to

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\(^{43}\) The method was not exclusively associated with Kōrin or even Sōtatsu. Ike Taiga (1723–1776), for instance, thought of it as part of Kōetsu’s style though Kōetsu did not leave any paintings to judge by. It eventually assumed a national position. Painters saw in it a thing that only befitted domestic subjects, hence we do not see *tarashikomi* in so-called Chinese-style works.


\(^{45}\) On its reverse, along with the artist’s signature (“Hokkyō Kōrin”) and seal (“Kansei”), the fan carries an image of white chrysanthemums. Kōrin mainly used the pseudonym “Kansei” between around the first five or so years of the 1700s.
represent the weather-beaten bark of trees (Fig. 3.28; 3.29). Each of the fans refers to Japan’s classical tradition. One work depicts branches with plum blossoms and bark in *tarashikomi* that closely resemble the fan in Kuranosuke’s portrait. The other fan depicts men in traditional court attire, as they appear in numerous works by the Tawaraya atelier. Their gathering takes place beneath a large tree that divides the picture into two clearly defined spaces, a clever device to fit the horizontal composition into the curved space of the fan. These fans all use *tarashikomi* to render the bark of trees, an artistic decision that Kōrin continued in most of his works that contain the technique.

Sōtatsu and the Tawaraya made *tarashikomi* an essential feature of their *shikishi* and fan paintings. The prolific atelier and its tradition of successors produced a large number of works in these formats, often with *monogatari* subjects that included the duo-chromatic *tarashikomi* of ink and malachite. These works often drew from repetitive modular forms of figures. Set compositional and thematic arrangements found in many different works kept reappearing as

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46 The box carries a total of twelve fans pasted onto its gilded surface. Marks of wear along the ridges show that some have been used as fans previously. The motifs are as eclectic as their styles: chrysanthemums (red and white blossoms); poet Saigyō; Mt. Fuji; plum blossoms; dragon in clouds; *Hakurakuten*; figures in court attire; bamboo in gold pigment; reeds in snow; irises at *yatsuhashi*; pine needles in gold pigment. For an analysis of the box’s fans, see, for example, Yamane Yūzō, “Kōrin hitsu Senmen harimaze tebako,” *Yamato bunka* 33 (September 1960): 1–14.

47 It seems that Kōrin became adept in the peculiarities of the fan format, since such works constitute his earliest recorded paintings. We have seen in Chapter One how Kōrin and his brothers gave fans and *shikishi* to Nijō Tsunahira on multiple occasions throughout the 1690s. The courtier himself ordered fans from Kōrin to give to his mother-in-law, the retired empress Shinjōsaimon’in, as early as 1695.

recognizable hallmarks of the Tawaraya tradition. Tarashikomi became part of the brand, mainly through Kōrin’s adoption and repetition of Tawaraya forms.

The Tawaraya’s legacy impacted Kōrin. His works of the time between around 1701 and 1704 provide early evidence how Kōrin read tarashikomi as an aspect of aristocratic splendor, which he incorporated in his peculiar portrait of Kuranosuke and numerous other works. Kōrin’s turn to the Tawaraya and tarashikomi happened at the time when he prepared his departure for Edo, where he would work for roughly five years. It seems that Kōrin and his Kyoto circle considered tarashikomi, by way of its use in aristocratic contexts, as a means to solicit influential patrons in Edo.

II. Tarashikomi and Edo

The timing of Kōrin’s emphasis on the Tawaraya style coincided with other preparations leading up to the painter’s departure for Edo in 1704. Kōrin’s relocation was a significant step with lasting implications for his personal and artistic development. For his move to Edo, Kōrin made use of the interregional presence of tarashikomi. The style of the Tawaraya, associated with the court and Kyoto, comprised local aesthetics as well as a sui generis ability to please geographically and socially diverse patrons, as documents on the Maeda clan of Ishikawa domain have shown. Šōtatsu’s workshop brought forth a network of followers to his artistic legacy, which they helped spread to different regions of Japan. These pupils, among them

49 Although the subject matter of a considerable number of fans remains unidentified, many extant works carry motifs relating to war epics like the Tales of the Heike, the Tale of Hōgen, and the Tale of Heiji. Other subjects include fans of flowers or landscapes such as sea and waves, among others. The Tawaraya atelier and its successors made extensive use of recurring, modular forms taken by Šōtatsu mainly from medieval handscrolls, such as Kitano tenjin engi emaki, Saigyō monogatari emaki, and Ihon Ise monogatari emaki. These recognizable figures and compositional arrangements became trademark features of the atelier. See Miyeko Murase, “Fan Paintings Attributed to Šōtatsu: Their Themes and Prototypes,” Ars Orientalis 9 (January 1973): 51–77.
Tawaraya Sōsetsu (act. mid-17th c.) and Kitagawa Sōsetsu (act. late 17th c.), contributed to the interregional quality of *tarashikomi* by disseminating the visual language of the Tawaraya to the courts of regional daimyo. As we shall see, those provincial lords eventually carried the painting style to Edo. The case of *tarashikomi* illustrates that a single technique can epitomize the interconnected web of the early modern art world.

**A Technique’s Move to Edo**

This section will show that Edo was receptive to *tarashikomi* and that an infrastructure for the technique existed before Kōrin’s activities there. We will also investigate how Kōrin’s experiences in the shogunal capital established the foundations for his push towards an ever stronger focus on *tarashikomi* in large-format works painted during the final years of his life.

Kōrin made several major paintings that entered the collections of daimyo and display his emphasis on the Tawaraya style. In fact, two of these—a pair of screens depicting the Gods of Wind and Thunder (*Fūjin Raijin*) that belonged to the Hitotsubashi Tokugawa clan (Fig. 3.30; 3.31), and a single screen of maple and pine trees, owned by the Hachisuka family, lords of Tokushima domain (Fig. 3.32; 3.33)—are copies of Sōtatsu works. The signatures and seals on Kōrin’s paintings leave little doubt that the majority of them were either produced in Edo or after Kōrin’s final return to Kyoto around 1709, a time when he continued to perform long-distance
work for Edo patrons. It is also possible that Kōrin shipped works that used tarashikomi to Edo prior to 1704, as may have been the case for Teika Twelve Months. The work was owned by the Doi clan, lords of Furukawa domain (present-day Ibaraki). Although it is unclear when these works entered their respective ownerships, the paintings embody Kōrin’s continuing devotion to Tawaraya styles and subjects that he absorbed prior to his departure to Edo.

Many of the paintings produced while in Edo and after show how Kōrin assimilated specific sets of Tawaraya techniques when, before he departed in 1704, he refashioned his artistic persona. In his keen awareness of the art market, Kōrin seems to have considered the Tawaraya style potentially suitable to Edo tastes. The painter’s carefully timed adoption of select elements from the pictorial language of the Tawaraya evinces that Sōtatsu and his style were sufficiently established in Edo to encourage Kōrin to make it part of his own entry into the art world there. The second and third generation successors of Sōtatsu, rather than the master himself, offer a possible explanation for Kōrin’s modal shift for Edo and afterwards.

Sōtatsu’s legacy was manifold and extended well into the early eighteenth century. A large number of unnamed painters emulated his mode, but two individuals stand out in particular: Tawaraya Sōsetsu and Kitagawa Sōsetsu. Their biographies are largely obscure, but

50 All these works are signed “Hokkyō Kōrin,” though using different signature styles. Other works, such as Taigong Wang, which was owned by the Ikeda clan, contains a round relief “Kansei” seal, the pseudonym that Kōrin used mainly between circa 1702 and 1704. Works like Azaleas with the “Dōsū” seal were most likely painted while in Edo, given that he had the name divined just prior to his departure and appears to have adopted it specifically for his venture eastward. Maple and Pine, Fūjin Raijin, and Red and White Plum Blossoms (former Tsugaru collection) bear a round relief seal reading “Masatoki,” Kōrin’s last pseudonym. According to Yamane, works bearing “Masatoki” date to the time after Kōrin’s return to Kyoto, from around 1709 to 1711 and after. On Yamane’s analysis of the “Masatoki” and “Seisei” seals, see his Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 60–63.

51 A sketch book by Hara Yōyūsai (1769–1845), a lacquer artist who collaborated with Sakai Hōitsu, contains designs based on Teika Twelve Months. The book records the Doi clan as the screens’ owners. Tamamushi, Toshi no naka no e, 432–433.
both painters used the pseudonym “Inen” and seem to have succeeded one another, each apparently claiming successorship to Sōtatsu.\(^52\) In fact, their phonetically identical names led later commentators such as the late Edo-period painter Sakai Hōitsu, to consider the two Sōsetsu as one and the same person.\(^53\)

The two Sōsetsu ran prolific ateliers and under their tutelage the Tawaraya atelier gradually moved away from Kyoto. Both painters were granted the *hokkyō* title; Tawaraya Sōsetsu received the honor sometime around 1642.\(^54\) Sōtatsu himself is thought to have died in the early 1640s, probably before Sōsetsu was named *hokkyō*. Sōsetsu then seems to have succeeded him as head of the studio.\(^55\) Sōsetsu, however, moved away from the court patronage enjoyed by Sōtatsu and acquired the favor of provincial rulers, who followed their own distinctive aesthetic agendas.

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\(^{52}\) Aimi Kōu was the first modern scholar to draw attention to this misunderstanding. He also showed that Asai Fukyū in his *Fusō meikō gafu* (early 18th c.) followed the same assumption. Fukyū was one of the first early modern art historians to record the two Sōsetsu as one and Hōitsu’s misreading might have been influenced by such earlier treatises as *Fusō meikō gafu*. See Aimi, “Sōsetsu, Sōsetsu to Sōsen,” 63–78, especially 63.

\(^{53}\) In his *Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu*, Hōitsu considered Kitagawa the family name of Tawaraya Sōsetsu, calling him “Tawaraya Sōsetsu, by the family name of Kitagawa.” A version is kept at the Historiographical Institute, University of Tokyo.

\(^{54}\) In 1642, Hōrin Jōshō, the aristocratic abbot of Rokuonji, records in his journal, *Kakumeiki*, the receipt of fans “painted by Tawaraya Sōsetsu Hokkyō” 俵屋宗雪法橋筆. See Minamoto, *Tawaraya Sōtatsu*, 119.

In 1642, Maeda Toshitsune (1594–1658), daimyo of Kaga domain and an influential sponsor of the arts, had a residence erected in Kyoto for his daughter and her newly-wed husband, prince Hachijōnomiya Toshitada (1619–1662). Toshitsune employed Tawaraya Sōsetsu to outfit some of his daughter’s private quarters.\footnote{The full entry in *Imaeda Minbu tomegeki*, the journal of Maeda retainer Imaeda Minbu (1614–1679), is translated in Katz, “Collecting and Patronage,” 119.} Apparently, Sōsetsu managed to please his client, and a few years later the Maeda lord made him the official painter of the domain. The artist relocated from Kyoto to Kanazawa.\footnote{Ibid.} Sōsetsu’s arrival in their province to the north of Kyoto triggered a surge in *tarashikomi*-infused flower paintings.\footnote{Sōsetsu’s prolific career is illustrated in Asai Fukyū’s *Fusō meikō gafu*, where the author proposes that a large number of paintings bearing Sōtatsu’s name are in fact by the hand of his pupil Sōsetsu. He writes: “Tawaraya Sōsetsu, with the alias ‘Inen,’ was Sōtatsu’s pupil and served the Lord of Kaga. Many paintings commonly credited to Sōtatsu are by [Sō]setsu’s brush” 依屋宗雪譜伊年宗達弟仕二賀州太守一世曰宗達画多雪之筆也. Quoted after Fukui, “Sōtatsu to Kōrin,” 116.}

Judging from the works bearing Sōsetsu’s signature, it appears that his style relied heavily on malachite green and the prominent hills that often organize the composition in Tawaraya works. Commonly, paintings that are linked with the two Sōsetsu and the seventeenth-century Tawaraya studio bear the “Inen” seal, also used by Sōtatsu. Most “Inen” floral paintings, produced by a range of artists affiliated with or unconnected to the Tawaraya, used ink as a means to darken the hues of colors (Fig. 3.34). In “Inen” paintings, darker hues are achieved through the respective amounts of either ink or pigment; the larger the amount of either material, the stronger is its visual prominence. Other than his predecessor, Kitagawa Sōsetsu introduced a shift towards much more inky floral paintings (Fig. 3.35). The shift in material emphasis—
Kitagawa also painted almost exclusively on paper, vis-à-vis his predecessor’s gold-leaf grounds—resulted in a strong presence of *tarashikomi* in paintings under Maeda patronage.\(^{59}\)

Apparently, the Maeda were fond of the Tawaraya atelier’s paintings and their patronage of the two Sōsetsu played its part in spreading this style to Edo. Under the alternate attendance system (*sankin kōtai*) that required regional lords to reside in Edo for set periods of time, local painting traditions traversed the country and accumulated in Edo. Naturally, daimyo selected their favorite painters to outfit their Edo residences; an unspecified “Tawaraya”—possibly Tawaraya Sōsetsu, the Maeda’s official painter at the time—was sent to Edo in 1650 to paint the interior decors for the main estate of the Maeda in Edo. There, he worked alongside Kano Tan’yū.\(^{60}\) The project was undertaken in preparation for a visit by Sakai Tadakatsu (1587–1662)—an ancestor of Kōrin’s later Edo patrons—to Toshitsune’s son Maeda Toshiharu (1618–1660). The two painters outfitted the *shoin* rooms with paintings of their respective specialties; Sōsetsu provided pictures of flowers (*kusabana no eyō*).\(^{61}\)

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\(^{59}\) In fact, *tarashikomi* had a presence in Kaga’s visual culture already sometime earlier, through Sōtatsu. For instance, a small screen depicting black pines and cypresses (Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art) was handed down among relatives to the Togashi family, retainers of the Maeda. The painting makes *tarashikomi* its main visual feature, and it may have provided a prototype for the inky floral vistas later created by Kitagawa Sōsetsu and other “Inen” painters of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As Janice Katz has pointed out, the screen’s last private owner was Yamagawa Shōtarō, a descendant of the Yamagawa family who were blood-related to the Maeda retainers Togashi. She surmised that the Sōtatsu screen was kept in Ishikawa after Sōtatsu made it. Katz, “Collecting and Patronage,” 104–106.


\(^{61}\) *Mitsubo kikigaki* records: “Tan’yū and Tawaraya painted *kara-e* and designs of flowers on a [ground of] gold and silver leaves. [They were] unbelievable and truly as if from a former age” 探幽，俵屋が書きあらはす唐絵、草花の絵様、金銀をのべ仏、誠に前代あるべき事共不覚. Quoted after Murase Hiroharu, “Tawaraya Sōtatsu to Rinp e no arata na shiten: kangaeru koto no fukken,” in *Tawaraya Sōtatsu to Rinp a* (Kanazawa: Ishikawa Kenritsu Bijutsukan, 2013), 129.
Earlier, in 1641, *Mimyōkō on’yawa*, the records of Toshitsune’s daily activities, mention his Noh performance at the residence of Sakai Tadakatsu.\(^{62}\) After performing before the host, Toshitsune reportedly gave him a fan with a Tawaraya picture (*Tawaraya no e*). Although the record fails to clarify whether the fan was by Sōsetsu—he had not yet entered the official employment of Maeda then—we learn that the Sakai, through Maeda agency, gained early exposure to the Tawaraya style. The same year, Toshitsune ordered two more fans from the Tawaraya studio.\(^{63}\) Given the prevalence of *tarashikomi* in the seventeenth-century Tawaraya studio, it is likely that these fans contained examples of the technique.

Kitagawa Sōsetsu’s life and work is even more obscure than that of his predecessor Tawaraya Sōsetsu. But the sheer quantity of Kitagawa Sōsetsu’s extant works suggests that he maintained a prolific studio and, in his function as official painter to the Maeda, he also painted in Edo. In fact, Hōitsu provided evidence for the existence of Kitagawa Sōsetsu’s paintings in Edo collections: his name and samples of signatures and seals appear beside those of Kōrin, Sōtatsu, and other painters in the first edition of Hōitsu’s digest of seals *Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu*.\(^{64}\) A further indicator for the prevalence of works by the two Sōsetsu in the shogun’s capital is their

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\(^{62}\) The entry is recorded for the last day of the eighth month. Ibid., 128. For a translation, see Katz, “Collecting and Patronage,” 120.

\(^{63}\) The note in Toshitsune’s private journal dates to shortly before his performance for Tadakatsu, so among those fans might have been the one he gave away. *Jūsan meigen ki* records for 1641/08 that Toshitsune was in Kyoto and ordered the two fans directly from the Tawaraya atelier. See Ishikawa Ken Bijutsukan, *Sōsetsu Sōsetsu ten*, 3.

\(^{64}\) Aimi Kō’s research has shown that Hōitsu’s study of Kōrin at the time relied mainly on works in Edo collections, suggesting that Kitagawa Sōsetsu’s *tarashikomi*-heavy works were kept and cherished in Edo. A now lost document listing the lenders of artworks by Kōrin to an exhibition held in 1815 by Hōitsu and his circle, indicates that most participants were Edo residents. Aimi, “Hōitsu Shōnin,” 481–483 and McKelway, *Silver Wind*, 20.
frequent appearance in late Edo-period painting treatises, many of which were authored in Edo and on the basis of works in local collections.\textsuperscript{65}

By way of the large number of works made by Tawaraya Sōsetsu and Kitagawa Sōsetsu, and via the mobility of his Maeda patrons, Tawaraya-related pictures probably became a feature of Edo’s art world from at least the mid-seventeenth century. It may be no coincidence that the Sakai, who were close to the Maeda clan and witnessed Tawaraya pictures on at least two recorded occasions, were among Kōrin’s first and most enthusiastic Edo patrons. Accordingly, the Tawaraya style was present in Edo before Kōrin’s arrival and paved the way for his successful reception there.

**Worldly and Divine Preparations**

Against the backdrop of the Tawaraya’s Edo activities, Kōrin packed his bags in 1704 and departed on his first known trip away from his native Kansai region to the bustling power center of Edo. This departure was no off-hand decision. Kōrin planned it at length and carefully made sure he was ready for the Edo art market. Among various divine and worldly preparations, Kōrin’s adopted painting modes associated with the Tawaraya tradition, namely *tarashikomi*, were part of his pre-departure readying. This timing indicates that his turn to the Tawaraya was a calculated move with his prospective clientele in Edo in mind.

In order to understand Kōrin’s resolve to move to Edo, it is necessary to take a look back at his earlier days as an artist. Kōrin’s dealings with Edo clients began years before his actual

\textsuperscript{65} Other than Hōitsu’s *Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu*, biographies of painters ranging from the early eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, namely *Fusō meikō gafu*, *Gajō yōryaku*, and *Koga bikō* feature Tawaraya Sōsetsu and Kitagawa Sōsetsu. All misread them as being the same person.
move there in 1704. A letter introduced in Chapter Two that is addressed to Nishimura Seiiku, an agent who acted as an intermediary for long-distance commissions of works by Kōrin and Kenzan, speaks of the sale of a suzuribako to an Edo patron.66 Yamane dates the letter to around 1701 and 1702, suggesting that Kōrin’s artworks had already acquired Edo-based admirers years before the artist went there himself.67

During the first decade or so of his career, Kōrin made use of the elaborate network of art dealers that emerged by the seventeenth century and through them sold works to distant clients.68 Nishimura Seiiku probably was a merchant who dealt with antiques and mediated the sale of newly made art objects, such as Kōrin’s lacquer wares.69 Seiiku also helped Kōrin around 1700 and 1701, when the artist confirmed the method of shipping a piece of Kenzan’s ceramics to a location identified as Nagasaki (Fig. 3.36).

It has been a while and I hope you are well. Please allow me a quick question since I have not heard from you [for some time]. The other day, I received a letter from Nagasaki.

Letter from Nagasaki:
Concerning the ceramic piece by Kenzan [includes sketch of an ewer], it is ready now and [I will] send it. I have asked Master Jūichiya for advice on this.70 He advised me on the accompanying box (sotobako) and the place where

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66 The letter is part of the documentation accompanying a suzuribako with designs of water hyacinths in mother of pearl (MOA Museum). The work is thought to be the lacquer box that Kōrin referred to in the text. Yamane, “Kōrin maki-e nidai,” 14–16.

67 Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 72–73.

68 During the first half of Edo period, Kyoto dealers of karamono (prized Chinese objects, mostly for use in tea culture) commuted between Kyoto and Edo to sell goods to daimyo clients. This culminated in their establishment of branch offices in Edo, increasing the flux of prized wares between the two cities. The time between the Jōkyō (1684–1688) and Kyōhō (1716–1736) eras experienced the most intense exchange of goods between Kyoto and Edo through antique sellers. Noguchi, “Kōrin gagyō no kenkyū,” 248–257. See also Oka Yoshiko, “Kan’ei bunka no naka no karamonoya: bijutsushō no kigen o megutte,” in Bijutsushō no hyakunen: Tōkyō bijutsu kurabu hyakunenshi (Tokyo: Tōkyō Bijutsu Kurabu, 2006), 59–88.

69 Uchida, Kōrin maki-e no kenkyū, 217–218.

70 Kōrin is perhaps referring to a member of the Noguchi family. The Noguchi were wealthy sake brewers in Shiga who maintained a strong connection to the arts. Their business was called Jūichiya.
we should send it. Send it by ship, but make sure it won’t break. I am not sure about the best way to wrap the piece [so it won’t break during transport], so I am sending it to you. Please wrap it well in straw and keep the piece separate from others. Straw is the best material for wrapping. Thank you for kindly assisting with this. With this letter, I am also including the order for your reference.

Second month, twelfth day. Ogata Kōrin

To Nishimura Seiiku

其後は御物遠ニ打過申候、弥御堅固被成御座御承度奉存候、少々御尋可申処御無
音申候、先日は長崎より書状御届被下存候
長崎御札
一、乾山やきもの [sketch of an ewer]
出来為持進退申候、十一屋殿へ御相談被成、外箱も所などニ而被仰付候而、舟中
ニてそこね不申候様御下し奉願候、下し様不存候故此まま進じ申候、わらにてよ
く御つめ可被下候、外ノもニてハわれ申候、とかくわらがよく候由申候、御世
話ながら奉願候、書状弁ニちもん相添進じ申候、乍御六ケ敷宜奉願候 以上
二月十二日 尾形光琳
西村正郁様"71

Richard Wilson has convincingly argued that Nagasaki here indicates the neighborhood of Nagasaki-chō, an area of Reiganjima in Edo, rather than the city in Kyūshū.72 We glean from another letter, dated to the late 1690s, that Kōrin was at work on an order for a suzuribako and a screen, and that he had completed a set of lacquer inrō (small containers), all of which were to be sold at “Nagasaki,” that is Edo’s Reiganjima. Though the letter’s recipient is unrecorded, as the trusted long-distance sales agent for Kōrin’s artworks here, too, Seiiku was probably the

"71 Yamane dates the letter to shortly after Kenzan established his own kiln at Narutaki in the northeast of Kyoto. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 70–71. Appendix Document III / 2.

72 Wilson’s interpretation is generally accepted by scholars today. See Wilson and Ogasawara, Ogata Kenzan, 125–126. Kenzan himself moved to Edo around the Kyōhō era. During this time, he went on occasional excursions to the same Nagasaki area, known from at least one vessel he made and inscribed there. See Richard L. Wilson, The Art of Ogata Kenzan: Persona and Production in Japanese Ceramics (New York: Weatherhill, 1991), 131–152.
addressee. The art dealers at Reiganjima and agents like Seiiku appear to have been an established destination for works by Kōrin and may have formed a beachhead for his relocation to the city in 1704.

The time of these sales coincided with Kōrin’s increasing association with Nakamura Kuranosuke, who commuted back and forth between Kyoto and Edo on Ginza business. It seems that Kōrin’s turn to Kuranosuke as his main benefactor from the early 1700s onward was at least in part stimulated by the prospect of accessing the art market of Edo. The commodification of art from the seventeenth century onward and the surge in collecting activities in its wake provided emerging artists like the Ogata brothers with a practical infrastructure of dealers. Artworks moved between the cities of Kyoto and Edo, and Kōrin’s public reception reflects this surge of interest in making, selling, and buying art.

Vernacular fiction contributed its part to increasing the demand for Kōrin’s works beyond the boundaries of Kyoto. The year 1699 marked Kōrin’s entry into popular fame when he appeared in the widely-read novella Kōshoku fumi denju. From the late 1690s and throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, Kōrin’s name also came to be associated with sought-after textile patterns, disseminated through popular catalogues of kimono patterns (hinagata bon). The combination of sales through art dealers and Kōrin’s early absorption by popular culture

73 Though the letter records neither its addressee nor a year, Yamane pointed out the possibility that here, too, Nishimura Seiiku was the likely recipient. Judging by the style of handwriting, he further surmised that the document might date to around 1697. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 66–68.

74 Written by Yūshiken Masafusa, the book contains Kōrin’s first mention in vernacular literature. The short passage records how he added an ink painting to a white kimono, establishing his name as a token for the refined elegance and exhibitionistic nature of the Genroku era. Yoshida Kōichi, ed., Kōshoku fumi denju Kōshoku nishikigi, Koten bunko 1 (Tokyo: Koten Bunko, 1997), 324.

75 On hinagata bon that feature patterns associated with Kōrin see, for example, Oyama, Kōrin moyō.
illustrates how the artist was effectively active in Edo at least half a decade before his relocation there in 1704. These processes helped set the stage for his artistic activities there.

The establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate fostered the development of an increasingly mobile society where travel for business and leisure became common. But Kōrin was a superstitious man. He paid close attention to supernal will and the implications of the subconscious. In light of his belief in subliminal meaning, it is not surprising that Kōrin kept close company with Nakane Genkei, the prominent mathematician and astrologer who inscribed Kōrin’s portrait of Kuranosuke. Their relationship is documented through several divinations that Genkei conducted for Kōrin. Kōrin’s unusually frequent changes of pseudonyms and choice of characters for his first and last names reflect the painter’s superstition and, perhaps, uncertainty about his position as an artist. For some of these names, Kōrin sought celestial blessing.

Kōrin called on Genkei a total of four times when he felt a name change became necessary. The first divination took place circa 1691 and 1692 when the soothsayer prognosticated good fortune for the painter’s choice of a different set of characters to spell his name “Kōrin,” selected in reference to his ancestor Hon’ami Kōetsu. The next recorded case dates to the seventh month of 1702. That year Kōrin desired seraphic testing of his nom de plume “Kansei.” The date of that divination coincided with the first year of Kōrin’s fosterage of Katsu, the daughter of Kuranosuke. Two years later, in the seventh month of 1704, Genkei

76 On Genkei and his activities as a diviner, see, for instance Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 33 and Kawai Masatomo, “Kōrin hitsu Shiki kusabana zukan ni tsuite,” in Rinpa kaiga zenshū Kōrin-ha ichi (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1979), 32.

77 Yamane showed that the pseudonym “Kansei” may be derived from a verse by the late Tang poet Wen Tingyun (812–870). The link to Chinese literature led him to suggest that probably Kenzan proposed the name to Kōrin. Kōrin’s brother was highly conversant in continental culture and kept company with sinophile monks and scholars. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 61–62.
performed a third divination for another pseudonym, “Dōsū,” which Kōrin used briefly together with the “Kansei” seal around 1704. He also employed “Dōsū” exclusively during his activities in Edo. Kōrin clearly searched for favorable omens in the months before his departure for Edo; he left eastward four months after the divination, in the early days of the eleventh month.

Throughout Kōrin’s back-and-forth travels between Kyoto and Edo, which extended until around 1709, the artist impressed his works with “Dōsū” seals, demonstrating the significance of Genkei’s favorable divination for Kōrin’s activities there.

Perpetually penniless, in 1703, Kōrin attempted to sell his property at Nakamachi Yabunouchichō, a bustling and affluent neighborhood just north of the imperial palace in Kyoto. He inherited the large mansion from his father and agreed to a mortgage payment of the exorbitant amount of seventy-nine ryō in gold by an unidentified townsman named Kawai Heiemon. The transaction was finalized in the ninth month of 1704, roughly two months before Kōrin departed for Edo. Around the same time, the artist sold off substantial numbers of artworks in his own collection. Most of them were probably bequeathed by his father and ranged from the

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78 See Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō, 174–175.

79 In 1705/04/05, during a brief return to Kyoto, Kōrin asked Genkei to divine a different set of characters for his last name, Ogata. Ibid.

80 Almost exclusively small-format works (mainly hanging scrolls) and one screen carrying “Dōsū” seals survive. These include: Waves (single two-panel screen; round relief seal; Metropolitan Museum); Scroll with Flowers of the Four Seasons (handscroll; dated Hōei 2 [1705]; round relief seal; cut up and dispersed among various private collections in Japan); Azaleas (hanging scroll; round relief seal; Hatakeyama Memorial Museum); Misogi (hanging scroll; square relief seal; Hatakeyama Memorial Museum); Murasaki Shikibu Writing the Tale of Genji (hanging scroll; square intaglio seal; MOA Museum); Hotei on Horseback (hanging scroll; square intaglio seal; private collection, Japan); Dragon Ascending a Waterfall (hanging scroll; square relief seal; dated to 1708; Miho Museum). Originally a painting of a waterfall by Kano Naonobu (1607–1650), Kōrin added a dragon in ink and gold to it.

81 The neighborhood is close to the Ogata family temple, Myōkenji. Documents in the Konishi Archives, dated to the Genroku era, refer to the area as Nakamachi Yabunouchichō, while those dating to the Kyōhō era record the name Kami-Goryō Yabunouchichō. See, for instance, Appendix Document I / 24 and Document VII / 4.

82 The mortgage allowed the creditor, Kawai Heiemon, to move into the estate. The contract stipulated that the property would enter Heiemon’s permanent ownership if Kōrin failed to repay the debt.
Sōtatsu screen mentioned earlier to various ceramics, such as a Shigaraki ware vase, among a colorful array of other items.\textsuperscript{83}

The money likely served to repay some of the debts that Kōrin had accumulated over the years. The urgency with which Kōrin sought to clear his name in Kyoto suggests that he aimed for a smooth departure and, perhaps, even wanted to avoid seeming as a runaway—a notion supported by the fact that he left his wife, Tayo, in Kyoto during his first trip to Edo. Kōrin attempted to start his Edo activities with a clean slate. His extensive pre-departure arrangements—artistically and personally—suggest that he envisioned his stay in Edo to be long term, with only brief visits to his town of birth.

As another part of his preparation, Kōrin gradually changed the style of his signature around 1703. As we have seen, he initially wrote the first character of Kōrin in the style of his famous ancestor Kōetsu.\textsuperscript{84} However, around 1703, Kōrin began to clearly articulate each stroke of the first character of his nom de plume. Works bearing the “Kansei” seal carry both writing styles for his signature, indicating that Kōrin used both the abbreviated and clearly written-out kō until around 1704, the year he departed for Edo (Fig. 3.37; 3.38).\textsuperscript{85} Kōrin paid much attention to the meaning of names, their spelling, and the right timing for using them. The reference to

\textsuperscript{83} Appendix Documents I / 20 and 21.

\textsuperscript{84} See Chapter One.

\textsuperscript{85} The Kuranosuke portrait, dated to 1704, and the hanging scroll Yatsuhashi (Tokyo National Museum), painted around 1702 to 1704, show an increasing tendency to clearly enunciate the kō character. This change is reflected both in paintings and letters that are dated to the same time. For instance, Kōrin signed the contract between him and Kuranosuke for the latter’s daughter Katsu’s fosterage (1702), in a similar way to the portrait. The signature is especially close to the one in Yatsuhashi. Both date to sometime between 1701 and 1704. Yamane Yūzō proposed that the Tokyo National Museum work was painted sometime around 1701, due to its round “Koresuke” seal, the same seal found on the Irises screens which he dates to circa 1701 or 1702. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 214. However, Yamane’s assumption is problematic given the stylistic resemblance of the work to the Kuranosuke portrait. Also, the signature finds its almost exact match in two letters, which are dated to 1702. Thus, the Tokyo National Museum piece was probably painted around that time, that is between around 1702 and 1704. See Appendix Documents II / 12 to 14.
Kōetsu in Kōrin’s earliest signature style reveals an awareness of the import of an artist’s signature. This consciousness finds its reflection in Kōrin’s frequent divinations and changes of pseudonyms. His decision to clearly articulate the kō character may indicate an attempt to emancipate himself from the cultural leverage of his ancestor prior to setting off for Edo, a city where Kōetsu’s name resonated less than in Kyoto. It also shows that Kōrin struggled to devise a personal artistic identity as he strove to establish himself as a successful artist in Kyoto and, eventually, in Edo.

In the years leading up to his departure, Kōrin also renewed his connection with Tsunahira—probably remembering the societal clout that such court connections could provide the painter in Edo. While Kōrin visited Nijō Tsunahira only one time in 1701, his calls increased exponentially in the following years, with a total of seven visits in 1703 alone. Further, the move to Edo coincided with the relocation of the family temple of the Fuyuki family, one of his main Edo patrons, from Kyoto to Edo following the death of Fuyuki Masachika in 1703. Although the Fuyuki ran a business in Edo, until Masachika’s death their family temple was located in Kyoto. The family also spent extensive time in the capital. After 1703, however, their focus shifted to Edo and clients there. Thus, a variety of factors played a part in the timing for Kōrin’s relocation. It appears that Kōrin made the definite resolve to try his luck in Edo around 1702 or 1703, when he began his personal and divine preparations.

1704, the year of Kōrin’s departure, was an eventful year. It marked the end of Genroku and the beginning of the Hōei era. Such astrological circumstance likely gave additional impetus

87 See Ishizuka, “Kiba Fuyuki-ke kō,” 33–34. Kōrin is said to have studied tea with Masachika before the 1690s. See Chapter Two.
to Kōrin’s decision to venture eastward. In the same year, Tsunahira was appointed naidaijin (Minister of the Center), a post that carried prestige, which Kōrin may have used to his advantage.\(^88\) Tsunahira remained invested in Kōrin’s life, and the aristocrat arranged a welcome-back banquet upon Kōrin’s final return from Edo in 1709/06/04, suggesting that he was involved in paving the road for Kōrin behind the scenes.\(^89\) The connection with Tsunahira, along with Kōrin’s illustrious ancestry, no doubt carried considerable cultural weight and boosted the painter’s entry into circles of daimyo and upper-tier merchants—his most important patrons in Edo.

### III. Kōrin in Edo

Scholars have been able to identify three separate journeys that spanned Kōrin’s activities in Edo: from 1704/11/02 to circa 1705/03; between around 1705/05–06 and roughly 1707/04; and from circa 1708/05 to around 1709/03.\(^90\) Over the course of his time in the shogunal capital, we encounter perhaps the most incisive picture of Kōrin as a man and as a painter. Two letters, probably sent respectively in 1704 and in 1708 or 1709 to friends in Kyoto speak of how Kōrin went to Edo full of enthusiasm but left the city disenchanted and tired. We glean insights into how Kōrin initially approached prospective patrons, possibly in part through the agency of Nakamura Kuranosuke, and how he eventually came to resent those benefactors towards the end of his stay.

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\(^88\) Igarashi, *Kinsei Kyōto gadan no nettowaaku*, 159

\(^89\) Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 59.

First Steps

Shortly after his first arrival in the eleventh month of 1704, Kōrin began to work profusely, as is evident from one of his letters sent from Edo to a friend in the capital.91 The document provides a wealth of information on the initial period of Kōrin’s first stay in Edo. The language and content support Yamane’s assumption that the letter dates to around 1704, written shortly after the artist’s arrival, when he worked particularly hard to gain traction among his new clientele.92

The recipient, Ueshima Gennojū, and his son or brother Gennojō appear to have been close friends with the artist, though their profession is unknown.93 Both men received detailed private letters from Kōrin where he shared much of his inner sentiments.94

I received your letter from the eighteenth day of the last month, and I am delighted to hear that your family is well. On the second day of this month, I arrived safely [in Edo] and took up lodgings at the Ginza mansion at Kyōbashi Itchōme. Once the weather is suitable [for safe travel], my relations [Tayo?] will join me.95 I was overjoyed to be granted an audience with Lord Eshū96 soon [after my arrival]. In the meantime, I have been receiving commissions for paintings from various clients (tokorodokoro). I quickly finished a pair of chrysanthemums screens. Kō[ken?] is also well and I take him along to...

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91 The letter was first introduced by Kamimichi Setsuko in 1960. See her “Kōrin shokan,” Yamato bunka 33 (September 1960): x and 35–37.

92 See also Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 33–34, 78–80.

93 On one occasion, Kōrin thanked Gennojō for their friendship and on another he wrote a farewell poem for Gennojū. See Chapter One.

94 In a letter, dated to sometime between 1701 and circa 1704, Kōrin thanks Ueshima Gennojō for his “never-ending kindness,” illustrating how close he felt to Gennojō. In the document, Kōrin refers to having solved an unidentified problem, alluding perhaps to his financial situation or the lengthy process of negotiating a mortgage for his estate at Nakamachi Yabunouchichō, which was finalized around 1704. Around 1705, the time of Kōrin’s second departure to Edo, the painter wrote a letter to Ueshima Gennojō who had given him expensive paper as a parting gift. The letter also contains the only extant poem by Kōrin himself, which conveys the tender feelings that he held for Gennojū. No biographical data has been discovered on Gennojō and Gennojū to date. For the mortgage agreement, see Appendix Document I / 24; for Kōrin’s letter to Gennojō, see Appendix Document III / 5.

95 However, Tayo did not come to Edo before 1707.

96 Ogiwara Shigehide (1658–1713), the financial advisor (kanjō bugyō) to the shogunate.
appointments [with clients] to paint.\textsuperscript{97} I am pleased to receive praise from all sides and have even been invited for tea two times already. I am overjoyed. Please also tell [your brother] about [what I said in this letter].\textsuperscript{98} He should let me know if he desires my services.\textsuperscript{99} Please also send my best wishes to your father.

Sincerely,
Ogata Kōrin (cypher)
Eleventh month, fifteenth day.

To Ueshima Gennojū
The other day, Hōshō daifu Nakakurō\textsuperscript{100} was called and performed Seiganji and Hanagatami. It was quite marvelous and I am at loss for words [to describe his performance].

Kōrin took up lodging at the Ginza-owned estate in Edo’s Kyōbashi district, suggesting that Kuranosuke was instrumental in motivating and channeling Kōrin’s move to the eastern city. It

\textsuperscript{97} This passage provides evidence that Kōrin had taken in pupils by the early 1700s and also took at least one of them to Edo.


\textsuperscript{99} In Appendix Document III / 8, a letter to Ueshima Gennojū, Kōrin instructs him on painting. Gennojū seems to have suggested Kōrin to Gennojū as a painting teacher. This line seems to be the first evidence for their teacher-pupil relationship.

\textsuperscript{100} Hōshō Tomoharu (1654–1728), a Noh actor and head of the Hōshō troupe.
seems likely that Kuranosuke arranged for his friend to stay at the Ginza mansion, a property commonly used by senior officials.101 The proximity of Kōrin’s accommodation in Kyōbashi afforded him easy access to the main Edo estates of several high-ranking daimyo families. The residence of the Tsugaru clan—one of Kōrin’s earliest Edo benefactors—in the Kamezawa neighborhood of Sumidagawa was more or less in walking distance, as were the households of other Edo patrons, such as the Sakai. The Edo estate of this daimyo clan of Maebashi domain, was located at Kanda and would have been within easy reach for Kōrin. Thus, the artist’s early quarters were more than just a bed for sleeping. The location enabled Kōrin to reside near the epicenter of power with convenient access to a congregation of major patrons. Kuranosuke himself departed for Edo on Ginza business in the third month of 1704, almost immediately after Kōrin made his portrait. Although the official was scheduled to return to Kyoto by the ninth month of 1704, he stayed on for more than two years, a fact that may have enabled him to guide Kōrin’s fortunes there.102

The letter demonstrates that Kōrin spent his time lobbying for clients. These early activities paid off; Kōrin writes further how he already received commissions from different patrons, namely for a pair of screens of chrysanthemums, one of his signature subjects that he painted several other times.103 Kōrin also mentions several invitations to tea gatherings—to him


103 The flower was one of Kōrin’s signature subjects and numerous works survive. One side of the Freer fan, with the Utsuyama episode of the Tales of Ise mentioned earlier in this chapter, has a picture of white chrysanthemums along a stylized stream. A letter dating to around 1715/16 also refers to a screen with this motif, indicating the prominence of the subject among Kōrin’s oeuvre. On the subject of chrysanthemums in Kōrin’s oeuvre, see also Chapter Two.
an indicator of social achievement—and he remarks on the laurels that his works solicited from Edo audiences, exemplifying the success of the stylistic choices he transported with him to Edo.

Apart from the surge in commissions received immediately after his arrival—likely at least in part triggered by his early Edo sales and the reputation that preceded him—Kōrin met with Ogiwara Shigehide, the shogunal commissioner on financial matters. Shigehide’s involvement with the Ginza and his leading role in the Genroku era currency reform, which formed the basis for much of Kuranosuke’s wealth, brought him to frequent contact with the silver mint official. Kōrin was a skilled socializer and Kuranosuke may have arranged the artist’s audience with the high-ranking bureaucrat.

In Shigehide’s orbit we find many leading Edo intellectuals, such as the Confucian academics Arai Hakuseki (1657–1725) and Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728). Kuranosuke dealt with Sorai around the time of Kōrin’s departure for Edo, when the scholar provided the official with a posthumous pseudonym that is recorded on Kuranosuke’s portrait by Kōrin. These high-profile connections provide a glimpse of Kuranosuke’s exalted position in Edo’s social circles. Conversant in both Kyoto and Edo circles, Kuranosuke was well-suited to advise Kōrin on how to approach this new terrain and, possibly also on painterly matters.

A handscroll of seasonal flowers, a painting that Kōrin may have produced at most a year into his stay in Edo, provides a sample of the kinds of artistic choices that formed the basis for the initial success he writes about in his letter to Ueshima Gennojū. In 1957, restoration work

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105 Kinginza kakitome (National Diet Library, Tokyo).

106 On Genkei’s inscription on the Kuranosuke portrait, see Appendix Document VI / 4.
revealed a tiny inscription on the paper joint of Kōrin’s scroll *Plants of the Four Seasons* (Fig. 3.39). The paper maker Nakagawa Kiyoroku—otherwise unknown—recorded his name and the date when he produced the paper for Kōrin’s paintings, dating the scroll to 1705/06/02. The work bears Kōrin’s characteristic “Hokkyō Kōrin” signature, along with a round “Dōsū” seal, the alias divined by Genkei in 1704 and used by Kōrin during his activities in Edo.

The scroll depicts an assortment of flowers of the four seasons, dispersed along its horizontal expanse. In its entirety, the work overall seems like a gigantic underdrawing, reminiscent of Tawaraya-atelier paper designs. Kōrin here treats the seasons not as a linear succession like in his screen paintings of the twelve months, but instead he deconstructs their sequential display; he begins with summer and moves on through spring and autumn to arrive in winter. The painter affords summer the largest number of flowers, expressing his devotion to this popular season of *haikai* poetry. The heavy heat of summer nights, eased only by the gentle breeze of rivers, made summer a central season in Edo *haikai* poetry, and Kōrin shows his awareness of such aesthetic associations that his Edo-based clients would have made. The city with its many canals was ideal for boating, which grew to be a favorite form of socializing.

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107 The handscroll is now cut up and dispersed among various private collections in Japan.

108 Kiyoroku added his inscription at the joint of paper and wooden shaft that commonly forms the core of a scroll: “Hōei 2 [1705], [Year of the] Wood-Rooster, 6th Month, 2nd Day Nakagawa Kiyoroku” Interop eternal six month two days 中川清六. Kōrin’s signature on the work closely resembles those found on his portrait of Kuranosuke, his hanging scroll *Yatsuhashi*, and several letters dated to around 1704–06, thus leaving little doubt as to the scroll’s dating to around 1705. The agreement between Kōrin and Kuranosuke for Kōrin’s fosterage of the latter’s daughter has a similar signature. On Nakagawa Kiyoroku’s inscription, see Kawai, “Kōrin hitsu Shiki kusabana zukan ni tsuite,” 32 and Kōno, “Kōrin to Tsugaru-ke,” 4.

109 Haruo Shirane has explained how summer was a perpetual, if comparatively neglected season in poetry since the first poetry anthology, the *Man’yōshū* (late 8th c.). Summer received increasing attention during the Edo period when new forms of poetry, such as *haikai* and *kyōka* (mad verses) placed strong emphasis on poems dealing with that season and produced an array of new seasonal terms (*kigo*) linked with it. Matsuo Bashō even took his name from a summer plant. See, for instance, Haruo Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 29–63.
The scroll begins with a large peony (*botan*), a seasonal flower that gained considerable popularity during the Edo period and frequently appears in painting and poetry alike. The disproportional emphasis on the peony has led Kōno Motoaki to speculate that Kōrin made the work for Tsugaru Nobumasa (1646–1710), then the head of the Tsugaru clan, whose family emblem consisted of a stylized peony.110 The timing would have been ideal, since Nobumasa was not only residing in Edo at the time, but he also celebrated his sixtieth birthday in 1706. Following this line of thought, the narcissus at the end of the work, Kōno argued, could symbolize a wish for long life to the jubilant (Fig. 3.40).111

Early twentieth-century auction catalogues indicate that no later than by the late nineteenth century the work was in the possession of the Tsugaru daimyo family, lords of Hirosaki domain in today’s Aomori. This provenance is shared with other major pieces by Kōrin, such as the *Red and White Plum Blossoms* screens.112 The scroll represents an experiment with the versatility of ink, inspired mainly by monochrome pictures of flowers and other plants in *tarashikomi* that are associated with the Tawaraya atelier (Fig. 3.41).113 The painting is a case in point for Kōrin’s goal to solicit Edo patrons by utilizing *tarashikomi* and the Tawaraya style. In the scroll, Kōrin changed the monochromatic *tarashikomi* he found in similar works by

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111 Ibid.

112 The work was first introduced in the art historical journal *Kokka* in 1904. “Ogata Kōrin hitsu Kusabana zu,” *Kokka* 172 (September 1904): 64.

113 At the example of *Scroll with Flowers of the Four Seasons*, Nishimoto Shūko has argued that Kōrin adopted the Tawaraya style to introduce an unfamiliar visual language to an audience largely accustomed to paintings by the Kano school. However, as this chapter attempts to clarify, paintings in the Tawaraya style were already present in Edo, leading Kōrin to capitalize on an affinity for the *tarashikomi*-heavy works of Sōtatsu’s followers that seem to have circulated there. Nishimoto Shūko, *Kōrin Kenzan*, Meihō Nihon no bijutsu 20 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1981), 112–114.
Tawaraya painters into a customized mix of light color and ink. This use of pigment and ink became one of the defining features of Kōrin’s paintings throughout his career. In fact, there are no purely monochromatic pictures extant by Kōrin that use *tarashikomi*; to him, color and *tarashikomi* formed a unity.

Kōrin made a brief journey home to Kyoto in the third month of 1705 and stayed there for three months.\(^\text{114}\) If the scroll was really intended for the Tsugaru, Kōrin must have painted it immediately after Kiyoroku delivered the paper, that is during the second half of 1705. This timing suggests that Kōrin either completed the work during his brief return to Kyoto and then carried it back to Edo with him, or he made it shortly after going back to Edo around the sixth month of 1705. Kōrin may have given the work to Nobumasa during the summer, thus providing a reason for the heavy emphasis on that season.

The Tsugaru may have been among Kōrin’s first benefactors in Edo. Judging from the 1704 letter to Ueshima Gennojū, it appears another networking device that connected Kōrin with potential patrons was here, too, the Noh theater. In his function as the head of the Hōshō troupe, Tomoharu, the actor Kōrin purportedly saw performing in 1704, led a peripatetic life.\(^\text{115}\) He performed for and taught wealthy amateurs, such as daimyo and merchants, as well as scions of other troupes throughout the realm. By the late Genroku era, Tomoharu trained Hiyoshi

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\(^{114}\) *Nijō-ke nainai gobansho hinamiki* records for 1705/03/20: “Ogata Kōrin recently returned to Kyoto and was so considerate to call [on Tsunahira]. Thus, [Tsunahira] met [with him]” 尾形光琳頃日上京仕候二付為伺候御機嫌参上則御対面也. Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 56.

Kōrin’s return to Edo around the sixth month of 1705 becomes clear through the family chronicles of the Sakai, *Tekiko sai'yō*, which record that Kōrin served the clan between that month and 1707/04. See Aimi Kōu, “Hōitsu shōnin nenpu kō,” in *Aimi Kōu shū 1* (Musashimurayama-shi: Seishōdō Shoten, 1985), 395–541.

Yasaburō, the heir to the official Noh troupe in service of the Tsugaru family.\(^\text{116}\) In 1703, Tomoharu himself also performed together with the young Yasaburō for Tsugaru Nobumasa in Edo.\(^\text{117}\) Clearly Tomoharu at least partially resided in Edo around the time that Kōrin arrived there, and the Noh actor enjoyed the patronage of the Tsugaru when Kōrin saw Tomoharu’s performance in 1704. Thus, Tsugaru Nobumasa may have even been present at Tomoharu’s performance; Kōrin could have met the daimyo at the event and connected with him through their mutual zeal for Noh.

Apparently, the Tsugaru were fond of Kōrin’s style. After the artist’s death, during the Kyōhō era (1716–1736), the family employed the lacquer artist Ogawa Haritsu (1663–1747) who followed Kōrin’s lead in lacquer designs and based his style on that established by Kōrin.\(^\text{118}\) The presence of the Noh performer Hōshō Tomoharu in the Tsugaru household, in addition to Kōrin’s connections to other daimyo increase the likelihood of the artist’s initial patronage by Nobumasa. As in the case of the courtier and early benefactor Nijō Tsunahira, a shared passion for the performing arts might have forged a link between the daimyo and the artist. A mix of the arts, Kuranosuke’s powerful network, and the daimyo interest in Kyoto culture channelled Kōrin ever deeper into upper-tier Edo circles.

\(^\text{116}\) Miyamoto, *Kamigata nōgakushi*, 367.

\(^\text{117}\) The performance occurred on 1703/01/16 in the context of the customary series of Noh plays, held around the fifteenth day of the New Year (*utaizome*), and it is recorded in the official records of the Tsugaru clan, *Hirosaki bancho nikki*. See Miyamoto, *Kamigata nōgakushi*, 376–377.

\(^\text{118}\) Uchida, *Kōrin maki-e*, 232.
Late Edo Patronage

Soon after his return to Edo from a brief stay in Kyoto, lasting until the sixth month of 1705, Kōrin seems to have solicited the support of the Sakai clan. For the period between 1705 and 1707, the Sakai family records, *Tekiko saiyō*, list Kōrin as the recipient of notable favors, not unlike those granted to an official house painter.119 The journal states that in 1707, Kōrin received the gift of ten retainers (*fuchi*)—a considerable number—from Sakai Tadataka (1648–1720), the family’s head at the time.120

We also learn that Kōrin went back to Kyoto again in the fourth month of 1707 to fetch his wife, Tayo, who had remained in the capital to take care of the family properties and accounts. Tayo probably also stayed behind to fulfill Kōrin’s fosterage agreement to raise Kuranosuke’s daughter Katsu; the contract ended in 1706. The journey followed just three months after receiving the gift of retainers, a time when Kōrin grew increasingly busy. However, probably in light of the aftermath of the Hōei earthquake in the tenth month of 1707, Kōrin did not return to Edo until 1708. Upon his return, the artist was immediately given twenty more retainers by Tadataka, who appears to have been happy to have a favorite painter back in town.

Since His Lordship Seikyū [Sakai Tadataka (1648-1720)] had an affection for [Kōrin’s] paintings, on the sixth day of the first month of 1707, [Tadataka], in his kindness beyond compare, graced [Kōrin] with ten retainers (*fuchi*). [Kōrin] had left his wife in Kyoto, so he went there in the fourth month of the same year [1707] to fetch her. Then, too, [His Lordship] bestowed Kōrin with one bottle of *awamori* [an alcoholic drink from

119 Though the entry is widely quoted and generally accepted to be reliable, one needs to bear in mind that the author, Matsushita Kōjo, lived during the late Edo-period and compiled *Tekiko saiyō* from a variety of records. The first volume with the above account on Kōrin, for example, contains a preface dating to 1827. Still, Kōjo relied heavily on the diaries of various Sakai lords, likely adding to the validity of his chronicle. See Tamamushi, *Toshi no naka no e*, 34.

120 By comparison, the follower of the famous seventeenth-century potter Nonomura Ninsei, Nonomura Kiyohachi, received a gift of only two retainers from the imperial temple Ninnaji in 1696. See Nakagawa Sensaku, *Ninsei*, Tōji taikei 23 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1974), 92–93.
Okinawa], two dried salmon, and two rolls of silk. This is also recorded in [his lordship’s] correspondence. In the next year [1708], Kōrin returned to Kantō and on the twelfth day of the fifth month was granted twenty retainers for as long as he remained in Edo. On the eighteenth day of the same month, as an expression of gratitude for the retainers, [Kōrin] extended a box of delicacies. This is also recorded in the [Sakai family’s] official ledger of gifts. Such as it is, [Kōrin] did not remain in Edo and frequently went back and forth [between Kyoto and Edo]. Kōrin died on the second day of the sixth month in Kyōhō 1 [1716].

The entry elucidates that Kōrin not only received extensive favors from the Sakai—the family of one of his most ardent late Edo-period admirers, Sakai Hōitsu—but also gives evidence that Kōrin established a flourishing household and, presumably, an atelier while in Edo. In fact, we have seen how Kōrin’s first letter of 1704 recorded how the artist took an unidentified pupil with him. The extensive volume of extant commissions that bear the “Dōsū” seal alone indicates that Kōrin must have had assistance from painters other than himself.

Kōrin’s immediate and lasting popularity with the Sakai was primed by the family’s seventeenth-century exposure to Tawaraya modes through the studio’s patronage by the Maeda. Tadataka was also fond of other artists that employed a similar aesthetic like Kōrin, such as the potter Nonomura Ninsei (act. ca. 1647–1678), expressing a general interest in the arts of the capital.122 Tekiko saiyō unfortunately omits mention of Kōrin’s paintings, but we know from two

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121 Appendix Document VIII / 2.
122 Nakagawa, Ninsei, 92–93.
diaries kept by a later head of the clan, Sakai Tadazane (1756–1790), that the family owned works by Kōrin at least by the late 1780s. Tadazane’s *Genbu niki*ki records a painting of Ariwara Narihira’s travel to the east, a signature subject of Kōrin, while *Yukō niki*ki mentions a diptych of a dragon and tiger at a tea gathering in 1781.\(^\text{123}\)

Daimyo families in the orbit of the Sakai, such as the Doi clan, appear also to have cherished Kōrin’s works. The Doi, who later courted Hōitsu for marriage, once owned Kōrin’s screens *Teika Twelve Months*, which signify one of the painter’s earliest large-format works in *tarashikomi*.\(^\text{124}\) It is unknown when exactly the paintings entered their respective daimyo collections, since in early modern Japan possessions often oscillated between different owners as gifts or barter. We do know, however, that Kōrin once worked for the Sakai and other daimyo families like the Tsugaru, whose collections reveal a particular fondness of *tarashikomi*. Yet Kōrin was not always happy with his lofty clientele.

A letter, possibly written around 1708 or 1709 to his friend Ueshima Gennojō, illustrates another facet of the painter’s stay in Edo. Kōrin provides a view of his activities whose negativity contrasts with the cheerful tone of his early letter of 1704.\(^\text{125}\) The document draws one of the most incisive pictures of Kōrin’s psyche and his reflections on what it meant to be a painter. Beginning with comments on the summer heat in Edo at the time of writing, Kōrin talks about the his struggles to please his feudal patrons. A melancholy timbre pervades the letter and

\(^{123}\) Tamamushi, *Toshi no naka no e*, 34.

\(^{124}\) On the Doi’s courtship of Hōitsu, see McKelway, *Silver Wind*, 17.

\(^{125}\) Since Kōrin mentions his plans for a visit to Kyoto in the third month of the next year and he returns to the capital in 1709, Yamane proposed the date of 1708/08 for the letter. See Yamane, *Kōrin kenkyū ichi*, 34 and 84. In the same compilation of essays, Yamane suggests a second possible date for the letter, 1709/08 (p. 54). The former, however, seems more likely. See Appendix Document III / 6.
reflects Kōrin’s disenchantment with the art world of Edo towards the end of his stay. In spite of its length, the letter merits a full citation.

I received your letters and read them all. I am happy to hear that your family is in good health. My family has been well, as usual. I should have replied sooner, but I have been so occupied lately that I was unable to write to you. My wife is also busy from dawn till dusk. For quite sometime, it has been impossible to rest. Even now, in this intensely hot season, it has been anything but rare for me to visit the estates [of patrons]. I paint hanging scroll after hanging scroll. Then, [my patrons] prefer this and that—what have I done to deserve this? It is not unusual that I come to [a patron’s] estate and have to paint with others. I am more exhausted than you can imagine. But I smiled when I saw that you made progress at painting. Why don’t you draw a picture on a small sheet of paper (fukusagami) or so and show me. Even without being a [vocational] painter (ekaki), you can enrich your life with painting and should become proficient in no time. If you paint the same motif (zu) repeatedly, for five or seven times, you memorize it and naturally make progress. [This way], you should improve quickly. I, too, practice to get a little better. I would like to see you soon. But at least we always have each other’s letters. If you do not pour in all your heart when painting, the results will not be good. With the yakifude\textsuperscript{126} it is better to be careful. As a rule, after drawing the outlines (shirushi sun) for faces, hands, and legs, you should make it a habit to paint the rest in rough [brushwork]. I see about five or seven paintings by Sesshū every day, and I copy most of them. If you do this and that and paint as if in a daze (neburi tsukitaru), the result fails to be a [true] painting. In any case, I sincerely wish you all my best and that you make progress at painting. This upcoming third month, I might return to Kyoto. This is the earliest that I can make time. [The trip] should do me good. I lack nothing, but I am somewhat exhausted by my work here. Poor people, who live day by day (buji ni agari), gain much happiness. Since I am in demand by day and by night and can never refuse, there is nothing I can do. When I work at night, my hands and legs become numb—signs of old age, I think. Now I have [no more than] a decade to live. It pains me that [life] passes by like this. I am not to envy for being brought before daimyo. Although I am poor, I’d like to say that I am feeling happy. Since you are such a dear friend, I did not pay attention and poured out all my heart.

I hope to see you soon.

Please send my best also to your father.

Yours sincerely.

Eighth month, fourth day.

Ogata Kōrin (cypher)
To Ueshima Gennojō

\textsuperscript{126} In lieu of a brush, the painter uses a slightly burnt wooden stick. This technique was often employed for underdrawings.
The gleefully optimistic painter of 1704 has given way to a saturated old man, disillusioned with the art market and dismissive of his benefactors. Kōrin laments the industrial fashion his production of artworks has assumed. Painting “hanging scroll after hanging scroll,” he never seems to be able to please his patrons. Kōrin portrays his daimyo clients as demanding and
haughty, ordering him to their residences and making him paint together with others, apparently hurting his pride. Born and bred in privilege, Kōrin was accustomed to a respected social position in Kyoto, where he conversed with aristocrats and was a part of high society. In Edo, however, he suddenly found himself one among many, a fact that dispirited him.

Kōrin also began to question his abilities as an artist—the first and only such instance in his surviving correspondence. Unable to please his daimyo benefactors, Kōrin attempted to improve his style. The letter’s addressee, Ueshima Gennojō, apparently received long-distance painting instruction from Kōrin, and the letter contains a response to Gennojō’s now-lost report on his progress. While providing several pieces of advice, the letter subtly conveys how Kōrin himself may have resorted to such beginner’s practices to ameliorate his own skills. Burdened with monetary problems, Kōrin’s personal and artistic choices were repeatedly based on economic considerations. However, in the intimate letter to Gennojō, the painter writes how he is envious of “poor people who live day by day,” whom he considers “filled with happiness.” Their ease he sees in contrast to himself, a man who has clearly gained considerable income (in spite of saying otherwise in the letter) and is invited before high-minded daimyo, an honor for which, so he tells Gennojō, “I am not to envy.”

Kōrin also laments bodily ailments such as numb limbs when working until nighttime, revealing evidence of declining health, and suggesting increased studio involvement in his works afterwards. Considering that Kōrin’s artistic output was greatest during the last half decade before his death, the remark insinuates that towards the end of his life Kōrin maintained an atelier with different hands at work. The plan for his last mansion, designed by Kōrin himself and begun in 1711, provides proof of a spacious studio within its walls (Fig. 3.42).
The letter also implies that Kōrin never intended to make Edo his permanent home and merely regarded the city as a source of revenue that quickly became demanding and tiresome. Kōrin reveals that he did not work well under stress, especially that imposed by his exalted patrons. To him, painting was not an enterprise to meet pushy demands with tight deadlines, which he often ignored. In the letter, Kōrin declares how he is shown scores of paintings by Sesshū (ca. 1420–1506) every day; however, this privilege does not seem to delight him. Rather, the quantity and frequency of such encounters with the Muromachi-period master left him “paint[ing] in a daze,” resulting in dissatisfying works that “fail to resemble the [original] painting.” Kōrin deemed his aptitude insufficient for living up to Sesshū, a realization that evidently spoiled his exposure to such masterworks.

Nevertheless, several extant studies and full-fledged copies of works by Muromachi painters like Sesson and Sesshū survive, such as a sketch of an ink landscape (Fig. 3.43). Supposedly copied after an original by Sesshū, it shows that Kōrin attempted to master—with some success—the patchy, wet brushwork of Sesshū’s signature technique. In its extensive use of wet layers of ink, the technique is not unlike tarashikomi and Kōrin may have felt more at home here. His adoption and mastery of tarashikomi by the early 1700s ingrained him with a preference for wet brushwork that lasted until his death.

He applied the trait to works for other Edo patrons as well. For example, a small painting in ink and colors on silk depicting azaleas along a stream—once in the possession of the Kuroda family of Kyūshū—uses a wet brushwork that is similar to the Sesshū sketch (Fig. 3.44). The work carries a “Dōsū” seal, indicating that it was probably produced in Edo. In conjunction with

the Tawaraya style, the painting exemplifies a secondary avenue of style that Kōrin pursued while residing in Kantō. In fact, the work is a hybrid between the tarashikomi method that Kōrin brought to Edo and the ink techniques of Muromachi painters like Sesshū, which he studied there. The silky ink surfaces with faint gradations of hues in Azaleas have their ultimate origin in Kōrin’s lifelong tendency towards formal eclecticism. In Azaleas, Kōrin wielded the brush from the tip to its side in a circular motion, with the smooth blending of different ink hues found in tarashikomi and the wet patches found in Muromachi ink paintings. The method can be found in different works that Kōrin made after his return to Kyoto around 1709. A painting of Huang Tingjian, one of Kōrin’s relatively late works, adapts an overarching cliff formation that frames the Chinese statesman to the left side of the picture (Fig. 3.45). Its execution in washes of ink is reminiscent of the rocks in Azaleas.\(^{129}\) Thus, Kōrin’s daunting exposure to Sesshū’s paintings may have ultimately endowed his works with a new-found finesse.\(^{130}\) Kōrin’s emphasized espousal of the Tawaraya style, in combination with Sesshū’s style seems almost as a reassertion of his initial decision to make Sōtatsu and his followers’ techniques the heart of his Edo activities. Kōrin’s struggle to achieve the necessary progress in accommodating the whims of his patrons perhaps encouraged him to amplify his use of the Tawaraya atelier’s legacy, a fact that made tarashikomi a defining part of his late oeuvre.

In addition to the warrior elite, it appears that Kōrin worked extensively for wealthy Edo merchants. We have seen in Chapter Two how Irises at Yatsuhashi was owned by the Edo-based

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\(^{129}\) The painting carries a square relief seal reading “Masatoki,” Kōrin’s latest pseudonym. Yamane suggests that Kōrin adopted the name “Masatoki” sometime before 1712 and used it until his death in 1716. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 129.

\(^{130}\) The impact of Kōrin’s time in Edo on his later works will be examined in more detail for the case of paintings in ink and iron oxide in Chapter Four.
Fuyuki family of lumber merchants and how the screens may have been commissioned by them. Large-format works like *Irises at Yatsuhashi* that bear the “Masatoki” seal have conspicuous amounts of *tarashikomi*, a feature that ties them to Kōrin’s successful tactic of using the technique as his means of entry into feudal and commoner patronage. *Irises at Yatsuhashi* exemplifies how Kōrin’s later patrons associated his work with and desired the inclusion of *tarashikomi*. The prominent bridge with a surface of watery ink in *Irises at Yatsuhashi* expresses Kōrin’s desire (and that of his patrons) to imbue his works with the painterly technique that he had painstakingly studied in preparation for his activities in Edo. Evidently, this strategy was successful, culminating in an overt emphasis on *tarashikomi* and ink in general throughout the painter’s late oeuvre. Another work the Fuyuki owned, a short-sleeved garment (*kosode*) in white satin with a hand-painted floral design by Kōrin, is mainly done in ink (Fig. 3.46). Echoing a famous anecdote that describes Kōrin as the designer of a lavish ink painting on a female garment in white brocade, the so-called *Fuyuki kosode* shows the early modern affection for black-and-white contrasts. It also displays how ink and the free-handed expression associated with it continued to form a core feature of Kōrin’s works throughout his life.

As was the case for several late large-format masterpieces by Kōrin, scholars have assumed that he made *Irises at Yatsuhashi* after his return from Edo. We have seen earlier how Kōrin worked on long-distance commissions already by the late 1690s and early 1700s. He probably continued to make use of the logistics network that was in place during the early modern period. Other major commissions, such as his screens *Red and White Plum Blossoms*,

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once part of the Tsugaru family collection, may have belonged to the extensive corpus of orders for Edo clients which Kōrin completed after he came back to Kyoto. Yet it is unclear when and under which circumstances the painter returned permanently to the city of his birth.

It appears that by 1709 Kōrin had more or less dismantled his presence in Edo. Evidence is provided in Nijō-ke nainai gobansho hinamiki, which records how Kōrin called on Tsunahira; the artist did so on other occasions when he visited Kyoto. The sixth month of 1709 marks the last entry in the journal where Tsunahira held a banquet for Kōrin, suggesting that the painter had returned to Kyoto for good. Further evidence is provided by Kōrin’s new residence in the Shinmachi district of the capital, constructed in 1711. The mansion’s extensive atelier suggests that Kōrin relocated operations to Kyoto. The established transport network of the Edo period that had already served Kōrin enabled him to work on commissions for loyal clients in Edo after his return to Kyoto. Major works, such as Irises at Yatsuhashi and Red and White Plum Blossoms seem to have reached their presumed Edo patrons during the years after Kōrin’s final homecoming.

Tarashikomi continued to be a major component of Kōrin’s pictorial language after his return to Kyoto; in fact, many of his late large-format pieces bearing the “Masatoki” seal incorporated the technique as their core visual feature and often found their way into Edo collections. Such paintings exemplify how the method was part of the allure of Kōrin’s art

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133 The pair of screens is signed “Hokkyō Kōrin” and “Seisei Kōrin,” and it bears a “Masatoki” seal, Kōrin’s latest pseudonym, which he used from around the late Hōei (1704–1711) or early Shōtoku (1711–1716) years until his death in 1716. The same signatures and seals can be found on Irises at Yatsuhashi. Yamane dates Red and White Plum Blossoms to after 1713. See his Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 127, 133–135.

134 Kamimichi, “Kōrin kankei shiryō,” 58.
among Edo clients, even after he left that city. Kōrin turned to the style of the Tawaraya in the years leading up to his departure for Edo. While Kōrin brought tarashikomi with him to Edo in a variety of forms, such as in his scroll *Plants of the Four Seasons*, he developed the technique further and, perhaps under the influence of the excessive use of *tarashikomi* in the “Inen” tradition, Kōrin transposed it into large formats. The works by Tawaraya Sōsetsu and Kitagawa Sōsetsu that emerged from Sōtatsu’s legacy established a precedent for *tarashikomi* and Tawaraya imagery in Edo that may have facilitated Kōrin’s reception there. Kōrin’s stay in Edo had a lasting impact on his stylistic emphases. Ink became part of his lushly colored works. The enthusiasm with which such paintings entered the collections of daimyo and Edo-based merchants attests to the interregional appeal of *tarashikomi*. Ink, the material in which Kōrin gained his first successes as a painter, never ceased to occupy a central position in his works. As we shall see in the following chapter, Kōrin and his brother Kenzan used the material’s visual and technical qualities to expand the scope of ink paintings to envelop ceramics, a move that marks Kōrin’s final artistic innovation.
Chapter Four: Beyond Ink: Sabi-e and Ink Painting

Throughout his life, Kōrin was an avid ink painter, the medium in which he received part of his earliest artistic training. As he experimented with different styles, he adopted and used specific ink modes during overlapping phases of his career. In the process of adopting and digesting, reinterpreting and expanding, Kōrin merged the medium’s faculties into an eclectic blend that transcended the boundaries of ink and its material definition. Thus, in order to grasp Kōrin’s persona as an ink painter, a variety of media need to be considered. The conventional perception of ink monochrome—ink applied by brush on paper or silk—is just one aspect of a larger heterogeneity in which Kōrin and his brother, the potter Kenzan, reinterpreted the techniques and materials of this tradition.

This chapter lays out how Kōrin expanded the scope of ink paintings by enveloping ceramics, a medium with an entirely different set of materials. I focus on sabi-e (lit. “rustic pictures”), paintings brushed onto ceramic surfaces in iron oxide, sometimes mixed with cobalt-oxide pigment (gosu), that Kōrin produced in collaboration with Kenzan during his late years, after his return from Edo around 1709. The brothers created ceramic plates with iron-oxide images where Kōrin employed an emphatically quick brush, seemingly contrasting the labor-intensive process of producing ceramics with an ostensible simplicity borrowed from ink paintings.

I. Brotherly Collaboration and the Roots of Early Modern Sabi-e

The foreign roots and alien visual flavor of sabi-e helped to make this kind of painted pottery part of the distinctive visual culture of Kōrin’s native Kyoto. In its early stages in Japan,
sabi-e benefited from the accomplishments of the potter Nonomura Ninsei (act. ca. 1647–1678) who established such decor as an aesthetic aspect of seventeenth-century tea circles. In this context, we will also examine the relationship between Kenzan and Kōrin that is manifest in their artistic collaboration. The brothers strove to perfect sabi-e in order to create the closest possible semblances of ink paintings in the ceramic medium. Here, Kōrin resorted to a variety of inspirations, mainly medieval ink paintings and early modern digests of them, a strategy that endowed sabi-e with the cultural prestige of Muromachi period ink paintings.

**Ink and Sabi-e**

Ceramic paintings in iron oxide were no new invention and similarly abbreviated pictures painted on white slip existed since the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Shino ware, for example, used abstracted iron-oxide imagery since the sixteenth century (Fig. 4.1). Also Karatsu ware employed sabi-e in a fashion that is similar to those of Kōrin and Kenzan around the turn of the seventeenth century. A jar with an abstracted, hand-painted design of either a persimmon or plum tree is dated to the Keichō era (1596–1615; Fig. 4.2). Based in northern Kyūshū with easy access to the important trade port Nagasaki, Karatsu ware may have adapted such monochromatic techniques from Korean ceramics, providing a precedent that was taken up by various other Japanese wares. Iron-oxide decor was also an established feature of Oribe ware, which dates to the early seventeenth century (Fig. 4.3). Kyoto wares made sabi-e part of their repertoire from the seventeenth century, an espousal of iron-oxide pictures which Ninsei

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1 Arakawa Masaaki argued that the jar depicts plum blossoms instead of persimmons. See his “E-Karatsu kakimon sanjiko,” *Kokka* 1388 (June 2011): 38–42.

eventually participated in. By taking on the production of sabi-e at his kiln, Ninsei channeled their adoption by Kenzan and, eventually, Kōrin (Fig. 4.4).

Towards the end of his life, Kōrin painted an array of sabi-e that he produced in collaboration with his brother. These works usually come in the form of square dishes, with occasional exceptions such as hexagonal dishes as well as braziers and other formats. Most of Kōrin’s sabi-e are characterized by decidedly simple visual features with single motifs brushed prominently onto the confined space of their ceramic ground. A dish depicting Kōrin’s painting of chrysanthemums together with an inscription by Kenzan illustrates the essence of the brothers’ sabi-e works (Fig. 4.5). The work carries an underglaze image—a technical feature customary to the sabi-e by Kōrin and Kenzan—painted on top of a ground layer of white slip. After the picture was added the work was fired, then coated with clear glaze, and fired again. The painting is executed on a square dish with borders raised in a ninety-degree angle, creating a clearly defined central surface onto which Kōrin brushed his painting and Kenzan added a Chinese-style poem (kanshi). The single chrysanthemum plant is done in quick strokes in the same dark hue of iron oxide. The painting is a composition of single lines, where no brushstroke was laid on top of another; each leaf of the plant consists of three to six separate strokes, while Kōrin painted the blossoms in swift semi-circular lines with oval petals filled in. Kōrin generated a reduced image that serves to present him as a painter who is innovative in his forms and well-skilled in his technique.

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3 On Ninsei’s role among the pottery traditions of Kyoto, see Oka Yoshiko, Kinsei Kyōyaki no kenkyū (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2011), especially 124–241.

4 Kenzan’s poem reads:
True reclusion lies inside the flowers
where the moist dew
brings with it deep autumn.

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Drawing from the dark blackish-brown hue of the iron oxide mixture that was Kōrin’s material of choice for his ceramic paintings, in his sabi-e the artist referred to the appearance of ink paintings. Transposing the aesthetics of ink brushed on paper or silk in ceramics put a painter’s capability to a test. Broadly speaking, the success of an ink painting depended on the visibility of a painter’s hand. In his ceramic paintings, Kōrin set out to convey this perpetuated presence of the artist, made visible through the shifting speed of the hand and the movement of the brush. Kōrin emphatically brushed his sabi-e in the manner he employed in ink, successfully recreating the impression of ink paintings in the different medium of ceramics.

By way of his sabi-e, Kōrin effectively showed that ink paintings need not be limited to ink on paper or silk. Having mastered the complicated process of brushing ink onto gold—a ground as impermeable as ceramics—Kōrin used a similar approach to sabi-e. A gilded screen, *Plum and Bamboo*, where Kōrin created a quintessential ink painting both in terms of technique and subject matter, exemplifies how he may have seen similar faculties in ink paintings on gold and iron-oxide paintings on ceramics (Fig. 4.6). The plum branch and bamboo stalks in this late screen of Kōrin’s find their direct equivalent in two of his sabi-e (Fig. 4.7; 4.8). In painting these three works, Kōrin underlines his dexterity with brush and ink. In the screen, he used the same method to render bamboo stalks as in his sabi-e bamboo dish; he set down his brush at a horizontal angle, pulled it upward, and then retraced the same line downward before stopping a little above each bamboo joint (Fig. 4.9). Also the bamboo leaves, done in a faintly curvy swing of the brush, correspond in screen and dish. We can observe a similar correlation between the gilded screen and sabi-e in Kōrin’s idiosyncratic rendering of plum blossoms. To paint a frontal view of plums, Kōrin commonly outlined the flower either in an imperfect, slightly cavernous
circle or in two semi-circles (Fig. 4.10). He employed the latter method in his sabi-e dish with plum blossoms (Fig. 4.11).

Kōrin’s transposition of these painting techniques to sabi-e evinces that ink paintings served as his model for integrating key aspects of ink techniques into the ceramic medium. Plum and Bamboo bears a “Masatoki” seal—one of Kōrin’s latest pseudonyms—and a signature style whose carefully pronounced characters are emblematic of the artist’s late works. The screen was likely produced during the height of Kōrin and Kenzan’s sabi-e collaboration.

The vertically narrow and horizontally elongated dimensions of the small two-panel screen are reminiscent of the handscroll format. A similar close-up of typical ink painting subjects can be found in Kōrin’s sabi-e dishes. In addition to the technical challenges, the square dishes that Kōrin selected for most of his sabi-e required a keen awareness of composition, a skill that he rarely failed to express throughout his career as an artist. To ensure a sense of balance within the quadrilateral space of the ceramic dishes, Kōrin often placed his sabi-e subjects a little off-center or in either corner of the picture plane. In most of his dishes, the painter included a diagonal element, arching down- or upward, imbuing the image with a feeling of spatial congruity. His dishes with bamboo and plum motifs respectively illustrate these two approaches and show how sabi-e were the result of a lengthy process of trial and error.

Kenzan and Kōrin’s time offered different incentives that may have prompted the artists to take ink paintings as their point of reference for sabi-e. In fact, paintings on ceramics constituted part of a larger trend during the mid-Edo period that drastically expanded and altered...
the notion of ink paintings. The production of sabi-e by Kōrin and Kenzan happened against the backdrop of an increasing tendency towards experimenting with the effects of materials and intermediality that had developed during the seventeenth century and continued afterwards.

Kenzan’s teacher, Nonomura Ninsei, among other representations of different materials in ceramics, produced a ceramic object that emulates the appearance of a bamboo-made shakuhachi flute (Fig. 4.12). The sabi-e of Kōrin and Kenzan result from such trends in pottery, where methods were devised to transform vessels into approximations of other objects whose aesthetics had once been alien to ceramics. In the process, the definitions between different media and genres gradually began to blur.

Kenzan began producing monochromatic sabi-e shortly after establishing his kiln at Narutaki in 1699. A steeped tea (sencha) bowl is considered one of his most important early works (Fig. 4.13). Although Ninsei had already made sabi-e a feature of his wares, Kenzan refined the method to include not just the visual but also the technical faculties of ink paintings. The sencha bowl has an off-white surface, made with white slip creating a ground that is akin to paper. Onto this ground, Kenzan himself, or a professional painter employed by his atelier, applied a picture of a Chinese landscape in iron oxide that clearly was intended to reproduce the brushwork of landscape paintings in ink.7

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7 Richard Wilson argued that Kenzan largely worked as a designer for his wares, rather than producing ceramics with his own hands. Thus, works with such intricate pictures as the Narutaki tea bowl may have been painted by artists employed by Kenzan. See Wilson, The Art of Ogata Kenzan, especially 71–96.
In Tōkō hitsuyō (Essentials of the Potter; 1737), Kenzan refers to sabi-e as black pictures (kuro-e). Others, such as Kenzan’s adopted son Ihachi, also labeled Kōrin’s sabi-e with the same term. Within the early modern Japanese color vocabulary, the brownish hue of iron oxide seems to have been considered a variation of black—a chromatic association that was likely supported by the resemblance of sabi-e paintings to ink. To Kenzan, white (shiro), on the other hand, could be both a white hue as well as a transparent glaze. This double association of white is shared with traditional paintings where negative space could denote whiteness in the same way as could areas of white pigment, such as shell-white. The juxtaposition of white and black, or light and dark, is as old as the medium of ink painting itself, and it played a defining role in Japanese art from the medieval period onward when ink became one of the prime means of painterly expression. The visual and technical hallmarks of sabi-e—especially their blackish hue and ability to convey the individual hand of a painter—provided a solution for Kōrin and Kenzan to the problem of how to paint ink paintings on ceramics.

The pictorial nature of Kenzan’s sabi-e is characteristic of seventeenth-century ceramics by Ninsei and reflects Kenzan’s indebtedness to his early teacher. Kenzan used Ninsei’s method for the brownish black hue of sabi-e (two thirds ground-up iron scales and one third gosu, an impure cobalt pigment). Kenzan also adapted a recipe for white coating for his wares from

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8 See, for example, Mizuo Hiroshi, “Ogata Kōrin Kenzan saku Ume zu kakuzara,” Kokka 1297 (November 2003): 36.


10 In Tōkō hitsuyō, Kenzan uses shiro, white, to denote both transparent glaze and white enamel. See Wilson, The Art of Ogata Kenzan, 221–230.

Ninsei. On the basis of the mix of materials that Ninsei’s pottery manual prescribed for sabi-e and their white slip ground, Kenzan set out to devise new techniques that departed from traditional sabi-e decor and instead fashioned likenesses of ink paintings.

Kenzan managed to achieve an even purer whiteness than his teacher. The particular kind of white slip of Kenzan’s ceramics that he devised to be an approximation of sized paper became a defining feature of his ceramics by around the Hōei era (1704–1711). Using slip made from a blend of clays that came from different regions in Japan, Kenzan created surfaces that to him were closest to white, the veneer he deemed most suitable for applying colors. In Tōkō hitsuyō, Kenzan writes that white clay from Aikawa, Bungo province—dried, finely ground, and mixed with animal glue (nikawa)—provides the purest hue of white. In fact, Kenzan explains how Aikawa residents traditionally used the same clay to whiten paper. Thus, the potter effectively arrived at a white slip ground by employing a component of paper making, and thereby connected these two inherently different media. This relationship illustrates the intimate connection between Kenzan’s method for producing whitish ceramic surfaces and the hue of paper used for painting and writing.

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13 Arakawa, “Gayū no tō,” 19.

14 Kenzan writes how he initially followed Ninsei and used white clay from Kurodani, close to Kyoto, as well as Bizen clay. Still, after years of trying out different clays, he was unable to find a better white than at Aikawa. Thus, he made this clay part of his personal method to create a ground that came as close to white as possible. Wilson, The Art of Ogata Kenzan, 219–220, 227, 229.

15 Ibid., 219.
The Domestic and Foreign in Sabi-e

The roots of Kōrin and Kenzan’s sabi-e lie with Nonomura Ninsei, a seventeenth-century potter whose work was flourishing around the time of Kōrin’s birth. Ninsei laid the foundations for the material and formal explorations that later made Kenzan ware one of the most distinctive traditions of Japan’s early modern pottery. Kenzan, by his own account, received Ninsei’s personal notes on pottery in 1699. He also claims that the second generation Ninsei, Nonomura Seimon, provided direct assistance in pottery making during the initial stage of the Narutaki kiln. Kenzan later recorded the results of this apprenticeship, along with a more or less overtly formulated claim to Ninsei’s succession, in his manuals Tōkō hitsuyō and Tōji seihō (Ceramic Techniques; 1737). Intended as the foundations for Kenzan’s own legacy, both manuals speak of the potter’s own innovations in glazes and clays. Yet these writings also convey Kenzan’s technical and material adherence to Ninsei’s ceramics and convey how Ninsei reformulated the art of pottery during the early modern period.

Ninsei’s life is obscure, but it seems that he established his kiln around 1647. The kiln, located in front of the main gate of Ninnaji in Kyoto and named Omuro in reference to the temple’s surrounding district, began to thrive soon after under the patronage of aristocrats and

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10 Since Ninsei retired in 1678 and was probably dead by 1690, Kenzan likely received the manual from the master’s successor. Ibid., 74.

11 Ibid., 75.

12 Tōkō hitsuyō begins with Kenzan’s annotated copy of Ninsei’s personal notes on pottery, followed by techniques that Kenzan learned from a certain Magobei, a potter of the Oshikōji kiln in Kyoto who provided assistance during Kenzan’s first steps in establishing his Narutaki kiln. The final third of the manuscript contains Kenzan’s own notes on the pottery techniques he developed himself. Kenzan wrote Tōkō hitsuyō in the year of his death in an attempt to secure the continuity of his tradition. Richard Wilson has translated the complete manuscript. Ibid., 218–233.

high-ranking commoners. The swift rise of Ninsei’s popularity was nurtured by the demand for ceramics used in the communal arts like tea and incense appreciation that were substantially nurtured by retired emperor GoMizuno’o. The court’s appetite for the utensils necessary for such cultural pursuits tied Ninsei and his Omuro ware closely to imperial tastes which, in turn, the potter himself helped to expand in a reciprocal relationship of supply and demand.

The selection of styles and aesthetics in Ninsei’s early ceramics was significantly determined by Kanamori Sōwa (1584–1656), an influential tea connoisseur. Although Sōwa died just a decade after Ninsei established his Omuro kiln, he infused Ninsei’s wares with the tastes of contemporary tea culture and helped disseminate them among elite clients. Sōwa’s tea journal records dozens of Omuro objects between 1650 and 1656, the time span between the establishment of the Omuro kiln and Sōwa’s death, illustrating how the tea master instantly admired Ninsei’s ceramics and sought to nurture them. Tea bowls, vessels to serve food, such as trays and similar objects all found their way into Sōwa’s gatherings, perhaps in an attempt to disseminate and market Omuro ware.

In Sōwa’s journal, we find the earliest mention of Omuro wares adorned with sabi-e paintings. For instance, in 1651 the tea master served fish in a Ninsei-made bowl with a sabi-e of plum blossoms. In the same year we also read about a tea bowl that appears to have carried a sabi-e of plum blossoms under the moon. The same tea bowl, or an example with a similar

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21 On the relationship of Ninsei and Sōwa, see Oka, Kokuhō Ninsei no nazo, 126–156.
23 The gathering took place in 1651/04/16. Nishida Hiroko suggested that the tea bowl, which is now lost, might have been close to an example of the same subject in sabi-e at the MOA Museum. See Nishida Hiroko, “Ninsei no chawan,” in Ninsei no chawan, Kanshō shirizu 7 (Tokyo: Nezu Bijutsukan, 2004), 48. On the entry in Sōwa’s tea diary, see Tani, Kanamori Sōwa chasho, 263–264.
design, was used again at a gathering almost exactly one year later. Twenty-four Ninsei adorned his tea bowls and other ceramics in sabi-e that refer to a variety of traditional ink painting subjects. One such example depicts Mt. Fuji against a contrasting white ground (Fig. 4.14). All of these paintings emulate more or less successfully the modality of ink paintings. Mt. Fuji, for example, is reminiscent of Kōrin’s dream painting in ink of 1699 (Fig. 4.15).

In general, sabi-e at Omuro were painted designs applied with a brush—either by Ninsei himself or a specially hired painter—in a characteristically blackish-brown hue. Before the pictures were brushed, the clay body was covered with a layer of white slip and bisque-fired to a low temperature just sufficient to strengthen the clay body and adhere the slip. Once the sabi-e was added, it was coated with a thin layer of transparent glaze and fired again at the high temperature necessary to melt the glaze. The glaze prevented the slip and pigment from flaking off and added a luscious glossiness to the picture. The manufacture process, aesthetic considerations, and their final sabi-e product arguably were akin to making an ink painting. A painting required sizing the paper to create a suitable ground followed by adding the black ink with a brush to form a painting. The slip surface carrying a brushed painting in iron oxide replicates this practice in the ceramic medium.

The aesthetic of sabi-e found a following among seventeenth-century tea practitioners. Sōwa himself was at the core of that culture, maintaining friendships with high-level connoisseurs like the Rokuonji abbot Hōrin Jōshō for whom Sōwa, akin to an agent, procured tea.

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24 Tani, Kanamori Sōwa chasho, 265–266.


26 The white slip was applied with a broad brush, a technical aspect that the technique shares with the sizing of paper. Takeuchi Jun’ichi, “Kenzan yaki chawan kō,” Yamato bunka 81 (1989): 5–6.
wares like those by Ninsei. Sōwa’s involvement in creating Ninsei’s aesthetic and establishing it as a major part of his tea gatherings instigated the speedy rise of Omuro ware. In the process, *sabi-e* became an essential feature of upscale salons from the mid-seventeenth century onward. The presence of *sabi-e* designs among these objects exemplifies how the subdued, aesthetic qualities of the method satisfied the expectations of seventeenth-century salons.

It seems that Ninsei’s kiln produced substantial numbers of *sabi-e* and this specific style of ceramic decor appeared among the earliest objects the potter made at Omuro. Instead of being a local innovation, Ninsei’s early embrace of *sabi-e*, however, reflects an idealized notion among early-modern tea connoisseurs of continental Asia as the birthplace of exceptional ceramics. Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s (1536/37–1598) invasion of the Korean peninsula between 1592 and 1598 triggered a significant exodus of Korean potters who were relocated to Japan to produce ceramics and teach pottery making there. The Japanese invaders, carrying an aesthetic consciousness molded by a surge of tea culture at the time, had encountered a wealth of pottery in Korea that melded with the austere aesthetic notions recently formulated by such tea connoisseurs as Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591). The vestiges of this Japanese absorption of Korean ceramics can be found among Ninsei’s early wares, some of which attempted to reproduce Korean models.

Sōwa’s tea diary records several tea bowls that Ninsei made using specific shapes and glazes to deploy the visual aesthetics of Korean ceramics. Among the listings of Korean wares in

29 Perhaps the most incisive example of a Korean potter immigrating to Japan and leaving a remarkable imprint on the landscape of Japanese tea culture was Raku Chōjirō, the progenitor of the tradition that carries his last name. The tradition’s history is recounted in Morgan Pitelka, *Handmade Culture: Raku Potters, Patrons, and Tea Practitioners in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005).
his collection, we find entries where Sōwa simply labeled a tea bowl “Omuro Korean” (Omuro Kōrai). Ninsei made Korean styles one of his signature aesthetics during the early years of the Omuro kiln, and excavations at the kiln site have uncovered that Korean-inspired Goki ware constituted about half of Ninsei’s output (Fig. 4.16).

The potter was not alone in his endeavors. In fact, his efforts to create domestic reproductions of Korean wares were shared by other Kyoto kilns that sought to meet the high demand for such objects. The glazes of Korean tea bowls often contained iron-oxide content, establishing brownish hues, in addition to an off-white glaze, as a part of tea culture’s chromatic language since the sixteenth century.

Although Kenzan relied on the material components laid out in Ninsei’s manual, the Ogata potter’s sabi-e simultaneously referred to two major foreign ceramic traditions: the brush-painted iron-oxide decor over white slip and under clear glaze of Cizhou-type ceramics from China, as well as a broadly conceived notion of Korean ceramics (Fig. 4.17). Cizhou-inspired objects were an established part of Kenzan’s output from his days at Narutaki onward. Arakawa Masaaki has pointed out that Cizhou ware had been known in Japan since the Muromachi period. Nonetheless it was commonly included in the umbrella term of kōrai.

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30 Tani, Kanamori Sōwa chasho, 271. Kenzan’s manual Tōkō hitsuyō shows that kōrai functioned as an umbrella term for Goki-style wares, which were modeled after Korean precedents. Wilson, The Art of Ogata Kenzan, 221.

31 Nishida, “Ninsei no chawan,” 45. Goki ware is characterized by the use of clay with high iron content, resulting in a rich ocher-color glaze that frequently leaves areas of the brown clay body visible. The Goki technique in Japan was mainly used to produce tea bowls.


33 Arakawa, “Gayū no tō,” 17.

Kenzan’s ceramics encompassed two types of kōrai wares: one that is close in technique and decor motifs to Cizhou wares and was similarly fired at high temperatures, and another that encompasses Kōrin and Kenzan’s sabi-e collaboration and were fired at low temperatures. Sometimes different visual languages were conflated; Kenzan frequently added a Cizhou-ware cloud pattern to the sabi-e dishes he produced together with Kōrin (Fig. 4.18; 4.19). It becomes clear that Kenzan and his contemporaries came to associate sabi-e with the Korean peninsula, rather than with Cizhou ware from China. Iron-oxide motifs, regardless of the geographic origin of their precedents, came to be thought of as kōrai, or Korean. From an inscription on a bowl with sabi-e dated to 1706 that draws from Chinese Cizhou ware we learn how Kenzan placed the geographic origin of any kind of sabi-e in Korea. For example, the following inscription can be found on the bottom side of a large bowl with peonies design in sabi-e (Fig. 4.20).

[Made in the] Hōei [era] (1704–1711) by the Recluse Potter Kenzan of the capital of Great Japan Shōkosai Ogata Shinsei. This piece was made after Korean [wares] (seal Shōko) [in the year] 1706

Kenzan stylized himself as the Japanese follower to the Korean pottery tradition by highlighting his own origin as a man from Kyoto (yōshū) in “Great Japan” (Dai Nippon). A dish with an iron-oxide painting by Kōrin of Huang Tingjian is similarly assertive as the Hamamatsu bowl (Fig. 4.21). Kenzan writes on the dish’s backside:

Made at the studio of the Recluse Potter Kenzan Shinsei from the capital of Great Japan. Shōkosai

The potter still felt the need to include his self-identification as a man from “Great Japan,” a geographic specificity that would have been unnecessary if he did not consider the dish’s visual features as foreign. The frequency with which Kenzan inscribed his wares with reference to his origin from Kyoto, Japan’s capital city, signals a friction between local and foreign aspects in his artistic persona, as well as in the sabi-e that he produced himself and together with Kōrin. Early modern contemporaries considered Korea a symbol for appealing pottery while they clearly felt the need to ascertain their domestic identity. The fact that artists intentionally expressed this local consciousness through a foreign style reveals the age-old trend of defining oneself vis-à-vis others. In all of this, Kenzan was at pains to show that he, too, could match the high standards of continental works.

Kenzan’s practice reveals early modern Japanese strategies of appropriating Korea as a domestic brand name. The peony bowl’s compartmentalized iron-oxide decor and stylized rim design are all hallmarks of Cizhou ware, but his inscription refers to Korea. Evidently, in kōrai-related pieces, Kenzan and his contemporaries did not distinguish between differences in style, technique, and geographic origin. The sole requirements to fit the concept of kōrai were a ground of white slip and an underglaze decor in iron oxide. Many objects by Kenzan fall into that rubric, and his collaborative pieces with Kōrin are part of them. In this way, sabi-e added a body of works with a foreign flavor to the autochthon painting tradition that Kōrin established by drawing from his country’s past and present culture.

The semiotic association of any kind of sabi-e with ceramic traditions of the Korean peninsula probably increased the appreciation of Cizhou ware and sabi-e in general among
Japanese connoisseurs, given the popularity Korean ceramics enjoyed in tea circles. In addition, the production of sabi-e by both Ninsei and Kenzan draws an artistic genealogy of the method that links the two artists. In all likelihood, the first generation Ninsei died sometime around the mid-1690s, instigating a drastic decline of the Omuro kiln’s fortunes that resulted in its dismantling by the late 1690s.\textsuperscript{36} The timing of Kenzan’s opening of his first kiln in 1699 seamlessly placed him in the footsteps of Ninsei and the defaulted Omuro kiln. Kenzan followed Ninsei technically and geographically. He adhered to and expanded the master’s pottery manual, and he also built his kiln at Narutaki, some distance away from Ninnaji in northwestern Kyoto. Sabi-e—a relatively inexpensive material that was easy to fire—played a vital role in connecting both artists, as Kenzan wares relied heavily on the sabi-e method throughout his more-than-forty-year professional pottery career.\textsuperscript{37}

Ninsei, and Kenzan together with Kōrin, who were aided by the preconceived, exotic associations of sabi-e in tea culture, reworked sabi-e-decorated ceramics into a brand that was both foreign and domestic. Similar to the cross-regional presence of tarashikomi that we observed in the previous chapter, the overseas origin of sabi-e emphasized by Japanese artists caused sabi-e to oscillate between local and foreign aesthetics.

In addition to several other foreign methods, such as Delft ware, sabi-e paintings were the physical embodiments of Kenzan’s embrace of the exotic as he molded his artistic persona (Fig. 4.22). The potter acquired a profound sophistication through his grounding in continental culture in part through early studies with Zen monks of the Ōbaku sect. In the early 1690s, Kenzan

\textsuperscript{36} See Oka, \textit{Kokuhō Ninsei}, 167–174. Competition from other kilns, such as Arita, also contributed to the downfall of Ninsei’s Omuro kiln. See Wilson, \textit{The Art of Ogata Kenzan}, 37.

\textsuperscript{37} I am grateful to Louise Cort for explaining the inexpensive nature and material qualities of iron oxide.
possibly studied Chinese poetry with Dokushō Seien (1617–1694), an Ōbaku priest, who directly apprenticed with Chinese exiles in Nagasaki.\(^{38}\) In the autumn of 1690, Gettan Dōchō (dates unknown), a pupil of Seien, visited Kenzan’s luxurious hermitage, Shūseidō (Hall of Quiet Learning), and recorded his visit in two accounts—one in Chinese, the other in Japanese—that speak of Dōchō’s poetic fusion of the domestic and foreign. His influence left its traces on Kenzan’s work.\(^{39}\)

Dōchō’s learning affected Kenzan, whose interest in continental culture had been strong already by the early 1690s when he began composing Chinese-style poems himself.\(^{40}\) Arakawa Masaaki has argued that the objects used for sencha made by Kenzan at Narutaki also reflect Dōchō’s interest in this form of tea.\(^{41}\) Such works, namely the sencha tea bowl with Kenzan’s sabi-e of a pavilion amidst a mountainous landscape, are material manifestations of the potter’s exposure to a blend of continental and domestic culture through Sōwa, Dōchō, Ninsei, and other agents of Kyoto’s late seventeenth-century cultured circles.

In Kenzan’s early set of painted dishes depicting the twelve months after Teika, sabi-e elements are part of a larger, polychromatic context and help to visualize this domestic subject (Fig. 4.23). In the sencha bowl, on the other hand, the potter employed sabi-e to make


\(^{39}\) Shūseidō-ki (Records of the Hall of Quiet Learning), written by Seien’s pupil Gettan Dōchō, records that Kenzan went into reclusion after his father died and purchased land from Ninnaji where he erected his Shūseidō. See Tanaka Kisaku, “Shūseidō-ki ni tsuite,” Gasetsu 10 (October 1937): 324–326.


\(^{41}\) Arakawa has pointed out how Gettan published a poem on sencha in 1694, Sencha uta, revealing his indebtedness to continental culture filtered through the Ōbaku Zen faith. Steeped tea was popular during the Edo period and is mentioned in various sources, such as Ihara Saikaku’s Koshoku ichidai otoko. Typical steeped tea equipment depicted in late Ming paintings commonly include tea bowls with relatively high rims that are similar to Kenzan’s Nezu bowl. See Arakawa, “Narutaki jidai ni okeru Kenzan yaki,” 21–22 and Arakawa, “Gayū no tō,” 16–18.
accoutrements for a new foreign pastime with an alien visual language. Evidently, the monochromatic *sabi-e* style served to create a continental feel while *sabi-e* elements as part of polychromatic pictures worked just as well to adorn objects embedded in the framework of the Japanese tradition. The two works, both made during the early years of the Narutaki kiln, illustrate the convergence of the local and the exotic that was a persistent theme in Kenzan’s oeuvre, a tradition his collaboration with Kōrin eventually continued.

**Kōrin and Kenzan**

Building on Kenzan’s early work in monochromatic *sabi-e* and iron-oxide elements in polychromatic pictures, Kōrin adapted the technical aspects of his brother’s ceramic decor for their collaborative *sabi-e*. Painted exclusively in monochrome on grounds of white slip, Kōrin’s *sabi-e* make straightforward references to ink paintings. The extensive palette of Kenzan’s oeuvre at Narutaki and, later at the Nijō Chōjiyamachi kiln, provided Kōrin with a broad selection of materials and styles. But, perhaps encouraged by Kenzan, Kōrin selected monochromatic *sabi-e* as the basis for the collaboration with his brother, revealing his life-long adherence to his early training in ink paintings. In Kōrin’s final years, the Ogata brothers joined forces as two accomplished artists, each bringing to the fore his own unique sets of expertise.

The *sabi-e* designs by Kōrin and Kenzan exemplify the brotherly cooperation that characterized their relationship. In the designs, each of the artists contributed his respective forte in an effort to unite the arts of painting (Kōrin) and ceramics (Kenzan). Their teamwork reflects a reciprocity that existed between the brothers throughout much of their lives. Kōrin and Kenzan
were close, and just as Kenzan was invested in Kōrin’s financial, social, and physical well-being, Kōrin valued his brother’s opinions and intellect.

Following prevailing norms of social hierarchy, Kōrin and Kenzan were subordinate to their eldest brother Tōzaburō, the main heir to their father’s fortune. As younger brothers they were not expected to hold prominent positions in the family business. This situation encouraged them to share with one another and bind them together. In his will, Ogata Sōken asked both sons to split the remaining inheritance evenly between each other, while Tōzaburō received the largest portion. Apparently, the two reached a quick agreement, and only a few months after Sōken’s death each claimed his share from Nichi’i, the abbot of Kyōzen’in and the executor of Sōken’s will. In his claim, Kenzan explicitly states that there were no disputed items among the bequest, indicating an understanding between the two brothers, even in the face of an ambiguously phrased will that provided ample opportunity to fight over significant monetary assets. Clearly, the siblings were content with each other.

With a better hand at financial affairs, Kenzan also played a role in brokering the mortgage on Kōrin’s estate at Nakamachi Yabunouchichō, which was handed over to the townsman Kawai Heiemon in 1703. Later, in 1713, it was again Kenzan who issued the full repayment of that mortgage in Kōrin’s stead. Their amicable relationship was further nurtured

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42 Appendix Document I / 1.

43 Appendix Documents I / 3 and I / 4.

44 Heiemon had been granted temporary ownership of Kōrin’s estate in 1703, with the option of the property returning to Kōrin upon repayment of the mortgage. See Chapter Three. Appendix Documents I / 24 and I / 25.
through joint Noh performances and their participation in the circle of the aristocrat Nijō Tsunahira and other high-level men of culture in Kyoto.45

Tsunahira, one of Kōrin’s main early benefactors, played an important part in Kenzan’s life, too, and both brothers enjoyed equal favors from the courtier throughout the 1690s and early 1700s. For instance, the 1704/05/16 entry of the Nijō family records Nijō-ke nainai gobansho hinamiki documents that Kenzan sent a basket of strawberries to Tsunahira. Kenzan was sick at the time and dispatched the gift to thank Tsunahira for worrying about his well-being. Four days later, Tsunahira held a banquet to celebrate Kenzan’s recovery.46 The year before, Tsunahira had stopped by Kenzan’s Shūseidō hermitage. As these records indicate, the Ogata brothers maintained close ties to Tsunahira and his group of acquaintances. In fact, it was Tsunahira who in 1694 granted Kenzan the land in Narutaki that the potter would later use to build his kiln. The plot was part of Tsunahira’s country estate in northwestern Kyoto. Tsunahira’s gift enabled Kenzan to establish his kiln there in 1699.47 Although both brothers had been close since childhood, Narutaki set the stage for their later professional collaboration that would eventually culminate in the joint production of sabi-e imagery for ceramics.

Kenzan’s first years at Narutaki also coincided with a surge in commissions for Kōrin. During that time, Kōrin was engaged in producing screens, fans, hanging scrolls, and lacquer works. As Kōrin sought to establish himself as a painter, Kenzan attempted to do so as a potter.

45 See Chapter Two.
46 Kamimichi, Kōrin kankei shiryo, 45.
47 Kenzan probably erected the Narutaki kiln on part of Tsunahira's mountain villa property. The site, called Narutaki no chaya, housed a Nijō-owned estate used for tea gatherings and other salon activities. See Arakawa, “Gayū no tō,” 13. The records of Ninnaji, Omuro gyokī, mention the establishment of Kenzan’s Narutaki kiln for the eighth month of 1699. Like Kōrin, Kenzan was a late starter. He was already 37 years old at the time. Tanaka, “Shūseidō-ki ni tsuite,” 330–331.
The first evidence of Kōrin and Kenzan’s joint efforts dates to sometime between 1699 and 1701. In a letter to Nishimura Seiiku, the art dealer who managed some of Kōrin’s earliest commissions, Kōrin informed Seiiku that Kenzan had completed an order for a sake ewer and that he was ready to send it to Seiiku’s unnamed client. This suggests that Kōrin took charge of the initial sales of Kenzan’s ceramics, and that both brothers utilized their respective advantages in order to gain traction in the art world.

However, it appears that Kōrin and Kenzan left their initial cooperation at practical matters like the logistics of long-distance sales and seem to have developed their creative cooperation only later. From around 1709, when Kōrin returned to Kyoto after a successful stay in Edo that left his pockets full of revenue and his atelier flourishing with pupils, he likely had more freedom to pursue personal interests. At that time, the artistic collaboration between the brothers intensified. Kenzan became invested in Kōrin’s artistic identity and suggested a set of possible pseudonyms for his brother. Kenzan probably drafted the list of elegant sobriquets around the time of Kōrin’s return from Edo, when the brothers reached the height of their sabi-e collaboration. Kōrin followed Kenzan’s advice and adopted some of the names, “Jakumei Kōrin” and “Seisei Kōrin.”

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48 The dating of the letter follows Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 70–71. On Seiiku, see Noguchi, “Kōrin gagyō no kenkyū,” 248–257, especially 248. See also Chapters One and Two. Appendix Document III / 2.

49 Around 1711, Kōrin constructed a new mansion and repaid several debts, suggesting that he had earned substantial wages in Edo. The mansion also included an atelier that provided space for pupils. Already by the early 1700s, we find evidence that Kōrin maintained subordinate painters. Appendix Document I / 24.

50 The list is part of Kōrin’s personal notes, written out on a separate sheet by Kenzan himself. Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō, 180–182. Yamane dates the list to around the late Hōei and early Shōtoku eras (1711–1716), since the catalogue of pseudonyms is followed by a separate sheet with the alias “Masatoki,” which Yamane believes Kōrin adopted by 1712. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 62, 129.
Both brothers were busy building a name for themselves around the early 1700s, leaving little space for the level of inspired collaboration that led to their *sabi-e* works. Scholars agree that Kōrin and Kenzan did not join artistic forces before circa 1709.\(^{51}\) Yet retrospectively Kenzan sought to align himself with Kōrin much earlier. He writes in *Tōji seihō*:

> I took care of technical aspects and patterns by consulting with Kōrin. The first pictures [on my ceramics] were all painted by Kōrin himself. The style of my pictures now follows Kōrin, but I also instilled them with new ideas of my own.

Although this claim likely has little truth value, Kenzan clearly attempted to utilize the fame of his elder brother. The quote also reveals his pride in both Kōrin and his own achievements. The output at Narutaki encompassed painted designs from as early as 1702, the date inscribed on the set of dishes depicting the twelve months after Teika. In the set, each piece depicts one month of the year in iron oxide and color pigments on a ground of white slip. The set’s decor makes close reference to conventional polychromatic painting, and the artist used iron pigments as substitute for ink and polychromatic pigment where a traditional painting would use mineral or plant-based colors.

Kenzan produced the set a few years before Kōrin made his own rendering of the subject in the screen format, analyzed in the previous chapter (Fig. 4.24). The two versions are markedly different.

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\(^{51}\) Initially, scholars argued that Kōrin was involved in adding paintings to Kenzan’s ceramics from 1699 onward. Focusing on the signatures used by Kōrin in ceramic paintings, many of which omit the *hokkyō* sobriquet, led scholars to conclude that those paintings pre-date Kōrin’s receipt of the title in 1701. Later, Yamane proposed, through stylistic analysis and the discovery of new pieces bearing dates after 1701 (though with signatures that lack *hokkyō*), that Kōrin could not have collaborated with Kenzan prior to circa 1709. Historians of ceramics like Takeuchi Jun’ichi have later endorsed that theory. See Yamane Yūzō, “Kōrin to Kenzan yaki nidai,” *Kokka* 1037 (September 1980): 15–23. Takeuchi Jun’ichi, “Chawan sandai to Kenzan yaki seisaku nendai ni tsuite,” *Kokka* 1169 (April 1993): 9–28.

different. While Kōrin created an eclectic concoction of Tawaraya and Kano-esque styles, Kenzan’s dishes use pure Kano imagery. The images are so close to the Kano style that it has been suggested that Kenzan employed a professional Kano-trained painter for this commission.\(^{53}\)

Kenzan apparently outsourced his early ceramic paintings and bypassed his brother, an accomplished painter at the time, only retrospectively to link Kōrin’s artistic prowess with his early ceramics more than three decades later. Above all, Kenzan’s claim in Tōji seiho reflects the momentum of Kōrin’s art especially after the painter’s death. When Kenzan wrote Tōji seiho in 1737, Kōrin’s works and persona had garnered substantial popular acclaim. Kenzan relished his brother’s renown and proudly employed it for his own ceramic manufacture.

Kōrin joined Kenzan’s work at Narutaki—he operated the kiln until 1712—during a prolific period of Kenzan ware. Kōrin’s participation eventually set the course for Kenzan’s ceramics, which would incorporate decorative methods that maintained overt links with paintings rather than conventional ceramic designs. With the objects produced together with Kōrin, Kenzan ware surpassed its earlier indebtedness to Ninsei and his Omuro kiln. The painterly quality of Ninsei’s ceramic decor provided Kenzan with the technical groundwork and the aesthetic inspiration that formed the foundations for his later collaboration with Kōrin. Still, the painter’s focus on free-handed brushwork initiated a new stage in Kenzan’s ceramics.

\(^{53}\) Nishimoto Shūko has pointed out how the paintings on Kenzan’s twelve months set correspond with renderings by Kano Tan'yū of the subject, presuming that a professional artist, hired by Kenzan for this occasion, was responsible for their making. Nishimoto Shūko, “Ogata Kenzan hitsu Teika yomi jūnikagetsu kachō zu ni tsuite,” Kokka 1043 (June 1981): 26–27
Kōrin’s *Sabi-e*: Style and Format

Kōrin’s prominence as a painter is often cited as a deep influence on Kenzan, but his *sabi-e* output arguably represents the reverse: an instance where Kōrin’s repertoire was expanded through the agency of his brother. Although Kōrin helped Kenzan sell his ceramics as early as the late 1690s, there is no evidence that he was involved in adding paintings to his brother’s objects before his return from Edo around 1709. The later date seems more likely, since Kōrin went back to his native Kyoto having learned different new ink modes. The shogunal capital had left Kōrin with a heightened awareness of the faculties of ink that provided a mental and technical basis for his adoption of *sabi-e* with Kenzan.

*Sabi-e* by Kōrin reflect his experiences in Edo. One of the most outstanding examples is Kōrin’s reference to the late Muromachi-period painter Sesson Shūkei (1504–ca. 1589). While in Edo, Kōrin had access to Sesson’s works and made copies of some of his paintings (Fig. 4.25; 4.26). Besides some close copies of paintings by Sesson, the painter took in the style and motifs he found in those works and reformulated them into Sesson-esque paintings of his own. One example of this method can be found in Kōrin’s renderings of Fukurokuju, one of the Seven Lucky Gods and a subject that Kōrin painted frequently during and after his stay in Edo. The prototype for Kōrin’s renderings of the subject may have been a large hanging scroll by Sesson that Kōrin could have encountered in Edo (Fig. 4.27). The work was handed down in the Sakai family, one of Kōrin’s main Edo patrons, and it is possible that the artist saw the painting when

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54 The most thorough study on Sesson’s life and work in English was accomplished by Barbara Ford. Barbara B. Ford, “A Study of the Painting of Sesson Shūkei” (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1982).

he served the Sakai from circa 1705 and after. The peculiar position, squat physique, and body proportions of Fukurokuju in Sesson’s painting are reflected in Kōrin’s numerous renderings of the subject, suggesting that some connection exists between those works.

However, while taking in new styles, Kōrin perpetually revisited his early artistic education. He tailored his Fukurokuju figures after his personal approach to painting and did not slavishly follow the model provided by Sesson. While adopting the composition and physical aspects of the figure in the medieval work, Kōrin used mannerisms that he had adopted from Shōkadō Shōjō’s works during his early painting endeavors in the 1690s. For instance, a picture in monochromatic ink of Fukurokuju has the same posture and physique as in the painting by Sesson, though the brushwork and ubiquitous juxtaposition of fields of black ink with blank or lighter areas is a direct nod to Shōjō (Fig. 4.28). Just as in Hotei Playing Kemari and Sōgi, two of Kōrin’s earliest paintings covered in Chapter One, Kōrin’s ink paintings form a fusion of references to different artists who are removed in time, but still maintain some aesthetic overlap (Fig. 4.29; 4.30).

Shōjō’s own work referred back to medieval ink paintings—the time of Sesson—and by adopting his mode, Kōrin tied his own works to a canonized retrospection of Japan’s artistic past. The paintings that Shōjō consulted belonged to an accepted framework that inspired and guided early Edo-period ink paintings; while Shōjō consulted medieval ink modes through an early seventeenth-century lens, Sesson was one of the foremost representatives of medieval ink painting in the Kantō region. The two painters thus supplied Kōrin with a practical combination

56 On Kōrin’s connections with the Sakai, see Chapter Three.
of references to the medieval period, references that provided cultural gravitas for his ink and sabi-e paintings.

Kōrin made Shōjō and Sesson part of his own present by fusing both artists into the medium of sabi-e paintings. His blending of different modes shows that Kōrin’s work was defined as much by tradition as by change. Kōrin had turned to Shōjō’s painting style during his formative years as a painter, only to return to it for his sabi-e. In his later years, Kōrin drew from his considerable faculties in ink to expand the medium’s scope to envelop ceramics.

The use of the “Jakumei” seal on Kōrin’s Fukurokuju painting puts the date of this work around or after circa 1709. The name “Jakumei,” which was probably given to Kōrin by Kenzan after his return from Edo, appears exclusively on Kōrin’s ink paintings and sabi-e, and its intellectualized, continental sound communicates the air of a lofty painter recluse. Kōrin placed his signature in a similar position as in the Sesson painting of Fukurokuju, to the lower right of the picture—a positioning that makes it seem as if Fukurokuju has purposely turned his back on the name of the painter. We have seen in earlier works like Hotei Playing Kemari how Kōrin put great care into making his signature part of a painting’s overall composition. Here, too, its placement seems cautiously calculated.

Fukurokuju and other lucky gods, especially Hotei, are recurrent subjects in Kōrin’s ink paintings and in sabi-e collaborations with Kenzan; a dish at the MOA Museum shows the folk deity alongside an inscription by Kenzan (Fig. 4.31). Although the figure is almost a mirror image of its ink-painting counterpart (plus an added staff), the thin, controlled lines Kōrin used

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57 Yamane has proposed that Kōrin adopted the alias “Jakumei” sometime around the late Hōei era. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 62–63.

58 The sobriquet shares this characteristic with the pseudonym “Kenzan,” signifying the northwestern mountains bordering the capital.
for the face and cranium are closer to Sesson’s painting, revealing how Kōrin’s sabi-e, through their choice of whimsical subject matter and spontaneous brushwork, effectively exploited references to ink painting’s medieval origin.

Kōrin and Kenzan’s comments on Sesson’s style and subject matter encompassed figure paintings, botanical subjects, and landscape paintings. During and after his stay in Edo, Kōrin seems to have embraced depictions of bamboo, a long-established subject of ink paintings. The slender yet sturdy stalks of the plant provided painters with an intriguing motif to test their abilities and align themselves with the lofty tradition of bamboo paintings in ink. The culture of ink that existed in Edo apparently stimulated Kōrin to make this visually simplistic but culturally weighty motif a major facet of his oeuvre.

Kōrin’s dishes with a sabi-e of bamboo and a plum branch, Kōrin once again fused his personal style with that of Sesson and Sesson’s fellow Muromachi-period painters. The stalks of bamboo find their equivalent in paintings by the medieval master (Fig. 4.32). The plum branch, which is another traditional subject of ink paintings, on the other hand, conveys more of the quick, staccato brushwork of Shōjō in addition to Kōrin’s own stylistic quirks that are evident in his characteristic circular blossoms.

In the dish with a picture of plum blossoms, Kōrin combined his signature flowers with thick, expressive strokes for the branches and patches of pigment for the tree’s trunk (Fig. 4.33). Here, Kōrin added areas of darker pigment onto lighter ones, resulting in a watery blend that resembles the pooling effects found in ink paintings since the medieval period (Fig. 4.34). However, the effect in the sabi-e is distinctive, as the transparent layer of glaze added on top of the pigment brings about an uncanny, blurry effect. This example shows that designs done in
sabi-e also resulted in their own accidental or intentional peculiarities on the basis of the techniques of ink painting.

Kōrin’s sabi-e dishes focus on close-up of their subjects by using square spaces that resemble shikishi, or sheets of paper for writing poetry.59 As we have seen at the example of Kenzan’s set of square dishes depicting Teika’s definition of the twelve months, the potter used the shikishi shape since at least 1702, but with more complex pictures than those by Kōrin. Yet it was probably Kenzan who brought the format to the Ogata brothers’ collaboration.

The shikishi-shaped dishes of Kōrin and Kenzan’s sabi-e invoke the early seventeenth century and earlier ages, when poetry was inscribed on the clearly defined square spaces of shikishi that were pasted onto painted screens or admired in albums.60 Kenzan’s 1702 set also follows this principle by pairing pictures of the twelve months with accompanying poems on the reverse, separating writing from pictures. Later, in collaboration with Kōrin, Kenzan used the square dishes as grounds for sabi-e and began to combine calligraphy and imagery by adding his inscriptions directly onto the front side of many of his dishes.

Kōrin and Kenzan decided to adopt a carrier for sabi-e that was based on models from painting and calligraphy. Iron oxide, at least as elements of polychromatic ceramic paintings like his twelve months set, was part of Kenzan ware’s visual language since the first years of his

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59 Art historians have long drawn the connection between the square format of Kenzan’s ceramic dishes and shikishi. See, for instance, Mitsuoka Tadanari, “Kenzan iro-e Teika kachō waka shikishi zara,” Kobijutsu 6 (June 1969): 111–112.

60 Kōetsu himself was a virtuoso in inscribing shikishi that have been attributed to the Tawaraya atelier and Sōtatsu. During the last years of his life, Kōrin again came back to his great-granduncle Hon’ami Kōetsu, whose cultural leverage he had used during his early years as a painter. See also Chapters One and Two.
Narutaki kiln. But the production of exclusively monochromatic pictures on square dishes dates to his collaboration with Kōrin, from around 1709 and after.\textsuperscript{61}

The format supplied the brothers with a surface that emphasizes the painting it carries. This display character is reminiscent of *shikishi* by the Tawaraya atelier. Kenzan and Kōrin may have looked at such works that incorporate *monogatari*-related content, namely those of the *Tales of Ise*. At least one leaf in the expansive set of *shikishi* by the Tawaraya atelier that depict the *Tales of Ise* was inscribed by Kōrin and Kenzan’s father Sōken (Fig. 4.35).\textsuperscript{62} The Tawaraya *shikishi* paired figural images with calligraphic inscriptions that relate to their pictorial content. The writing was added directly on the picture, granting equal visual significance to both elements. The same holds true for the *sabi-e* dishes by Kōrin and Kenzan. Furthermore, many of their dishes were produced in sets that establish loose associations between each other, a strategy also pursued in the Tawaraya *shikishi*.\textsuperscript{63} It is unknown whether Kōrin and Kenzan made all their *sabi-e* dishes originally as series, or whether some were combined later. Because Kenzan often devised his objects in groups, a common practice in ceramics, it is likely that he and Kōrin made at least some *sabi-e* in sets.

Similar to such works as the Tawaraya *shikishi*, which are connected by means of a stylistic and chromatic correspondence, Kōrin and Kenzan’s *sabi-e* dishes are linked by distinct matching rim decors. Their use of motifs that were rooted deep in popular culture, namely Hotei, Fukurokuju, and oft-depicted plants, such as chrysanthemums and bamboo, establishes another

\textsuperscript{61} Around the late Narutaki and early Nijō Chōjiyamachi kiln periods, scholars observe an increasing focus on pictorial decor in Kenzan’s ceramics. Takeuchi, “Kenzan yaki,” 13–18.

\textsuperscript{62} We encountered the Tawaraya *shikishi* in the previous chapter.

correlating element. A further characteristic that unifies the entirety of sabi-e produced by Kōrin and Kenzan is their focus on monochrome. This type of unity is seen in the Tawaraya shikishi, whose repetitive use of azurite and malachite establishes a chromatic connection within the set that persists in spite of the fact that the individual pieces were often painted by different hands.

The sabi-e by Kōrin and Kenzan fused the brothers’ respective skills—painting and calligraphy. Kōrin imbued his sabi-e with stylistic and thematic elements that show his exposure to ink paintings in Edo. By way of this process, the brothers looked back towards the late medieval period and the early seventeenth century for inspiration. They reveal a decidedly retrospective approach to creating sabi-e, a technique whose visuality early modern contemporaries considered to be of foreign origins.

II. Calculated Spontaneity in Kōrin’s Sabi-e

The emphatic abbreviation and quick brushwork that Kōrin used in his sabi-e makes his works the closest early modern semblances of ink paintings in the ceramic medium. The technical features of ceramics with iron oxide, a pigment that is relatively easy to paint with and fire at low temperatures, predestined sabi-e for mimicking the spontaneity of ink. However, as we shall see, Kōrin and Kenzan’s carefree visual language originated in a meticulously engineered process.

Formulating Sabi-e

Kōrin and Kenzan’s made the choices in style and format for their sabi-e with an eye to ink paintings, a medium that Kōrin excelled in since his early days as a painter. Such displays of
artistic prowess can be found throughout his career in a variety of formats, ranging from hanging scrolls and screens to textiles and, in collaboration with Kenzan, ceramics. By using Kōrin’s experience and aptitude in the ink medium, the Ogata brothers created ceramic paintings that looked like works in ink, yet they were not the same. This play with the material and conceptual boundaries of ink painting, one of the most exalted forms of Japanese artistic expression, relied on an ostensibly unassuming simplicity that conjures up the impression of spontaneously done works in ink. While Kōrin made several such paintings that convey his command of the brush, his sabi-e do their best to replicate this painterly ideal, albeit through a process that was choreographed and often repetitive.

Examples of Kōrin’s untrammeled mastery of ink are his New Year’s paintings. A piece depicts three wish-granting cintamani jewels arranged on a bundle of bamboo branches, a common auspicious subject befitting the beginning of the new year (Fig. 4.36). The painting records the date of 1710/01/06, the period when Kōrin and Kenzan collaborated on sabi-e. As Alexander Hofmann notes, paintings of similar auspicious motifs, such as takarabune, treasure ships, which Kōrin also painted, were established themes for New Year’s painting performances.⁶⁴ The date inscribed on Kōrin’s cintamani jewels also confirms this hypothesis.

Kōrin signed the New Year’s painting “Hokkyō Kōrin” and included a cypher (kaō), reading “ju” or “kotobuki” 寿. The same cypher can be found on many of his sabi-e and in

⁶⁴ Alexander Hofmann’s book offers the only cohesive study of performed paintings in the early modern period. In response to the frequent absence of written records, Hofmann has proposed a methodology to discern painting performances by means of their visual qualities. Broadly speaking, sekiga, or paintings on the spot, were mainly done in ink on paper using conspicuously abbreviated brushwork. Such works often emphasize auspicious, easily understood motifs. Hofmann cites performances like the established tradition of the first painting of the New Year (on’e hajime) as symbols of the trust and devotion between painters and patrons. Alexander Hofmann, Performing / Painting in Tokugawa Japan: Artistic Practice and Socio-Economic Functions of Sekiga (Paintings on the Spot), The Hammonds Foundation Monograph Series on Asian Art (Berlin: Reimer, 2011).
similarly abbreviated, swiftly made ink paintings. Kōrin’s use of the same cypher in ceramic dishes and his impromptu New Year’s paintings suggest that the artist viewed the two mediums as belonging to the same conceptual category. The cintamani painting also embraces an array of stylistic peculiarities that Kōrin transferred to his sabi-e. Works like Kōrin’s dishes with sabi-e of plum blossoms and Fukurokuju express a similar, noticeably fast brushwork. In this rapid, ad hoc mode, Kōrin was careful to include flying white (C. feibai) and washes, making sabi-e displays of his virtuosity as a painter. The areas of washes gracing the upper portion of the cintamani in the ink painting and the lower trunk of the sabi-e plum correspond, demonstrating the extent to which Kōrin and Kenzan managed to merge the media of ink and ceramics. Evidently, Kōrin quoted the visual features of his ink paintings in these sabi-e.

Although the cintamani painting was produced after Kōrin’s return from Edo, he made a similar piece that is dated to 1699, revealing that such painting practices were an established facet of his oeuvre (Fig. 4.37). The whereabouts of this work are unknown and we may only judge from an auction catalogue image. Although the composition is more or less identical, Kōrin’s brushwork in the 1699 and 1710 pieces differs slightly. The 1710 work is closer in style to his sabi-e paintings, while the 1699 work naturally resembles his earlier paintings. Both pieces subtly show how Kōrin moved from a straightforward, steady painting style to the eclectic, technique-heavy visual language that he transferred to his sabi-e. Eventually, towards the end of

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65 The dish depicting bamboo at the Idemitsu Museum is signed “Kōrin,” together with the “kotobuki” cypher. The Nezu dish with plum blossoms is signed with “Jakumei Kōrin” and also includes that cypher, just as in the Fukurokuju dish at the MOA Museum.

66 The piece bears the date of 1699/01/02.

67 The work is published in an auction catalogue that accompanied the sale of parts of the estate of the Aoji family, held by the Tokyo Bijutsu Club in March 1920, p. 107.
his life, the concepts of sabi-e and quickly brushed ink paintings assumed a unity in Kōrin’s oeuvre.

The idiosyncratic quality of Kōrin’s sabi-e becomes apparent when contrasted with those attributed to Kenzan. The potter constructed a controlled pictorial language that had clearly defined points of reference. Kenzan’s works in subject matter and style put much less emphasis on a likeness to spontaneous paintings than the sabi-e by Kōrin. Works like a Kenzan dish with a landscape setting at the Nezu Museum show elements—namely the boats and figures, as well as the conspicuous texture strokes used to render the mountains—found in model books like Hasshu gafu (Genealogy of Eight Types of Painting; Fig. 4.38; 4.39). The manual was originally published in China and reprinted in Japan in 1672, where it was likely accessed by the sinophile Kenzan.

The practice of using printed books for paintings on ceramics was an established tradition by Kenzan’s time. The potter employed the same, bookish strategy in his 1702 set of the twelve months mentioned earlier, where the images seem to refer in part to the print publication Shigi no hanegaki (Fluttering of a Snipe’s Wing; 1691; Fig. 4.40 and 4.41). Kenzan’s inscribed poems are identical with the printed publication. The dishes—claiming Kenzan’s authorship though it is far from certain whether Kenzan himself was the painter—diverge from sabi-e by Kōrin. They

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Richard Wilson also suggested the possibility that Kenzan may have referred to Hasshu gafu for some of his sabi-e. See Wilson and Ogasawara, “Kenzan yaki: gasan yōshiki to shutten no subete,” 8.

59 Shigi no hanegaki includes an array of different waka sequences, such as the Thirty-Six Poet Immortals and the poems of the twelve months after Teika, among others. Kōrin’s personal notes in the Konishi Archives contain direct copies of the Teika poems contained in Shigi no hanegaki. The proximity of Kenzan’s poetic inscriptions on the reverse of the MOA Museum set of twelve dishes, dated to 1702, suggests that the brothers had access to a copy around that time.
do so in a way that elucidates how Kenzan consciously created a clearly defined niche among his ware’s repertoire for the particular abbreviated painting style of his brother.

Scholars have engaged in an intense discussion about whether the paintings on Kenzan’s wares, such as the set with images of twelve months after Teika and other pieces with similarly technically demanding compositions were painted by Kenzan himself or by an outsourced, professional painter. For instance, Nishimoto Shūko has suggested that Kenzan lacked professional training in painting, a personal disadvantage that he turned into a virtue by emphasizing relatively crude brushwork and emphatically simple compositions. In this context, Nishimoto has pointed out how Kenzan’s early twelve months set is painted too professionally to be by Kenzan’s own hand. Kenzan’s teacher Ninsei, too, employed Kano painters to adorn his ceramics with paintings.70

Kenzan-ware sabi-e can be divided into two categories: composite pictures by anonymous secondary painters, whom Kenzan may have employed on a contract basis to work for his atelier, and the succinct, prominently signed images that Kōrin introduced. The fact that many of the more complex paintings on Kenzan ware mostly lack a signature, though Kenzan always signed his inscriptions on ceramics in a prominent fashion, tells us that these works may hail from painters other than Kenzan himself. None of Kenzan’s workshop painters signed their sabi-e. The single known painter among Kenzan ware is an obscure figure named Watanabe Soshin, whose name Kenzan himself recorded on the back of the painter’s sole surviving work.71


71 The identity of Watanabe Soshin is unclear, but one theory maintains that he was the painter Watanabe Shikō, who adapted Kōrin’s style, among others. See, for instance, Mitsuoka Tadanari, Kenzan, Tōki zenshū 7 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1958), 5.
Kōrin, on the other hand, never failed to add his signature to his sabi-e. Only Kōrin was established and virtuosic enough to qualify for adding his name directly on his sabi-e.

Kōrin also painted a few complex sabi-e, such as on a brazier at the Yamato Bunkakan, whose composition and brushwork are reminiscent of Kenzan’s early sencha bowl (Fig. 4.42). However, the majority of Kōrin’s sabi-e, especially those on square dishes, embrace simple motifs and less technically demanding pictures that consisted of established ink painting subjects. These included auspicious motifs and other subjects that were well known and easily recognizable. Kōrin used the ceramic medium like he used his ink paintings, as an expression of his artistic dexterity. Kōrin’s nimble brushwork is evident throughout the palette of his sabi-e at a level that exceeds those attributed to his brother.

While Kenzan introduced Kōrin to sabi-e, the potter eventually embraced Kōrin’s distinctive style as part of his brand. Later Kenzan ware, produced after Kōrin’s death, incorporated the rapid brushwork and subject matters of Kōrin’s sabi-e. By merging the style of his brother with his own, Kenzan’s brand absorbed Kōrin’s free-spirited brushwork into its carefully orchestrated pictorial language. A set of ten dishes in a private collection in Japan, probably dating to the second half of Kenzan’s Nijō Chōjiyamachi kiln period, conflates Kōrin and Kenzan’s distinctive modes into a bricolage of the possibilities of sabi-e (Fig. 4.43). The set unites the most straightforward features of both brothers’ sabi-e, signaling how Kōrin’s professed spontaneity eventually became part of a calculated amalgam of Kenzan ware’s visual expression.

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72 Kenzan maintained a rented kiln in the Kyoto area of Nijō Chōjiyamachi from 1712. He gave up the kiln when he left for Edo around 1731.
Kenzan eventually absorbed the visual hallmarks of Kōrin’s sabi-e into his own work. This way, the striking resemblance of his brother’s sabi-e carried on beyond his death and became an established feature of later Kenzan ware. A renowned calligrapher, Kenzan added inscriptions that dovetailed with the content of the pictures in most of Kōrin’s sabi-e. The following section will discuss how Kenzan’s referential approach to art-making provides further evidence that the Ogata brothers employed a calculated imagery of ink paintings in their sabi-e.

Writing and Pictures

We have seen how Kōrin and Kenzan may have devised their sabi-e as semblances of spontaneously brushed works in ink. In addition, the conspicuous presence of Kenzan’s calligraphy establishes another calculated allusion to ink paintings in the collaboration of the Ogata brothers. They do so by combining Kenzan’s writing with Kōrin’s paintings, a result that is reminiscent of medieval hanging scrolls, or shigajiku. These composite works customarily combine an ink painting with calligraphic inscriptions that are triggered by a response to the picture (Fig. 4.44). Although the majority of painted dishes by Kōrin and Kenzan refer to shikishi in their physical format, the choice of monochrome sabi-e stirs unequivocal associations with ink paintings. Here, the brothers condensed another key genre of Japanese art, shigajiku, into the square shape of shikishi. Kōrin and Kenzan effectively concocted a new form of artistic expression that merged the format and seriality of shikishi with the monochromatic style of shigajiku.

Shigajiku linked paintings with poetic inscriptions that were composed in response to the picture and inscribed above it. In this way, the format represents the quintessence of the
communicative interaction between words and images. Following this compositional concept, Kenzan inscribed Kōrin’s sabi-e with poetic references to the picture in the same pictorial space. In their choice of medieval precedents, the brothers adhered to a major aspect of Kōrin’s artistic practice. Kōrin had attempted a reformulation of the shigajiku format already in his earliest works, namely Hotei Playing Kemari, dating to the 1690s.\(^73\) In the picture, he replaced the inscription that usually towered above the painting with a football, whimsically deconstructing the lofty medieval format. The shigajiku originated during the Muromachi period, which formed the foundations for much of Kōrin’s ink aesthetic. Kōrin and Kenzan’s choice of this idiosyncratic medieval format in their ceramic dishes shows the brothers’ intention to create a new type of ceramic works. In their quest for innovative visual features, they relied on Kōrin’s devotion towards the medieval past and its derivatives. Market considerations played another role here.

By the time that Kōrin and Kenzan began to collaborate, Kenzan ware had already assumed a brand-like quality.\(^74\) This is best illustrated by the prominent “Kenzan” 乾山 and “Shinsei” 深省 signatures that the potter added next to his inscriptions. Following the fashion of his time, Kenzan sought to portray himself as a noble recluse, a practice that emerged during the medieval period and which gained widespread momentum in early modern times.\(^75\) In 1689, Kenzan moved into his hermitage Shūseidō outside of Ninnaji, in the northwestern outskirts of

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\(^73\) On Kōrin’s earliest ink paintings, see Chapter One.


In doing so, he followed in the footsteps of his maternal ancestor Hon’ami Kōetsu, who moved from Kyoto to rural Takagamine to the northwest of the capital, making sure to be close enough to the city for convenience but still far enough to qualify as a recluse. The same was true for the site of Kenzan’s Narutaki kiln, which he established at some distance from Ninnaji. The reference to shigajiku and Kenzan’s choice of exotic poems, albeit from an easily accessible source, were part of his attempts to endow Kenzan ware with the alternative, intellectual aura of medieval interaction between word and pictures.

Kenzan’s inscriptions express his self-stylized recluse image and he made sure to convey that persona in a straightforward manner. In Kenzan’s inscription on the reverse of his dish with Kōrin’s painting of Huang Tingjian, for example, Kenzan labels himself as a “recluse potter” (tōin; Fig. 4.45). Although the recto of the dish lacks a poetic inscription, the verso signature performs a similar function. Kenzan reaffirms both his Kyoto identity and his guise of a recluse. It illustrates that Kōrin and Kenzan associated sabi-e with the image of a gentleman potter, an art form that Hon’ami Kōetsu helped elevate to a noble craft. Kenzan’s signature on the Huang Tingjian dish represents a contradictory action: it is a brand name—Kenzan frequently employed similarly hefty wording in other works—and an attempt at conveying the untroubled air of a man who has forsaken worldly affairs. The poems Kenzan added alongside Kōrin’s pictures are part of this attempt to carefully engineer the effect of the brother’s collaboration.

At first sight, the ceramic dishes by Kōrin and Kenzan suggest an unrehearsed, communicative interaction between the inscriptions and their accompanying paintings. Adhering

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76 Kenzan’s contemporary Gettan Dōchō records his 1690 visit to the Shūseidō, drawing the picture of a paradisiacal place with a lush garden and all amenities, like a study, extensive library, and other perks that a scholar would need. Tanaka, “Shūseidō-ki,” 324–326.
to the seemingly free-spirited nature of the *sabi-e* by Kōrin, Kenzan sought to enhance this image via a combination of writing and painting that was intended to convey spontaneity. Calligraphy, a revered form of individual expression, provided an ideal means to communicate this unrehearsed flavor. The abbreviated style of the pictures and the expressive, individualized calligraphy camouflaged the meticulous process that formed the backdrop of Kōrin and Kenzan’s *sabi-e*. Kenzan’s calligraphy that accompanies Kōrin’s *sabi-e* was in fact the product of a carefully selected, repetitive references that only mimicked an air of spontaneity.

It is unknown with whom Kenzan studied calligraphy, but he expressed a personal approach to this gentlemanly art from a young age. In a document dated to 1687, where Kenzan accepted the will of his father Sōken, his calligraphy already diverged from that of his father and two brothers (Fig. 4.46). Contrary to Kenzan, Ogata family members largely followed the writing style of their famous ancestor Köetsu.77 Yet, in the thick, stubby horizontal strokes, Kenzan’s writing of 1687 showed early signs of the bold calligraphy that later would become his trademark. Kenzan’s enthusiasm for calligraphy led Sōken to bequeath him a calligraphy collection that contained a piece attributed to the famous early seventeenth-century Zen priest Köetsu Sōgan (1574–1643).78 Later, Kenzan continued to develop a more and more distinctive calligraphic style, working out his characteristic round and playful forms.

In their *sabi-e*, Kōrin and Kenzan included an outstanding number of motifs like plums, bamboo, and chrysanthemums. The brothers also had a preference for the luminaries of Chinese history, such as the Song-dynasty statesman and calligrapher Huang Tingjian, and continental

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77 Richard Wilson and Ogasawara Saeko have identified traces of Zen-related calligraphy in Kenzan’s early calligraphy, such as Kenzan could have learned from Ōbaku monks like Dokushō Seien and Getten Dōchō. See their *Ogata Kenzan*, 148–150.

78 Appendix Document I / 4.
landscapes. These subjects were often found in ink painting, an explanation for the brothers’ choice of a monochromatic visual language in their ceramics. The strange appearance of sabi-e that drew from a combination of ink paintings, Cizhou ceramics, and Chinese poetry reflected the fascination with exotic objects in early modern Japan. Kenzan was affected by continental culture. In light of the affinity for foreign curiosities that helped give shape to Kōrin and Kenzan’s sabi-e, it is no surprise that they chose further to cultivate the medium’s intellectual evocations by adding Chinese poems. The poems served to imbue the sabi-e with a continental feel.

However, the brothers did not compose these verses themselves. As his literary sources, Kenzan referred to a limited array of reprints of Chinese poetry anthologies that had entered Japan in the seventeenth century and garnered popularity among early modern cultural circles. As Richard Wilson has proven, the majority of the poems Kenzan inscribed on vessels with sabi-e hail from Yuanji shixue huofa quanshu (J. Enki shigaku kappō zensho, hereafter Enki kappō; Complete Perfect Means for Composing Poetry) a Ming-dynasty reference lexicon for lyrical composition, compiled by the poet and literary historian Wang Shizhen (1526–1590).79

More than a dozen books with a similarly encyclopedic character authored by Wang Shizhen were republished in Japan during the early modern period, attesting to the importance of his role in educated circles there. Men of learning, like Kenzan, used such publications as an easy guide to exotic cultural features in order to make them part of their own identities. Japanese reprints provided convenient points of reference supplied by local publishers. Enki kappō was

79 Richard Wilson and Ogasawara Saeko have uncovered how a large amount of the poems inscribed by Kenzan on his pottery refers to complete poems or fragments of poems in Enki kappō. See their “Kenzan yaki: gasan yōshiki to shutten no subete,” Kokusai kurisutokyo daigaku gakuhō jinbin kagaku kenkyū 35 (March 2004): 1–47.
first printed in Japan in 1656 with various subsequent editions that followed.\(^{80}\) Apparently, Kenzan had access to a copy and made extensive use of it. The inscription in the upper right-hand corner of Kōrin and Kenzan’s dish with a sabi-e picture of plum blossoms reads:

Shame follows all things, for they thrive and wither,
But this is the force that creates us humans.
Written by Kenzan Shinsei
(three seals Kenzan; Shōko; Tōin)

耻隨萬物跡枯榮
別借人間造化成
乾山深省書
(three seals 乾山 尚古 陶隠)

The verse is part of a larger poem contained in a section of Enki kappō entitled “Plums in Painting” (gabai).\(^{81}\) As the name suggests, this part of the book refers specifically to poems suitable for pictures of plum blossoms. Its introductory paragraph speaks of the ethereal, meditative quality of old plum trees in ink. Following that, the entry explores common associations of plum blossoms, such as links with spring winds, frost, and the whiteness of its flowers versus the darkness of night.\(^{82}\)

Kenzan’s choice of the two-line excerpt of a poem from this section reflects his bookish approach to poetry and art-making in general that contrasts with his brother’s intuitive style. The potter used the same strategy in other works. We have seen how Kenzan probably also took the poems inscribed on the reverse of his 1702 set of dishes depicting Teika’s twelve months from a printed poetry compendium, Shigi no hanegaki. Thus, it was not just with his sabi-e designs that

\(^{80}\) Ibid., 2–5.

\(^{81}\) Ibid., 26.

\(^{82}\) I am referring here to a copy of Enki kappō at Waseda University Library, published between 1672 and 1673.
Kenzan referred to a poetic lexicon in order to create a piece of art. However, *Enki kappō* provided more concrete advice than *Shigi no hanegaki*, even prescribing the painting genre that fit the poem: ink. Accordingly, Kenzan employed the encyclopedia almost like a guide to writing and painting. By choosing *sabi-e* to accompany the poem, Kōrin and Kenzan adhered to the painting genre suggested by *Enki kappō*.

Kenzan approached other inscriptions in the same way. His short verse on the *sabi-e* dish with Kōrin’s painting of bamboo is taken from a section entitled “New Bamboo” (*shinchiku*) in the twenty-second volume of *Enki kappō*.83

> Beautifully purified by rain showers,
> the bamboo’s fragrance flows faintly in the wind.
> Written by Kenzan Tōin Shinsei
> (three seals Kenzan; Shōko; Tōin)

雨洗娟々浄
風吹細々香
乾山陶隠深省書

*(three seals 乾山 尚古 陶隱)*

With this and other works, Kenzan followed a set pattern by which he would take a painting subject and then search for the appropriate poetic reference in *Enki kappō* or a similar lexicon. Repetition was common. In fact, the inscription on the bamboo dish reappears in other works of the same subject. For example, Kenzan later recycled the verse for use in two of the rectangular dishes in his set of ten discussed earlier (Fig. 4.47). The set post-dates Kenzan’s collaboration with Kōrin, and it exemplifies how the pairing of Kōrin’s painting style and Kenzan’s habits of making reference to Chinese poetry became a fixed mechanism in Kenzan ware.

83 Wilson and Ogasawara, “Kenzan yaki,” 27.
Kenzan also repeated this practice with several dishes depicting Fukurokuju. Two examples, one at the MOA Museum and another at the Fujita Museum (Fig. 4.48; 4.49), bear the same inscription as a third dish of the same subject at the Brooklyn Museum (Fig. 4.50).

The first to penetrate the great confusion,  
the Polar Star has gathered the light.  
Saying that Heaven and Earth have existed long  
the star becomes everlasting [the God of Longevity].  
Humbly written by Kenzan Shinsei  
(three seals Kenzan; Shōko; Tōin)

Especially in the case of the Fukurokuju motif, the repeated inscription created duplications among a body of works that otherwise appears unpremeditated. Once a poem was deemed suitable, it was employed repeatedly, a process that contrasted with the unrehearsed air of Kōrin’s sabi-e paintings.

Visual features like the individualistic impression of Kenzan’s calligraphy at least on the surface endowed the sabi-e collaborations of Kōrin and Kenzan with the impromptu appeal of shigajiku. Kenzan’s inscription, in combination with the abbreviated pictures by Kōrin equipped each painting with an unrehearsed mien, as if painting and calligraphy had been conceived in an impromptu interaction on the spot. The visual aspects of the sabi-e and their inscriptions, however, conceal their meticulously engineered background.

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84 I thank Amanda Tsao for her help in translating this poem.
The calculated appearance of Kōrin and Kenzan’s sabi-e is manifest in a small scroll by Kōrin where he painted several motifs for ceramic paintings (Fig. 4.51). Kōrin made the preparatory drawings exclusively in ink and their subjects—horses, Hotei, plum blossoms, and pines—largely represent traditional motifs of ink paintings. Intended as a reference for Kenzan ware tea bowls, Kōrin imbued the ink images with the nonchalantness that is typical of the painter’s sabi-e. The scroll reaffirms the importance of such traditional subjects of ink paintings as the lucky gods, bamboo, and plums in Kōrin and Kenzan’s effort to connect ink and sabi-e. In fact, these subjects form an important part of Kōrin’s oeuvre and he made numerous ink paintings of each. Perusing the images, we find the same idiosyncrasies that Kōrin applied to his paintings and sabi-e alike. Their swift execution, as if drawn in a spontaneous gesture, shows the visual effects that Kōrin employed in his ink paintings and which he attempted to recreate in his sabi-e.

The sketches illustrate that these seemingly carefree images on ceramic surfaces and the transfer of the physical peculiarities of ink to sabi-e were the result of meticulous planning. For instance, Kōrin used the same flying white, where the hand is slowly lifted to make visible the individual hairs of the brush, suggesting speed and virtuosity while retaining steady command of the brush; the technique appears in the Hotei figures contained in his sketches in very much the same way as in many of his ink paintings and sabi-e of the subject.

The sketches provided Kenzan with reference material for subjects, brushwork, and forms—three aspects that would be crucial in the potter’s later sabi-e oeuvre where he relied heavily on Kōrin as his model. Kōrin’s characteristic plum blossoms, for instance, came to occupy a firm position in Kenzan ware. The sketches suggest that Kenzan’s turn to his brother’s
artistic peculiarities was an operation begun on mutual agreement and collaboration when Kōrin was still alive. The images also show how the feeling of spontaneity in Kōrin and Kenzan’s teamwork was choreographed and evidently relied on consultation and premeditation.

Pseudonyms like “Jakumei” or “Seisei” which Kōrin used in his ink paintings and sabi-e alike and which Kenzan seems to have suggested to his brother provide further evidence of the Ogata brothers’ close connection and their collaboration in crafting a distinctive character for their joint ceramic works. The names were overtly lyrical and originated from the mindset of idealizing the domestic medieval and antique Chinese traits that formed the backbone of Kenzan’s own identity. Preserved in a list in Kenzan’s handwriting as part of the Konishi Archives, the set of aliases for his brother were possibly intended to foster the brand quality of the brothers’ artworks by the early 1710s and after.

In their sabi-e the brothers worked hard to infuse ceramics with the aesthetics of unrehearsed ink plays. Their efforts ranged from stylistic quotes of Kōrin’s skillful mastery of ink and the medieval shigajiku format to Kenzan’s persona as a recluse potter and his incorporation of Kōrin as part of Kenzan ware’s brand identity. The sabi-e medium provided the brothers with a means to craft the artistic identity of a quintessential early modern man of culture by drawing from traditions of medieval ink painting and foreign features in subject matter and poetic inscriptions. Through this carefully engineered process, Kōrin and Kenzan succeeded in creating faithful approximations of ink paintings in the ceramic medium.

In popular reception, Kōrin came to be associated with a free-handed, virtuoso brushwork in ink. He gained recognition for his expertise in ink modes, which he emphatically deployed in
his sabi-e. Conspicuously labeled as black pictures and painted onto ceramic surfaces that were meant to resemble paper white, sabi-e emulate the aesthetic of ink paintings. In the case of Kōrin, this trend had its earliest manifestation when he purportedly brushed an ink painting onto a white satin kimono.85 Kōrin’s sabi-e represent a similar chromatic pairing of black and white. Their contemporary context of production expands the meaning of Kōrin’s choices of colors and materials.

Kōrin painted plum branches, auspicious figures, and other subject matter in sabi-e—all of them ubiquitous in Edo period visual culture. They provided him with a secure ground in which to navigate visual experiments, in this case transferring the modal intricacies of ink paintings to the alien medium of ceramics. When pairing Kōrin’s sabi-e of a plum tree and Fukurokuju with his Hotei Playing Kemari and paintings by medieval luminaries like Sesson we recognize the sabi-e’s stylistic debt to different stages of Kōrin’s training in ink. In the process, the distinction between paper and ceramic surfaces, between ink and sabi-e, blurs.

That being said, sabi-e were not interchangeable with ink paintings. They shared the monochrome appearance and subject matter typical for ink paintings, making them visual semblances that effectively expanded the scope of ink to ceramics. The appellation “black paintings” suggests that such works adhered to a chromatic aesthetic that is akin to ink, the quintessential black color in traditional East Asian painting. This way, sabi-e were treated as simulacra of ink and belong to a separate, if connected, category. They are different from ink paintings in that the non-absorbent ceramic veneer constraints pooling and prevents the osmotic

85 The story is retold in the popular novel Kōshoku fumi denju of 1699, Kōrin’s earliest mention in literature. Yoshida, Kōshoku fumi denju, 324.
brush technique called *tarashikomi*, often associated with Kōrin. *Sabi-e* also do not allow for much gradation in hues.

Thus, paintings in iron oxide happened in approximation of ink. Attempts were made to conceal their respective idiosyncrasies, yet they were not negated. This process broadened ink’s spectrum to include a wider range of approximations, informed by the aesthetic of ink as a central, common point of reference. Ink paintings set the subject and stylistic standard for *sabi-e*, textile paintings, and other media, such as gold and silver pigments. This standard provided a shared threshold from which to expand and to incorporate features of each respective medium.
Conclusion

Kōrin passed away in 1716, exactly three hundred years before this dissertation was written. Following the Japanese count, in 2015, a surge of exhibitions and lectures sought to commemorate this seminal painter, along with artists in his orbit. Although history has forgotten countless painters, Kōrin never suffered such a fate. Every centennial of his death has been celebrated by admirers. Beginning with Sakai Hōitsu and his commemorative exhibition of 1815, the tradition continued with a 1915 memorial display at Tokyo’s Mitsukoshi department store that paired, for the first time, Kōrin’s masterpieces *Irises* and *Red and White Plum Blossoms*. In 2015, the Nezu Museum, Tokyo, and the MOA Museum, Atami, held two joint exhibitions in Kōrin’s honor that reunited *Irises* and *Red and White Plum Blossoms* again after a hundred years.¹

This long-standing devotion is the result of Kōrin’s continuous presence in art historical scholarship throughout the Edo period. Early modern posterity viewed Kōrin through a kaleidoscopic lens, where he assumed a variety of posthumous personae. In the years before his death, for example, Kōrin’s name came to be linked with the world of early modern fashion as so-called “Kōrin patterns” began to emerge. Textile designers seem to have created such patterns on the basis of Kōrin’s actual works, evincing the broad appeal that the painter garnered among his contemporaries. *Hinagata bon*, textile patterncatalogues intended for consumers, designers, and dyers, came to include a plethora of Kōrin patterns, especially around the mid- to late eighteenth century, a phenomenon that helped instigate an exponential interest in Kōrin’s oeuvre

¹ The 1915 Mitsukoshi exhibition was the first to display both pairs together. The centennial exhibitions follow the traditional Japanese count, which recognizes 1715 as the year of Kōrin’s death.
among artists and the general public. This attention catapulted Kōrin’s works from the private realm to the limelight of early modern commodities.

In spite of his popular reception as an artist of textiles and lacquer, Kōrin was a man of the brush, the medium whose faculties he extended towards a variety of other media. The painter Kōrin affected artists in various ways, but it was above all his tarashikomi that entered the paintings of later masters. Although the technique was devised by Tawaraya Sōtatsu in the early seventeenth century, artists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries mainly associated it with Kōrin. Fukae Roshū (1699–1757), a painter said to have studied under Kōrin, and Tatebayashi Kagei (dates unknown), who apprenticed with Kenzan, used copious amounts of tarashikomi in their works. Also Sakai Hōitsu, arguably the greatest champion of Kōrin’s style, absorbed the technique through studying the late painter’s oeuvre. Like Kōrin, these artists largely relied on a combination of ink and malachite green to create seemingly fluid surfaces of tree bark, while also using tarashikomi for different other expressions, such as the leaves of plants and the surface of garments.

Nakamura Hōchū (d. 1819) was similar to Kagei in that he made tarashikomi the core element of his painting style. In his Kōrin gafu (Genealogy of Kōrin’s Paintings) of 1802, the painter presents his interpretation of Kōrin in a combination of print and hand-colored elements. The subjects and their rendering is less a faithful reproduction than a free-spirited homage to Kōrin by way of Hōchū’s own imagination. With his abundant use of tarashikomi in a publication that carries Kōrin’s name, Kōrin gafu symbolizes the role of the technique as an integral part of the artist’s afterlife. Hōchū’s publication also marks a symbiosis of the two major

avenues of Kōrin’s posthumous reception. The plump, round forms in Kōrin gafu are reminiscent of the hinagata patterns that Kōrin was associated with already during his lifetime. Hōchū, a painter, seems to have discovered Kōrin through a combination of the artist’s popular reception and the study of his actual paintings. By doing so, Hōchū was one of the first artists to bring together the two sides of Kōrin’s posthumous reception—popular and esoteric—that determine the painter’s afterlife to this day.

In the modern era, scholars were at pains to define Kōrin and the potpourri of artists who followed in his footsteps. The versatility of these painters left art historians with a dilemma. They struggled to categorize Kōrin and related painters, a challenge that resembled that of early modern commentators who tried to make sense of Kōrin’s work. Hōitsu’s espousal of Kōrin and the popularity of the painter from the late nineteenth century onward culminated in the formation of the modern umbrella term “Rinpa” 琳派, or the “School of [Kō]rin.” By establishing what he called the “Ogata-ryū” (Ogata style), Hōitsu laid the early foundations for this focus on Kōrin as the core of an artificially constructed lineage of artists. He formulated this definition in his Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu of 1813 and 1815, two publications that had Kōrin at their center and included artists like Tawaraya Sōtatsu, Kenzan, Fukae Roshū, Tatebayashi Kagei, and Watanabe Shikō as part of the “Ogata-ryū.” In terms of chronology, Hōitsu placed Kōrin in the middle of this succession of artists and not, as such genealogies usually demanded, at its beginning. Sōtatsu preceded Kōrin’s artistic activities by half a decade. Yet, to Hōitsu, Kōrin occupied a more defining role than Sōtatsu, although he provided much of the foundation on which Kōrin built his

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3 Ryū is variously translated as “style” or “school.” I have chosen “style” as its English equivalent, in order to distinguish between the premodern ryū and the modern usage of ha (school).

4 See Tamamushi, Ikitsuzukeru Kōrin, 27–36.
style. The biographer of painters Asaoka Kunisada (1800–1856) in his *Koga bikō* (Thoughts on Old Paintings; begun in 1850), on the other hand, prioritized Hon’ami Kōetsu (by whom no paintings survive) and included Kōrin, alongside Hōitsu, in a “Kōetsu-ryū” (Kōetsu style).

Amidst the high value that Kōrin had gained abroad, Japanese scholars in the late nineteenth century began to focus increasingly on the artist. Tamamushi Satoko has illustrated how, in a series of lectures on Japanese art, held between 1890 and 1893, Okakura Tenshin (1862–1913) introduced a “School of Kōrin” (*Kōrin no ippa*), where Kōrin was placed at the center of a group of artists before (Sōtatsu, Kōetsu, and Hon’ami Kōho, Kōetsu’s grandson) and after him (Kenzan). While Hōitsu laid the conceptual groundwork for the development of Rinpa, Tenshin established the forerunner of its nomenclature. In 1901, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce published a Japanese-language translation of *Histoire de l’Art du Japon*, originally prepared in French for the Paris Exposition of 1900. The publication takes up Tenshin’s “Kōrin no ippa” and transforms it into “Kōrin-ha,” a term with essentially the same meaning. “Kōrin-ha” included Sōtatsu, Kōrin, Kenzan, Shikō, Kagei, Hōitsu, and the Hōitsu pupils Suzuki Kiitsu and Ikeda Koson. Also in 1901, Yokoi Tokifuyu’s (1860–1906) *Nihon kaigashi* (History of Japanese Painting) expanded the scope of “Kōrin-ha” by adding Tawaraya

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5 The concept of a “Kōetsu style” or “Kōetsu school” lived on into the modern era. Sometimes the “Kōrin school” and the “Kōetsu school” were conflated; Ernest Fenollosa, for example, uses the label “Kōrin school,” but argued that it should be named after “Koyetsu” instead. See Asaoka, *Zōtei Koga bikō*, 1525–1580 (on Kōrin, see pp. 1541–1556) and Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, 496.


7 The book was written by the art dealer Hayashi Tadamasa (1853–1906) and the government official Kuki Ryūichi (1852–1931).

8 Tamamushi has also shown how the term “Kōrin-ha” existed already by 1882, when the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce used it in an exhibition record in reference to Meiji era followers of Hōitsu and Kōrin’s style. See Ibid., 61.
Sōri (d. ca. 1782) and Hōitsu’s pupil Sakai Ōho (1808–1841). It seems that by the early 1900s, the term “Kōrin-ha” was a firmly established category of Japanese art. The division of Japanese history and art in clearly defined periods and schools was expedited by Western scholarship. But the concept of a “Kōrin school” (and other schools, such as the Kano and Tosa) dates back to the early modern era and artists like Hōitsu, who provided early points of reference for categorizing Kōrin.

From the early 1900s, the development toward coining the moniker Rinpa accelerated. Between 1903 and 1906, the five-volume publication Kōrin-ha gashū (Masterpieces from the Kōrin School) served to solidify the idea of a “Kōrin-ha,” albeit without including Sōtatsu and Kōetsu. Another art historical anthology, Tōyō bijutsu taikan (Survey of East Asian Art) of 1909, reframes Kōetsu as the beginning of the “Kōrin-ha.” Arguably the first recorded use of Rinpa appears in a 1915 essay on Kōrin and artists with a stylistic relationship to him. Although different appellations were in use during the prewar period, Rinpa gradually assumed a prominent role in defining the succession of artists from Sōtatsu and Kōrin to Edo painters like Hōitsu, Kiitsu, and Koson. After the Second World War, Rinpa became the common label for this group of artists. Tamamushi identifies the series Genshoku Nihon no bijutsu (Illustrated [History of] Japanese

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9 Ibid., 62.
10 Ibid., 64–66.
11 Ibid., 71–72.
12 Tamamushi has suggested that Takahashi may have been influenced by the writings of Yokoi Tokifuyu, who used the term “Rin-pū” 琳風 ([Kō]rin style) in his 1906 publication Dainippon nōsho den. See Ibid., 111–112.
Art), published in the 1960s, as the turning point when Rinpa became the universal name for the lineage of artists from Sōtatsu to nineteenth-century Edo painters like Hōitsu.\textsuperscript{13}

As is the case with most generalizing labels, Rinpa has its drawbacks. It places Kōrin at the center of a lineage of artists who worked in a variety of genres—painting, pottery, lacquer, textiles—and were separated by centuries. Also, there was no direct apprenticeship between Sōtatsu, Kōrin, and Hōitsu as in other schools, such as the Kano. Although scholars sought to compensate such pitfalls by pointing out family relationships between Sōtatsu and Kōetsu, as well as Kōetsu and Kōrin, their connection was less firm than in traditional schools that relied on a system of consanguinity and direct teacher-pupil relationships.\textsuperscript{14} Instead, Rinpa painters were tied together by the force of admiration from one artist to another across time. This illustrates that Rinpa is less a lineage than a loose association of mutual aficionados. The fact, however, that Kōrin was placed at the center of Rinpa speaks of the timeless appeal of his artworks. The way artists from the eighteenth century up to our age absorbed Kōrin’s style allows us to understand the extraordinary force of his art. Few other painters can claim such long-lasting popularity.

Kōrin, who sought to remove himself from the tedium of everyday life, was reinvented as both a private and a public figure. This process began during Kōrin’s own lifetime and was in part determined by himself. Through his artistic creativity and careful considerations of his own time, Kōrin himself built the foundations for his own long-lasting fame. Kōrin’s unparalleled versatility and the visual allure of his artworks ossified his central position in the history of

\textsuperscript{13} See Ibid., 167–182.

\textsuperscript{14} On the possible family connection between Kōetsu and Sōtatsu, see Aimi, “Hon’ami keizu no kōsatsu,” 42–43.
Japanese art. By allowing his works tell their story, this dissertation set out to unveil the circumstances that shaped Kōrin as a person and an artist. They tell us of an artist driven to overcome the traditional confines of painting. By relying on the full choice of genres available to an early modern artist, Kōrin redefined the act of painting and its material definition. This dissertation attempted to identify how Kōrin tested the potentials of painting by exploring new avenues of inspiration and artistic processes across media, a seminal achievement that formed the bedrock for Kōrin’s appeal across three centuries.
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Fig. 3.18 Ogata Kōrin, *Red and White Plum Blossoms*, early 18th century, pair of two-panel folding screens; ink and color on gilded paper, MOA Museum, Atami
Fig. 3.19 Ogata Kōrin, *Nakamura Kuranosuke*, dated 1704, hanging scroll; ink and color on silk, Yamato Bunkakan, Nara
Fig. 3.20 Tawaraya Sōtatsu, *Nishi no mura, from the Tales of Ise*, early 17th century, ink, color, and gold on paper, MOA Museum, Atami
Fig. 3.21 Ogata Kōrin, *Akikonomu*, early 18th century, hanging scroll; ink and color on silk, MOA Museum, Atami
Fig. 3.22 Ogata Kōrin, *Raigō* (detail), late 17th/early 18th century, hanging scroll; ink on paper, Kyoto National Museum (above), and *Nakamura Kuranosuke* (detail; below)
Fig. 3.23 Ogata Kōrin, *Nakamura Kuranosuke* (detail)

Fig. 3.24 Ogata Kōrin, *Red and White Plum Blossoms* (detail left screen)
Fig. 3.25 Tawaraya Sōtatsu (painting) and Ogata Sōken (calligraphy), *Yuku hotaru, from the Tales of Ise*, early 17th century, ink, color, and gold on paper, Private Collection, Japan
Fig. 3.26 Tawaraya Sōtatsu, *Utsu no yama, from the Tales of Ise*, early 17th century, ink and color on paper, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Fig. 3.27 Ogata Kōrin, *Narihira and the Pilgrim*, early 18th century, oval fan; ink and color on paper, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Fig. 3.28 Ogata Kōrin, *Box with Mounted Fans* (detail), late 17th/early 18th century, gilded wooden box; ink and color on paper, Yamato Bunkakan, Nara
Fig. 3.29 Ogata Kōrin, *Box with Mounted Fans* (details)
Fig. 3.30 Ogata Kōrin, *Gods of Wind and Thunder*, early 18th century, two-panel folding screen; ink and color on gilded paper, Tokyo National Museum
Fig. 3.31 Tawaraya Sōtatsu, *Gods of Wind and Thunder*, early 17th century, two-panel folding screen; ink and color on gold, Kenninji, Kyoto
Fig. 3.32 Ogata Kōrin, *Maple and Pine* (detail), early 18th century, six-panel folding screen; ink and color on gilded paper, Tokyo University of the Arts Museum
Fig. 3.33 Tawaraya Sōtatsu, *Maple and Pine* (detail), early 17th century, six-panel folding screen; ink and color on gold, Yamatane Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 3.34 Tawaraya Sōsetsu, *Seasonal Flowers* (right screen), mid-17th century, pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on gold leaf, Nezu Museum, Tokyo

Fig. 3.35 Kitagawa Sōsetsu, *Seasonal Flowers* (right screen), mid- to late 17th century, pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper, Nezu Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 3.36 Ogata Kōrin, *Letter*, late 17th century, hanging scroll; ink on paper, Private Collection, Japan
Fig. 3.37 Ogata Kōrin, *Nakamura Kuranosuke* (detail)

Fig. 3.38 Ogata Kōrin, *Jurōjin* (detail), oval fan; ink and gold on paper, MOA Museum, Atami
Fig. 3.39 Ogata Kōrin, *Plants of the Four Seasons* (detail), dated 1705, handscroll fragment; ink and color on paper, Private Collection, Japan

Fig. 3.40 Ogata Kōrin, *Plants of the Four Seasons* (detail)
Fig. 3.41 Tawaraya Sōtatsu, *Peonies*, early 17th century, hanging scroll; ink on paper, Tokyo National Museum
Fig. 3.42 Ogata Kōrin, *Ground Floor Plan of Shinmachi Residence* (with atelier in upper right), early 18th century, ink on paper, Kyoto National Museum
Fig. 3.43 Ogata Kōrin, *Landscape Sketch after Sesshū*, early 18th century, hanging scroll; ink on paper, Yamato Bunkakan, Nara

Fig. 3.44 Ogata Kōrin, *Azaleas*, early 18th century, hanging scroll; ink and color on silk, Hatakeyama Memorial Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 3.45 Ogata Kōrin, *Huang Tingjian*, early 18th century, hanging scroll; ink and color on silk, Private Collection, Japan
Fig. 3.46 Ogata Kōrin, *Fuyuki kosode*, early 18th century, ink and light color on satin, Tokyo National Museum
Fig. 4.1 *Tea Bowl, called Unohanagaki*, Shino ware, 16th century, Mitsui Memorial Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 4.2 Jar with Decor of Plum Blossoms or Persimmons, Karatsu ware, late 16th/early 17th century, Idemitsu Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 4.3 Dish in the Shape of an Arrow’s Fletching, Oribe ware, early 17th century, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Fig. 4.4 Nonomura Ninsei, *Jar with Decor of Mt. Fuji*, 17th century, Idemitsu Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 4.5 Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, *Dish with Sabi-e of Chrysanthemums*, early 18th century, Yamato Bunkakan, Nara
Fig. 4.6 Ogata Kōrin, *Plum and Bamboo*, early 18th century, two-panel folding screen; ink on gilded paper, Tokyo National Museum
Fig. 4.7 Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, *Dish with Sabi-e of Bamboo*, early 18th century, Idemitsu Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 4.8 Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, *Dish with Sabi-e of Plum Blossoms*, early 18th century, Nezu Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 4.9 *Dish with Sabi-e of Bamboo* (detail)
Fig. 4.10 Plum and Bamboo (details)
Fig. 4.11 *Dish with Sabi-e of Plum Blossoms* (detail)

Fig. 4.12 Nonomura Ninsei, *Ceramic Box in Shape of Bamboo Flute*, 17th century Idemitsu Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 4.13 Ogata Kenzan, *Sencha Tea Bowl with Landscape Design*, early 18th century, Nezu Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 4.14 Nonomura Ninsei, *Tea Bowl with Design of Mt. Fuji*, 17th century, Idemitsu Museum, Tokyo

Fig. 4.15 Ogata Kōrin, *Dream Fuji*, dated 1699, ink on paper, Present location unknown
Fig. 4.16 Nonomura Ninsei, *Tea Bowl*, Goki ware, 17th century, Nezu Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 4.17 Pillow with Scenes from a Popular Drama, late 13th century, Cizhou ware, Cincinnati Art Museum

Fig. 4.18 Pillow with Scenes from a Popular Drama (detail)

Fig. 4.19 Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, Dish with Sabi-e of a Peony (detail)
Fig. 4.20 Ogata Kenzan, *Large Bowl with Peony Arabesque Design in Underglaze Iron Oxide*, dated 1706, Hamamatsu Municipal Museum of Art
Fig. 4.21 Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, *Dish with Sabi-e of Huang Tingjian* (back), early 18th century, Tokyo National Museum

Fig. 4.22 Ogata Kenzan, *Small Dishes with Floral Decor (In Imitation of Delft Ware)*, first half of 18th century, Hōzōzenji, Kyoto
Fig. 4.23 Ogata Kenzan, *Twelve Months After Fujiwara Teika* (seventh month), late 17th century, MOA Museum, Atami
Fig. 4.24 Ogata Kōrin, *Poetic Meanings of the Twelve Months After Teika*, early 18th century, pair of six-panel folding screens; ink and color on silk, Seikadō Bunko Art Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 4.25 Sesson Shūkei, *Qin Gao Riding a Carp*, 16th century, hanging scroll; ink on paper, Kyoto National Museum
Fig. 4.26 Ogata Kōrin, *Qin Gao Riding a Carp*, early 18th century, hanging scroll; ink and color on paper, MOA Museum, Atami
Fig. 4.27 Sesson Shūkei, *Fukurokuju*, 16th century, hanging scroll; ink on paper, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Fig. 4.28 Ogata Kōrin, *Fukurokuju*, early 18th century, hanging scroll; ink, gold, and light color on paper, Private Collection, Japan
Fig. 4.29 Ogata Kōrin, Sōgi, late 17th century, hanging scroll; ink and color on silk, Idemitsu Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 4.30 Ogata Kōrin, *Hotei Playing Kemari*, late 17th century, hanging scroll; ink on paper, Idemitsu Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 4.31 Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, *Dish with Sabi-e of Fukurokuju*, early 18th century, MOA Museum, Atami
Fig. 4.32 Sesson Shūkei, *Dragon and Tiger* (detail left screen), 16th century, pair of six-panel folding screens; ink on paper, Cleveland Museum of Art (top); *Dish with Sabi-e of Bamboo* (detail; bottom)
Fig. 4.33 Dish with Sabi-e of Plum Blossoms (detail)

Fig. 4.34 Sesshū Tōyō, Landscape, 16th century, hanging scroll; ink on paper, Tokyo National Museum
Fig. 4.35 Tawaraya Sōtatsu (painting) and Ogata Sōken (calligraphy), *Yuku hotaru, from the Tales of Ise*, early 17th century, ink, color, and gold on paper, Private Collection, Japan
Fig. 4.36 Ogata Kōrin, *Cintamani Jewel*, dated 1710, hanging scroll; ink on paper, Private Collection, USA

Fig. 4.37 Ogata Kōrin, *Cintamani Jewel*, dated 1699, hanging scroll; ink on paper, Present location unknown
Fig. 4.38 Ogata Kenzan, *Dish with Sabi-e of a Landscape with Figures*, early 18th century, Nezu Museum, Tokyo
Fig. 4.39 Hasshu gafu (details), late 17th century, Waseda University Library, Tokyo
Fig. 4.40 Ogata Kenzan, *Twelve Months After Fujiwara Teika* (Twelfth month), late 17th century, MOA Museum, Atami

Fig. 4.41 *Shigi no hanegaki* (Twelfth month of *Twelve Months After Fujiwara Teika* on the right page), dated 1691, National Diet Library, Tokyo
Fig. 4.42 Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, *Brazier with Sabi-e of a Landscape*, early 18th century, Yamato Bunkakan, Nara
Fig. 4.43 Ogata Kenzan, *Dishes with Sabi-e of Bamboo and Plums* (set of ten), early 18th century, Private Collection, Japan
Fig. 4.44 Inscription by Huyan Jingfu, *Shide (Jittoku)*, Yuan dynasty (13th century), hanging scroll; ink on paper, Tokiwayama Bunko, Tokyo
Fig. 4.45 Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, *Dish with Sabi-e of Huang Tingjian* (front), early 18th century, Tokyo National Museum
Fig. 4.46 Ogata Kenzan, *Letter Accepting His Father’s Bequest*, dated 1687, Kyoto National Museum
Fig. 4.47 Ogata Kenzan, *Dishes with Sabi-e of a Landscape and Chrysanthemums* (set of ten), early 18th century, Private Collection, Japan
Fig. 4.48 Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, *Dish with Sabi-e of Fukurokuju*, early 18th century, MOA Museum, Atami
Fig. 4.49 Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, *Dish with Sabi-e of Fukurokuju*, early 18th century, Fujita Museum, Osaka
Fig. 4.50 Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan, *Dish with Sabi-e of Fukurokuju*, early 18th century, Brooklyn Museum
Fig. 4.51 Ogata Kōrin, *Designs for Tea Bowls* (details), early 18th century, handscroll; ink on paper, Idemitsu Museum, Tokyo
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Appendix: The Konishi Archives

I. Official Correspondence and Other Documents

● Document I / 1 - Will of Ogata Sōken to Kōrin.

Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō (hereafter KKZ), number 58 / 59 (pp. 82–83)

Testament
The family mansion at Yamazato[cho]1 However, excluding Tamonchō and Kōdaichō.2
The mansion at Saikyō. All [my] implements for the Noh theater.
Half of the remaining various implements.
Half of my entire collection of scrolls.
Invoices issued to daimyo, of which [you] shall share half with Gonpei [Kenzan]. This is your
inheritance. Claim your share after consulting about everything well with Gonpei. I know you do
not agree with my intentions [to pass on the leadership of the Kariganeya] to Tōzaburō. It pains
me to exclude the two of you from inheriting [the business], but I am giving him the two
mansions on Nakatachiuri[dōri]3 together with furnishings, money, and business contracts. I
leave it [to you and Gonpei] to find a settlement [for splitting your parts of the inheritance]. So
no one will challenge [the inheritance of] Ichinojō [Kōrin] and Gonpei, I also entrust to Tōzaburō
a copy [of the will] that each of you received. May the buddhas and deities watch over our
ancestors, and may our children and grandchildren hold them dear.
Such is my will.
Jōkyō 1 [1684], fifth month, thirteenth day. Sōken, of the same name (cypher) (seal)

To Ogata Ichinojō

讓状之事
一 山里家屋敷 但多門町高台院町へ拔ヘ有
一 西京屋敷 一能道具一式
一 諸道具見合半分
一 買置申候卷物万半分
一 金銀大名方諸方へ取替置申候分、并手前ニ
有之候分、権平卜其方卜半分ニ分テ可取事、
右之通譲与へ申候、権平卜中能万事
致談合、身上相続仕候様ニ可仕者也、同氏

1 All district locations mentioned in the will are areas in the city of Kyoto.
2 These three properties may originally have been one large complex—all of them are adjacent to each other—of
which Kōrin received the Yamazatocho section.
3 The main residence of the Ogata at Nakatachiuridōri, where the Kariganeya was located.
Testament

In accordance with my will of Jōkyō 1 [1684], on the thirteenth day of the fifth month, I bequeath [part of] my fortune, and various implements and other objects to Ichinojō [Kōrin] and Gonpei [Kenzan], who shall each receive half of them. They may distribute [the inheritance] among themselves.

I also hand over the mansion at Yamazatochō [to Ichinojō]. Last year, I have submitted the [necessary] documentation to the [district elders] of Sanchōmachi.

Jōkyō 4 [1687], first month, twelfth day.

Sōken, of the same name (cypher) (seal)

To Ogata Ichinojō

譲状之事

一 貞享元年甲子五月十三日書置申通、
金銀諸道具端物ノ買置、市丞権平ニ
半分宛譲与申候、配分可被申候、
一 山里町家屋敷渡し申候、三丁町へも先年
書置仕渡し置候、
貞享四年丁卯正月十二日

同姓宗謙（花押）

（印）

尾形市丞へ
Document I / 3 - Kōrin’s claim to Sōken’s will

KKZ 62 (p. 84)

(Envelope)

To Nichi’i Shōnin

Ogata Ichinojō

Kōzen’in

(Document)

One sheet

In accordance with the will issued by my father, Sōken, I shall receive the mansion at Jūraku Yamazatchō, Tamonchō, and Kōdaichō, as well as the mansion at Saikyō. [Part of] his fortune, miscellaneous implements, and all other remaining things shall be split evenly between Gonpei [Kenzan] and myself. I ask you to follow [my father’s will]. I shall not claim any more beyond [the above].

Jōkyō 4 [1687],

eight month, seventeenth day.

Ogata Ichinojō

Koretomi (cypher)

(“Koretomi” seal)

To Nichi’i Shōnin

Kōzen’in

(Envelope)

日意上人様

尾形市丞

興善院様

(Document)

一札之事

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4 Abbot of Kōzen’in and the executor of Ogata Sōken’s inheritance.

5 Kōzen’in was a temple of the Nichiren school of Buddhism, indicating that the Ogata belonged to that faith. The family shared this religious affiliation with their Hon’ami relatives. Kōzen’in played a continuous role in Kōrin’s life during the 1690s, when the artist repeatedly borrowed money from the temple. Kōrin would eventually be buried at Kōzen’in.
Document I / 4 - Kenzan’s claim to Sōken’s will

KKZ 63 (p. 84)

(Envelope)

To Nichi’i Shōnin

Ogata Gonpei

Kōzen’in

(Document)

One sheet

In accordance with the will issued by my father, Sōken, I shall receive the mansion at Muromachi Hanadatechō, the mansion at Takagamine, the calligraphy piece with the Kōgetsu 6 seal, along with all other calligraphy works [in my father’s collection]. His fortune, various implements, and all other remaining pieces shall be split evenly between Ichinojō [Kōrin] and myself. I ask you to follow [my father’s will]. There are no disputed items in the inheritance. Jōkyō 4 [1687],

     eighth month, seventeenth day.          Ogata Gonpei

Koremitsu 7 (seal) (cypher)

To Nichi’i Shōnin

6 Kōgetsu Sōgan (1574–1643).

7 One of Kenzan’s early pseudonyms.
Kōzen’in

(Envelope)

日意上人様
尾形権平
興善院様

(Document)

一札之事
一 老父宗謙書置之通、室町花立町
家屋敷一ヶ所、鷹峯家屋敷一ヶ所、印江月
墨蹟、書蹟一式自分へ被譲与候、金銀
諸道具万事之儀者、市丞と我等と
半分宛ニ立合配分仕、書置之通請
取申候、此已後跡式事ニ付少モ違乱
無之候、為其仍如件、
貞享四年
丁卯八月十七日 尾形権平
惟允（印）（花押）

日意上人様
興善院様

● Document I / 5 - Tōzaburō’s claim to Sōken’s will

KKZ 64 (pp. 84–85)

(Envelope)

To Nichi’i Shōnin
Ogata Tōzaburō
Kōzen’in

(Document)

One sheet
I shall receive [as my share of the] inheritance the business contracts [of the Kariganeya], the two mansions on Nakatachiuri[dōri], as well as furnishings and money. Now that [my father] has passed away, I shall receive without fail the assets and documents [lit. scrolls] of the [family] business. My younger brothers do no dispute the inheritance.
Jōkyō 4 [1687],
eighth month, seventeenth day. Ogata Tōzaburō (seal) (cypher)

To Nichi’i Shōnin
[of] Kōzen’in

(Envelope)

日意上人様
尾形藤三郎
興善院様

(Document)

一札之事
一 老父亲谦存生之时分ち
御所様方御用、中立壳家屋敷
弐軒井家财金银等、最前受
讓ヲ申候、又此度死後之书置之表
金银并呉服類卷物共迄、让与ノ品々
不残请取申候、此已後跡式ニ付両人之
弟共ヘ少も申分無御座候、仍為後日
一札如件、
貞享四年
丁卯八月十七日 尾形藤三郎（印）（花押）
日意上人様
興善院様

● Document I / 6 - Payment of silver to the Sanchōmachi district

KKZ 112 (p. 141)

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8 Not in Kōrin’s handwriting. The note may relate to Documents II / 3 and II / 4, which cover Hosoi Tsune’s lawsuit against Kōrin. Yamane, Konōshi-ke kenkyū, 141.
Confirmation of receipt of silver in Genroku 1 [1688], [Year of the] Earth-Dragon, Last Month, seventeenth day, by Jōjun, district elder of Sanchōmachi.

Receipt of a loan of silver [by Ogata Kōrin]
The total amount is twenty kan\(^9\) silver. The amount has been calculated [using] the most recent counterweight [units].\(^{10}\)
This is to certify the validity of the loan for the amount above. I pledge to return the amount according to the conditions of this invoice.
Genroku 2 [1689], twentieth day, sixth month.
[by] Ogata Ichinojō [Kōrin] (cypher)
[to] Nara Koshirō

In accordance with this postscript, the interest rate of the above amount for the period of nine months and a half, set at ten kan of silver, shall be returned by the last day of the upcoming eleventh month. The remaining ten kan shall be returned by the last day of the eighth month next year.

One sheet
The borrowed amount is twenty kan silver. An invoice for the loan was handed over [to the recipient, Kōrin]. The silver shall be returned according to the conditions of this invoice. Certified and agreed to,

\(^{9}\) One kan equals one thousand monme, with a total to 3.75 kilograms of silver.

\(^{10}\) Referring to the currency reform of 1689.
Sakakibara Toranosuke

預り申銀子之事
合銀子式拾貴目者 今新分銅掛也
右之銀子懸預り申処実正也、何時也共
此手形次第相渡シ可申候、為其仍如件、
元禄弐年巳ノ六月廿日
尾形市丞（花押）
奈良小四郎殿

右之利足月九半、但右之内拾貴目ハ来ル霜月晦日ニ
返弁可申候、残而拾貴目ハ来年ノ八月晦日ニ返弁可仕候、
為其奥書如件、
一札
一 其方銀弐拾貫目預り置、則預り手形老通相渡し置候、
証文之通何成共入用次第ニ銀子相渡シ可申候、猶為念

樫原庚之助様

● Document I / 8 - Invoice

KKZ 84 (pp. 118–119)

Receipt of a loan of silver.
[The loan] amounts to a total of 26 kan 600 me.12
Sakakibara Toranosuke, lord of Murakami [domain], shall name [Kōrin] kuramoto for the
tributary rice shipped [and stored] in Osaka.13 [This document] acts as invoice for the loan and
acts as proof [of the agreement between Kōrin and Toranosuke]. This contract establishes that the
interest of the above amount shall be repaid with the revenue from the sale of next summer’s rice
[harvest].
Genroku 2 [1689], sixth month

11 Sakakibara Masakuni (1675–1726), daimyo of Echigo domain, Murakami province. In 1704, Masakuni was
named lord of Himeji domain, which in 1749 ceded to the control of the Sakai family, one of Kōrin’s main Edo
patrons.
12 One me (or monme) amounts to 3.75 grams of silver.
13 This employment as overseer of Sasakibara Toranosuke’s rice storage facilities in Osaka does not appear in other
surviving documents. It is unclear how much work Kōrin devoted to this position or how much revenue, if any, he
received.
Aizawa Yoshihei
Harada Tarōhei
Arayama Ichimon
Awata Kurazaemon
Kawauchi Sukehei
Kageyama Jihei

Ogata Ichinojō [Kōrin]

From the revenue of the rice harvest, ten kan of the above amount shall be repaid [in rates of] two kan eight hundred me each over the course of five years starting next year [1690] until 1694. [These payments] must be made until the ninth month of every year.

(Reverse side)

[The following witnesses certify the agreement], so that there may not be the smallest difference to the terms stated on the front [of this document].

Harada Ken’emon
Takeda Jūemon
Itō Shihei
Lord Murakami
Nakane Zenjirō
Murakami Yaemon

Seven kan hundred forty-eight monme fifty-one 1690
Seven kan hundred forty-eight monme fifty-one 1691
Seven kan hundred forty-eight monme fifty-one 1692

預り置申敷銀之事
合銀弐拾六貫六百目定
右者榊原虎之助知行所村上、納米大阪へ差登せ候ニ付、
其方へ蔵本申付候、依之為敷銀与、右之銀高騏ニ預り置申候、
所仰実証明白也、来年ノ夏指上候米、時之相場ニ
売立、其代銀を以、右之四敷銀引取勘定可被申候、
証文仍如件、

元禄弐年巳巳月

相沢嘉兵衛
原田太郎兵衛
荒山市右衛門
栗田角左衛門
河内助兵衛
Document I / 9 - Sale of Kōrin’s secondary estate (urayashiki)

KKZ 85 (p. 119)

(Document)

[This document] concerns the final sale of [Ogata Kōrin’s] urayashiki. 
East-West [dimensions] 2.5 ken and 1 sun (ca. 4.57 meters) 
North-South [dimensions] 4.5 ken (ca. 8.18 meters) 
The estate mentioned above is transferred permanently to the person named below [Jihei], for two hundred pieces of silver. I certify the validity of this transaction. The [sale of this] estate received no external objections. If anyone should disagree, they shall seek reconciliation with the signatories [of this document] at once. Should the buyer encounter any difficulties concerning this estate in the future, the above shall act as proof [of the transaction].

Genroku 4 [1691] Buyer Jihei (seal)
End of the eighth month, twenty-eighth day. [District] elder Shichirōhei (seal)
Ogata
Kōrin

(Envelope)

These two sheets shall be taken to and deposited at the Inner Shrine of Yamashiro. This is a copy of the proof of transaction. With this, the transaction is valid and all is settled.

(Text on side of envelope)

Draft for Higashimachi.

(Document)

永代売渡し申裏屋敷之事
西東　　弐間半壱寸
北南　　四間半
右之裏屋敷代銀弐百目ニ永代其方様へ、
売渡し申所実正明白也、此屋敷ニ付外不違乱
申者無御座候、若違乱申者御座候ハハ、判形者共
罷出、急度埒明、其方様へ少しも御難掛申間屋敷候、
為後日仍而如件、
　元禄四年　　売主　次兵衛（印）
　未ノ八月廿八日　　年寄　七郎兵衛（印）
　尾形
　浩臨様

(Envelope)

此二枚ハ町代山の内殿へ取テ可置候
　売効状ノうつし也、是にてよく候よし也、

(Text on side of envelope)

東町ノ案文

14 In this document, Kōrin spells his name 浩臨, while in documents after 1692 or 1693 he uses the characters 光琳, indicating that he changed his choice of characters between 1691 and 1692 / 1693.

15 There are two Higashimachi in Kyoto: one in the neighborhood of Higashiyama and one in Fushimi. Since Yamashiro, to the south-east of Kyoto is mentioned in the same document, Fushimi seems to be the most likely location here. The area lies to southern tip of Kyoto along the Kamo River, and due to its excellent canal and waterway system, it was an important settlement of merchants and sake production.
District dues for [the sale of] Jihei’s urayashiki

Twenty bu one ten monme
Fee for elders one monme silver
Mediation fee one monme silver
Entertainment fee five monme silver
Eboshi one monme silver
Labor [costs] one monme silver
Liquor expenses one monme and five bu silver

Year of the Goat [1691], eighth month, twenty-eighth day.

Please forward the above amounts.

Elder
Shichirōhei (seal)

治兵衛殿裏屋敷之町義
一 二十分壹 拾両
一 年寄銀 銀壹両
一 吹挙銀 銀壹両
一 振舞代 銀五両
一 えほし 銀壹両
一 くいんろう 同壹両
一 酒代 同壹両五分
以上
未ノ八月廿八日

右之通査ニ請取申候

年寄

16 Jihei’s name is spelled differently here, a common inconsistency in early modern documents. The person, however, appears to be the same as in Document I / 9.

17 Traditional head gear, originally associated with the imperial court and worn on official occasions.
Thank you for your letter. We would be very grateful if you could bring the silver quickly. We would like to advance the money for the house today. Therefore, since you have not done so yet, please bring [the amount of silver] as soon as possible and we shall be satisfied. In the meantime, we wish you all the best.

Ninth month, Nineteenth day

This document may be related to fees incurred by the sale of Kōrin's urayashiki in Document I / 9. Although the letter records no year, it probably was authored close in time to that document, that is 1691.
● Document I / 12 - Receipt for loan interest paid to Kōzen’in

KKZ 88 (pp. 120–121)

(Envelope)

Late Year of the Rooster [1693]            Entrusted by Kōzen’in

(Document)

Confirmation of the loan interest for the Year of the Rooster. (seal)
Exactly five payments of a total of 617 monme, four bu, and six rin.

This is to certify the receipt of the above amount.
Genroku 6 [1693]
Year of the Rooster, twelfth month, sixteenth day.  Kōzen’in (seal)

[To] Ogata Kōrin

(Envelope)

西暮 興善院請取也

(Document)

右之年分利銀之覚 （印）
一  己上五口合六百拾七匁四分六リン

尾形光琳老様

---

19 Kōrin spells his name 光琳 here, indicating that he changed the characters from 浩臨 around 1692 or 1693.
• Document I / 13 - Pawning of two swords

KKZ 89 (p. 121)

One sheet
One wakizashi by Seki Naotsuna with one sheath, one Utsu wakizashi with one sheath. The two items are pawned at [a value of] four hundred me silver. By the sixth month in the coming Year of the Rat [1696] the above amount shall be returned to the lender. This document acts as proof that the wakizashi have been received.

Naka [partly illegible] Shōan (?) (seal: “Naka-shi Shōan”)
Genroku 8 [1695]
Year of the Pig, twelfth month, twenty-fourth day.

[To] Ogata Kōrin

一札
一 関直綱賛指一腰擒有、宇津賛指一腰擒有、
以上二腰、銀四百貫物預り置申候、来子ノ六月ニ
元利御返弁之節、右之銀子と引替可申候、為其
賛指預り証文如件、

(章安)

中？？(印 中氏章安)

元禄八年

亥十二月廿四日

緒方光琳老

• Document I / 14 - Receipt of payment to a courtesan by Kōrin

KKZ 92 (pp. 122–123)

---

20 A certain Naotsuna is known as a sword smith of the Nanbokuchō period (1336–1392), however it is unclear whether the maker of Kōrin’s wakizashi was the same person.

21 Kōrin spells his last name 緒方 here. Throughout his life he interchangeably used 尾形, 緒方, and 小形 to write his name.

22 Dated to 1709. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 34.
For your reference
Year of the Ox [1697], Fifth month, Seventh day under witness by Denzaburō

First Thirty monme to Ukihashi from Kōrin
Accompanied by Tachibanaya Shōemon

Second Thirty me received from Kagiya Gen’emon

To Hachimonjiya Kiemon

覚
丑ノ五月七日ニ伝三郎殿ち預り
一 卅々 水橋様 光林様
御つれ 橘屋庄衛門様
一 三拾め 水二ょうけ取申候
錫屋 かきや
源衛門 りん

八文字屋
喜右衛門様

● Document I / 15 - Loan issued to Kōrin and Kenzan by Myōken

KKZ 93 (p. 123)

Total loan of two kanme silver.
Two hundred me of this amount received.
Year of the Ox [1697], twelfth month, eighteenth day.

Myōkenji
Representative (seal)

Ogata Kōrin
Ogata Shinsei

23 A courtesan in Kyoto whom Kōrin allegedly spent three days with upon his return from Edo in 1709. Ibid.

24 Kōrin is recorded as 光林 here. This choice of characters appears frequently in popular hinagata publications referring to textile patterns associated with Kōrin.

25 The Ogata family temple.
元銀弐貫目也
内弐百両儀取申候
丑ノ十二月十八日
妙顕寺
役者中（印）
尾形光琳老
同 深省老

● Document I / 16 - Partial repayment of loan to Myōkenji

KKZ 94 (p. 123)

For reference
From a total loan of two kan silver,
Hundred me silver [were repaid]. Annual interest for the Year of the Tiger [1698]
Part of Kōrin’s [loan].
Ogata Kōrin Myōkenji
Representative (cypher)

覚
元銀弐貫之内

銀百両 寅ノ年年歩銀也
光琳老分也

尾形光琳老 妙顕寺
役者中（花押）

● Document I / 17 - Various fees paid to Myōkenji

KKZ 95 (pp. 123–124)

For your reference
First Seventy me Year of the Earth-Hare [1699], sum for a seven months [period] from the seventh to the last month [of the year].
Amount for interest of one kanme

Second   Thirty me  Documents fee
Third    Sixteen monme, six bu  Fee for Uji tea

Amount received for the three items above.

[Year of the] Earth-Hare Genroku 12 [1699], twelfth month, twenty-eighth day.

Myōkenji
Priest Kōshō (cypher)

To Ogata Kōrin

For your reference

First  Hundred me in silver coins.
Year of the Tiger [1698], annual fee for ancestral hall at Myōkenji,
received through a representative [of Myōkenji].
Genroku 11 [1698], [Year of the] Tiger, twelfth month, eighteenth day.
Myōkenji
Priest Kōshō (cypher)

To Ogata Kōrin

First  Two bu²⁶ gold.  Received through a representative. This [payment] covers the amount of the fee / set amount for the
Year of the Hare [1699]
Genroku 12 [1699], Year of the Hare,
Twelfth month, eighteenth day.
Kōshō (cypher)

To Ogata Kōrin

覚
一 七拾め  己卯とし七月分極月まで七ヶ月分
兪貫めの利也、
一 三拾め  資料銀
一 拾両九分 宇治茶料
右三色受取申候、
己卯元禄十二臘月廿八日
妙顕寺
興正坊（花押）

尾形光琳様

²⁶ One bu is one forth of a ryō, equalling 10.5 grams.
I was very happy to receive word from you the other day. In relation to the money, I have advanced the amount [to you]. Please send me a receipt [of the transaction]. The receipt should state the interest for [the borrowed amount of] one kan and seven hundred seventy monme. Adjusted to the [current] rate of rice, I will advance a remaining five hundred eighty-one monme and seven bu. Please take notice of this. I am handing over one kan and seven hundred monme. You should find a way to repay [the amount] eventually. I hope that I can be of service to you again [in the future]. I send you all my best and shall visit you [soon].

Thirteenth day.

光琳様
Document I / 19 - Letter from antique dealer (karamonoya) Kamenokōya Kishichi concerning a delay in payment to Kōrin

To Kōrin

From Kamenokōya Kishichi

Follow-up

As I mentioned in my recent reply to you, I have been unable to reach you. In any case, [illegible in original] I will advance the [amount of] money we agreed upon. These are the conditions [of the agreement] and I kindly ask for your understanding. Following the above, I was asked to pay five hundred monme silver to Shichirōemon, which is not the amount we agreed on. He has not yet returned anything. The one hundred hundred sixty monme and three bu to be paid to you I gave Shichirōemon. For that reason, go to him and ask him what he intends to do. I will also ponder what I will do about this. I will let you know about as things progress. Should have word by tonight. I am sorry to trouble you but, since I sent you the initial calculation, could you please forward a note of agreement [to the conditions of our contract]. I will not pay Shichirōemon, so you can receive your money first. Please allow me to meet with you then.

I have already advanced two hundred monme of silver to [your] representative. Please confirm this [by issuing] a receipt. All my best spring greetings.

27 The tone and general frankness of the letter suggests that Kōrin and Kishichi knew each other well.

28 This letter seems to make reference to the prices recorded for the art works described in Document I / 18. Kamenokōya Kishichi appears to have been a dealer, specializing in purchasing and selling works of art. See also Noguchi, “Kōrin gagyō no kenkyū,” 248–257.
Eleventh month, twenty-first day.

Sales

First item  Seventeen monme two bu  carpet
Second item  Ten monme  flower vase
Third item  Thirty-five monme  kettle for heating sake (kannabe)

Total sum of sixty-two monme two bu
Including two monme one bu

29 In spite of his dire financial situation at the time, Kōrin not merely sold off his possessions, but also acquired new pieces.
Net amount of Fifty-nine monme one bu

Purchases
First item      Fifty monme          Unkei [ware] chawan
Second item    Two monme five bu     Calligraphy

Total sum of Fifty-two monme five bu
Minus a total of six monme six bu paid

Twelfth month, eighth day. From Kamenokōya Kishichi

霜月廿一日会
御売り
一 拾七両拾分 丸せん
一 拾処 竹花入
一 卯五両 かななへ
〆 六拾二両十二分
内三両壹分
正味五拾九両壹分

御買物
一 五拾攲 雲渓ちゃわん
一 両両五分 切
〆 五拾両両五分
指引〆 六両六分 払

極月八日           亀甲や
喜七方

● Document I / 21 - List of items Kōrin sold to and purchased from Kamenokōya Kishichi

KKZ 99 (pp. 125–126)

Record of Sales and Purchases
Sold items at the gathering on the eleventh day of the twelfth month.31

30 Unkei here seems to designate Tada ware, a kiln established in today’s Yamaguchi prefecture around the end of the seventeenth century.

31 The objects seem to have been sold off in some sort of salon-like setting, where a group of potential clients were presented with a selection of artworks to choose from. Such gatherings were common venues for the sale of antiques and newer artworks during the early modern period.
First Hundred-eighty monme Sōtatsu
Two-panel screen

Second Eleven monme six bu Shigaraki [ware] vase

Third Twenty-three monme five bu Tray for sweets

Forth Seventy-seven monme Chaïre [tea caddy]

Fifth Sixteen monme five bu Eight colored [ceramic] plates

Sixth Ten monme [Colored] brazier

Seventh Twenty-seven monme Five Seto [ware] sake cups

Eighth Six bu Water pitcher

Ninth Ten monme Tray with [decor of] deer in mother of pearl

Total sum of three-hundred fifty-six monme two bu
Including seventeen monme eight bu
Net amount of three-hundred thirty-eight monme four bu

Purchases
First Seventeen monme two bu [Lacquer] maki-e tobacco tray

Second Hundred monme Small brazier [used for lighting tobacco] with red picture [ceramic piece with a picture in iron oxide]

Third Sixty-five monme Amida altar

Forth One monme five bu Price for foods

Total of Hundred eighty-three monme seven bu
Minus a total of hundred fifty-four monme seven bu paid

Twelfth month, nineteenth day. From Kamenokōya Kî[shichi]

To Kōrin

御売買覚
極月十一日会御うり
一 百八拾両 宗達
勝手屏風
一 拾壹両六分 しからき花入
一 巳三両五分 くわしほん
一 七拾七両 茶入
一 拾六両五分 染付皿八枚
一 拾両 同鉢
一 廿七両 瀬戸
ちよく五

535
Document I / 22 - Reminder to repay debt, sent to Kōrin by Kitaōji Toshitsune

I am recording [the following] in the form of a letter. According to [my] records, you are supposed to pay two hundred coins [mon] until the Obon festival. I ask you to take note of this and comply [with the terms of the agreement].

Kitaōji [Toshitsune], Lord of Tanba
Seventh month, tenth day.

To Ogata Kōrin

---

32 Yamane suggests this record may be related to Document I / 15. Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō, 126. Kitaōji Toshitsune, the governor of Tanba, appears again in Document IV / 1, where Kōrin invites him to tea.

33 Chūgen is an alternate name of the Obon festival, an annual rite to honor the souls of deceased ancestors, held on the fifteenth day of the seventh month.
Receipt for money taken from Myōkenji

以手紙令啓達候、
然者中元之御
祝儀迄目録之通
弐百足被遣之候、
此指相心得可申
入之由、御意ニ候、
以上

北小路丹波守
七月十日

尾形光琳殿

(On backside of document)

妙けんし寺中ノ銀とり手形

- Document I / 23 - Certificate of Kōrin’s bestowal with the hokkyō title

KKZ 138 (p. 174)

(Envelope)

Announcement of Hokkyō [Bestowal]

(Document)

Let it be known that,

His Excellency Kushige Chūnagon,34
Declares on the 2nd month, 27th day of Genroku 14 [1701]

Kōrin

34 Kushige Takayoshi (1652–1733).
Receives the title of hokkyō.

Attended by
The Curator of the Imperial Archives, Chūjō Fujiwara Takanaga.35

(Envelope)

法橋口宣

(Document)

口宣案

上卿 橿筒中納言
元禄十四年二月廿七日 宣旨

光琳
宜敘法橋

奉

蔵人頭左近衛権中将藤原鸞尾隆長

● Document I / 24 - Sale of Kōrin’s Nakamachi Yabunouchichō residence36

KKZ 101 (pp. 126–127)

Concerning the permanent sale of [Ogata Kōrin’s] residence
Total of one property: Nakamachi Yabunouchichō

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entrance</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Main Entrance</td>
<td>Two ken four shaku six sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Main Entrance</td>
<td>Two ken three shaku nine sun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total circumference [of the property]: twenty-four ken. With an eastward [expanse] of 2.5 ken and a southern [expanse] of four ken four shaku. [The property] recedes from Shichibei’s property for five ken five shaku four sun. The front extends over the width of two properties for twenty-one ken one shaku. Including the riverbank, [the property] borders on Iri[ya] Sahei in Higashimachi to the east and Jūchiya Tokuemon to the west.

---

35 Washino’o Takanaga (1673–1736).

36 Yamane argues that in 1703/12 Kōrin tried to sell his Nakamachi Yabunouchi mansion, but instead he seems to have taken a mortgage on the property. See Yamane, “Kōrin maki-e nidai,” 16. The mortgage entailed a clause that entitled Kawai Heiemon, the creditor, to keep the property until the money is fully repaid.
This is to certify the sale of the above residence for seventy-nine ryō\(^{37}\) gold. Those who object to [this transaction] must bring forth his claim by name immediately. To prevent any disagreement, this [document] is proof for the permanent sale [of this residence].

Seventeenth Year of the Monkey [1704], Ninth Month, Last Day [of the month]
Seller
Ogata Kōrin

Genroku 16 [1703], Year of the Sheep, Twelfth Month, Forth Day

[District] Elder
Shichibei
Mediator
Jūichiya Tokuemon
Agent
Yoshida Daisuke

To Kawai Heiemon

(On backside of document)

Sale Agreement
First Road
Second Paved path removed
Third Water basin for hand [washing] removed
Forth Sliding doors, fusuma, shōji removed

[This contract] validates the sale of the residence, sans the four concessions above, to be sold for seventy-nine ryō gold. Should there be anyone to object [this transaction], they shall come forth to us. This sales record will be distributed [among the persons involved in the transaction]. [The conditions of the sale] are those stated therein.

Same date as on front [of document]. Kōrin\(^{38}\) Daisuke

To Kawai Heiemon

From the end of the twelfth month, a monthly interest of 3.5 bu is charged for the residence’s [accompanying] road, stone path, fittings, et cetera.\(^{39}\) The purchase may be returned until the last

---

\(^{37}\) One ryō equals 187.5 grams, amounting to a total of 14.8 kilograms of silver.

\(^{38}\) In his signature on front and back of the sales agreement, Kōrin abbreviated the first character of his name in the fashion of his ancestor Kōetsu (see Chapter One). Kōrin employed this habit mainly in his earliest paintings and ceased to do so by around 1704 and after. This document is one of the last dated instances where Kōrin made use of this particular way of writing his name.

\(^{39}\) Although Kōrin seems to have removed some of these features upon selling the property, stone basins and other furnishings were standard details of mansions. The contract appears to assume that the future owner will reinstall them, making their taxation a necessary aspect of the contract.
day of the ninth month next year, [the Year of the Monkey]. After this deadline, [the residence] shall pass [to its new owner] following [the conditions] of this contract. At that point [once the deadline has passed], no objections can be made.

Twelfth Month, [Forth] Day.  Kōrin
Daisuke

To Kawai Heimon

(Document title)

Promissory Note

永代売渡申家屋敷之事
合倉ヶ所 中町敷内町

（東表口）武間四尺六寸
（西表口）武間三尺九寸

息裏行式拾四間、是々東へ武間半入、南へ四間四尺間中、七兵衛
屋敷表方裏行五間五尺四寸、夫々武ヶ所之横幅拾老間半尺、

但川筋共ニ東隣ハ東町へ入左兵衛、西隣ハ十一屋徳右衛門、

右之家屋敷依用要之、金子七十九両ニ売渡申所実正也、
外々違乱申者候者、我等并ニ判形之者共罠出、急度其名メ仕、

少茂御難義掛申間敷候、為其永代売券状仍如件、

十七年申九月晦日 売主
元禄十六年未十二月四日 尾形光琳

年寄

七兵衛
吹挙

十一屋徳右衛門

売請人

吉田大助

川合平右衛門殿

(On backside of document)

売手形

一 たうろ

540
二 とび石不残
三 手水銭不残
四 立具不残
右四？家屋敷共ニ、金子七十九両ニ売渡シ申所実正也、
外ヲ違乱申者候ハハ、我等恵出埒明可申候、本売券状
相渡し申候、為シ仍如件、
年号月日表通 光琳
大助
川合平右衛門殿

右之家屋敷とうろ飛石立具等、未極月ヲ
月三分半の利足加、来申九月毎日ニ此方買戻し
可申次第也、右之切過候ハハ、証文通其元へ相渡し
可申上、其時ハ少も申分無候、仍如件、
月 日 光琳
大助
川合右衛門殿

(Document title)

案文

- Document I / 25 - Repayment of the mortgage on Kōrin’s Nakamachi Yabunouchichō property

KKZ 109 (p. 139)

One sheet
Concerning the mortgage of forty-five ryō gold, [agreed upon] thirteen years ago, in the Year of the Rooster [1705]. In accordance with the conditions of the mortgage, [the current] repayment of ten kan silver, made on the thirteenth day of the seventh month in this Year of the Snake

---

40 This letter is related to Document I / 24. Though signed by Kenzan, it appears to have been written by Kōrin himself. Kōrin probably copied the original for his records. Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō, 139.

41 Kawai Heiemon’s de facto purchase of Kōrin’s Nakamachi Yabunouchi estate—Shichibei was the district elder in charge of approving the transaction—dates to 1703 and 1704, not 1705, the date given in the document here. Considering this discrepancy, the transfer of Kōrin’s Nakamachi Yabunouchichō property to Kawai Heiemon was probably finalized in 1705.
[1713], should fully erase the debt. I am asking you to send an official receipt to the two of us [Kenzan and Kōrin] quickly, and at the latest by the thirtieth day of the first month in the Year of the Horse [1714]. I hope [my request] will not cause you too much inconvenience. This letter acts as proof of my request.

Ogata Shinsei [Kenzan]

Shōtoku 3, Year of the Snake [1713]  
Yoshida Chiseki, on behalf of
Shichizaemon

Eleventh month, twentieth day

[District Elder of] Nakamachi Yabunouchichō
Shichibei

一札

一 正徳三年以前西之年、寄手四拾五両借用
仕候、うり問状ニ仕判形額候得共、此度
又ノ七月十三日ニ入用候而、丁銀拾貫目ノ
うり問状ニ判形額申候付、同七月中ニ、
先手形之金子相濟可申候、手形御座候へ共
たんたん相のひ申候間、我等武人其元へ
判形仕、来年午正月卅日までニ急度
処明ケ、其元判形方へ御なんかけ申間敷候、
為其証文仍而如件、

小形深省

正徳三年己
七左衛門事
吉田千碩

十一月廿日
中町敷内町

七兵衛殿
II. Personal Matters

● Document II / 1 - Kōrin’s letter to the Matsuya family asking them to adopt his illegitimate son, Jirōsaburō

KKZ 110 (p. 140)

One sheet

This year, my son by the name of Jirōsaburō is turning one year old. Although he is not your biological child, I would be immensely grateful if you could permanently adopt Jirōsaburō as your own [son]. I renounce any claims at all from my side in the future. Should you make him your child and declare him your family’s heir, I shall humbly advance

Two kan

as part of this agreement.

I am also handing over five hundred me silver [to cover] food expenses for Jirōsaburō. This document shall act as future proof [of my request].

Jōkyō 4 [1687] Ogata Ichinojō
[Year of the] Rabbit, ninth Month, nineteenth Day
To Matsuya Kanzemon
[and] wife

二郎三郎ヲ遺し候書物

一札之事
一 我等子次郎三郎と申枚子当年壱歳ニ
罷成候ヲ、其方ニ実子無御座敷ニ付、此
次郎三郎永代其方ヘ養子ニ遺申候、
向後此方ヲ毛頭申分無之候、若又
其方ニ実子出来候共、右之次郎三郎
惱顔ニ相定申答之契約ニ而候、則

式貫目

譲与遺し申候、
為樽代銀子五百目次郎三郎ニ相添
渡し申候、為後日之仍如件、

貞享四年 尾形市丞
 卯九月十九日
Document II / 2 - Adoption agreement between Kōrin and the Matsuya family

KKZ 111 (pp. 140–141)

One sheet
Following the counsel of Maruya Jōgen and Myōchi, we shall take in your son Jirōsaburō, one year of age, as our own son. He shall be our heir and succeed to our family property. Herewith, [Kōrin] renounces any claims to Jirōsaburō in the future. By allowing us to adopt [Jirōsaburō], we pledge not to burden [Kōrin] with any [financial and personal] problems that may occur. We humbly ask you to advance five-hundred me silver. I am sure we shall receive [the money] soon. This document shall act as future proof [of the agreement].

Adopted Father
Matsuya
Kanzemon (seal)
Matsuya wife (seal)
Mediator Maruya
Jōgen (seal)
Mediator Myōchi (seal)

Document concerning Jirōsaburō One document My Correspondence with [Matsuya Kanzaemon]
Copy by [Kōrin] One document Proof of agreement
Jōkyō 5 [1688], [Year of the] Dragon, ninth month, nineteenth day.

一札之事
一 我等実子無御座候ニ付、貴殿御子息
二郎三郎、當年壹歳ニ成候を、
丸屋常玄老、妙知、肝煎ヲ以テ
我等申請候、唯シ我等実子出来候共、
二郎三郎義ハ惣領ニ相立、我等跡式
譲可申候、向後此方ち二郎三郎

Documents II / 1 and II / 2 were kept together in one envelope. Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō, 141.
Announcement of [District] Ruling

Last year [1688], on the ninth day of the twelfth month [of 1688], and again on the fourth day of the second month of this year [1689], a woman by the name of Tsune saw me, Iseya Ryōsen of Shinmeichō,43 in order to press charges against Kariganeya Ichinōjō [Kōrin]. In accordance with the verdict decided by the district, [Kōrin] must hand over one mansion; several implements [to outfit the household]; tatami mats; twenty sheets of silver; and five-hundred me silver for last year’s food expenses. The custody of [Kōrin’s] son [with Tsune], Motonosuke, will be entrusted

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43 A district of Kyoto, likely where Tsune and her family were living.
to the Hosoi family. Ichi[n]ōjō loses the guardianship of Motonosuke and [Motonosuke] shall forever renounce the right as heir to Ichinojō. This ruling shall not be disputed, and this document acts as proof of the decision made jointly by both districts’ elders.\(^{44}\)

Genroku 2 [1689] Year of the Earth-Snake
Second month, eighteenth day.

Iseya Ryōsen of Shinmeichō [the district where Tsune’s family, the Hosoi, maintained their residence], Announcer [of the verdict] (seal)
Tsune (seal)
Younger Brother [of Tsune], Shichibei (seal)
District Elder of Shinmeichō, Jōjun (seal)
Chiekōindōri Yamazatochō [Kōrin’s official residence at the time], Ichi[n]ōjō (seal)
District Elder of Chiekōindōri Yamazatochō, Jūemon (seal)

[For the reference of] the Honorable Magistrate

(Envelope)

One Sheet [recording the dispute with] Tsune Genroku 2 [1689]
Copy of the verdict Settled in the [Year of the Earth-]Snake [1689], second month, eighteenth day.

乍恐済状差上ケ申候

一 私儀神明町伊勢や了仙請やニ罷有候つぬと申女ニ而御座候、厮金や市丞義ニ付、去年御訴訟申上、極月九日ニ被為召出、又当二月四日ニ被為召出、町暖之通ニ而相済シ申様ニと 御詫意ニ付、家や敷一ヶ所、諸道具畑并
銀子廿枚、去年飯料として銀五百目、惚ニ請取、
申候、世懸元之助義も此度我方へ請取申候、
然上ハ元之助義市丞子ニ而ハ無御座候、永代市丞
跡跡ニ付、かまわせ申聞敷候、少々申方無御座候ニ付
乍恐両方両町年寄連判之済状差上ケ申候、以上

元禄弐年

神明町伊勢や了仙請や

己二月十八日

つ ね（印）

\(^{44}\) The elders of the two districts where Tsune and Kōrin resided jointly decided on the ruling.
In accordance with the district council’s ruling of the fourth day of this second month, I ask you to hand over one mansion, twenty sheets of silver, five-hundred me silver for last year’s food expenses, several implements [to outfit the household], tatami mats, among other items. Since the ruling passed the guardianship for Motonosuke to Tsune, I request that you permanently denounce the right to take [Motonosuke] as your child and to determine his affairs in any way, even when he comes of age. This sheet shall act as future proof [of this request].

Younger Brother of Tsune
Genroku 2 [1689], [Year of the] Snake, second month, eighteenth Day.  Hosoi Shichirōhei (seal)

To Kariganeaya Ichinojō

ー札之事
ー 此度御町中御取喰之通相濟申候様こと、
当二月四日 御詫意ニ付、家屋敷
壹ヶ所、銀子ヲ拾枚、去年飯料として
銀五百目、諸道具置等迄、慥ニ
うけ取申候、元之介義つねニ遺候様ニと
御詫意ニ付、此方へ請取申候、永代
To be delivered to

Kōrin

Ken

I do hope you are well. I have just received a letter from [Suma? at] Aburanokōji, asking that Bunzaburō can visit you. I am writing to inform you of the letter’s content. [Suma] asks that you take in Bunzaburō for a day or two. Luckily, the wet nurse is available again today. You may be unable to accommodate [Bunzaburō] immediately, but we can bring him whenever is convenient for you. Until the wet nurse arrives, I could send over Seikurō to entertain [Bunzaburō?] in the meantime. He can also call on you at night. I don’t mind. I shall leave it at that for now.

Yours sincerely. [Written by Ken]

(Text written between the first four lines of main text)

I will come to visit you tomorrow. Once we see each other, we can talk this over and you can see the letter from Aburanokōji. Sincerely.

くわうりんさま

御もとへ

けん

御きしよくいよいよよく御さ

候や、うけ給りたくそんしまらいせ候。

---

45 This letter is related to Documents II / 7, II / 8, and II / 11.

46 Ken writes on behalf of Suma, the woman with whom Kōrin had an illicit affair that resulted in the birth of Bunzaburō. Her relationship to Suma is unclear, but she may have been an employee of Suma’s family.

47 Suma herself seems to have added this section. See also the following letter, Document II / 7. The language of both letters shows that Ken and Suma were of lower status than Kōrin’s family and were unable to issue legal demands like the Hosoi family in Documents II / 3 and II / 4.
さては、あぶらのこうち
たたいま御ふみ、文三郎殿
御おくらせ御こし、そこもとへ
やりまし、一両日もそこもとニ
をかせられ候ように、此ほうち
申しんし候ようにて御申し
ここし候まま、おうらせしんし
まいらせ候、よきてにてにて
御さし候まま、うは事今日にも
仰遺され候、御よび被成すくニ
そこちに御おきまし被成
候ハんや、御しふんしたいに御さし候、
さしハハはまいり候までハ
此せい九郎そこちにをかせられ候て
とき被成候へく候、よるもそこもとニ
をかせられ候でも、くるしからず
候まま、御とめをき被成候へく候、
あなかしく

(Text written between the first four lines of main text)

『なほなほわたくし事も明日
あたり御見まい申、御めにかかり
くハしく申しけ給かたかた
あふらノこうち
ふみ御めにかけ申候、かしく』

● Document II / 6 - Letter to Kōrin from a woman named Suma with whom he had an illegitimate son, Bunzaburō

KKZ 116 (p. 143)

(Envelope)

Letter from Aburanokōji
inside
I am very grateful we could meet when I visited you two days ago. We would be delighted to welcome you for a meal every now and then. Also, I would like for Bunzaburō to go [and see you] again. I would like to go visit you today to thank you [as a courtesy for the recent meal]. Kōrin, although this is causing you a lot of trouble, I would like [for Bunzaburō] to stay with you for even [just] a day or two.

I also send my sincerest greetings to you. Suma
Oken
comes [and delivers the letter]

おととひハまいり御めニかかり
かたしきなくそんしまいらせ候、
殊にたひたび御ちさう
あそハし、かたしきなく
そんしまいらせ候、文三郎
まいりたきと申され候
まま、しんしまいらせ候、わたくしも
こん日にて、れゐにまいり申候、
御くろうなから光りんさま
そこもより御やりたのみ
あけまいらせ候、一画もゐ申候
者、御おきたのみあけまいらせ候、

『尚々おハしながら旦那さまへ

---

48 This part might have been written by Ken.
Thank you for your letter. I have waited so long and would so like to come and see you, even just for a little bit. But I have fallen a little ill and have not been eating, so I cannot go to meet you. Given the position I find myself in now, both of my parents have been angered by your change of heart against us being together. I really would like you to acknowledge me as your partner. But given your recent change of heart, I cannot force you to do so. I do not ask for your financial support, but that does not mean I will return [to my parents?] for good. I am trying to struggle through this for now and wish that one day all this will be resolved. Thank you for looking after me. Do not worry about Bunzaburō, he can spend time with you whenever is convenient. Given the current circumstances [we found ourselves in], I cannot agree to meet with you. Please understand this. All my best to you.

(Text written between the first five lines of previous text)

I do not feel well and cannot come to see you. I ask you to please understand this.

49 The letter’s content is directly related to the previous Document II / 6. Given the mention of Bunzaburō and the generally longing, amorous timbre of the letter, it was probably authored by Suma. Her repeated appeals to Kōrin to respond or meet her imply that he tried to sit out the situation by avoiding contact with her and denying to take on responsibility for Bunzaburō.
申候と、たんたんはらたて
申され候ゆへ、わた
くしももはやせほつつき
両人したいいたし申候、
今されしんてい事
ちかい申事も
御さなく候へとも、あまり
ちちあき申さす、
そのうへ光りんざさ
御しんしよも成申さす
候へはせひせひかへり
申候ハンとも申さす、
右のことくやはり
いつかたへ成とも、
ありつき申候まま
さよう御心へ
たのみあげまいらせ候、
たんたん御せわ、さてさて
かたしきなく
そんしまいらせ候、文三郎義ハ
ともかくも、光りんざさ
したいあそハし
候へく候、わたくし事
今こと hariため
ちいしんしまいらせ候、
めてたくかしく

(Text written between the first five lines of previous text)

『なほなほわたくしも
きしよくしかしかと御さなく
ゑまいり申さす候、
さよう御心へ
あそハし
下され候へく候』
I read your letter. You say you are suffering from abdominal pain. It seems you are feeling quite distressed, so I would like to call on you and see how you are. But, to tell you the truth, I am also suffering, so when we last met I got very angry that we can’t be together. Also, throughout the winter you withdrew and avoided seeing me. For that reason, I listened to what Oken had to say. I do not need your money and I will surely not ask for it. I will return [to my parents]. You must think I caused you a lot of trouble, but I think neither of us acted in a despicable way. Although we did achieve to build some common ground, we never felt as one. You don’t seem to entertain the thought of us getting together, so please leave me be.

I wish you all my best, [Suma]

I think the kimono (awase) you ordered will be ready by tomorrow, or the day after.

By describing her suffering, Suma suggests that her sickness is a result of Kōrin’s attempts to avoid meeting her and acknowledging their relationship.

The letter is unsigned, but judging from its relation to those authored by Suma or concerning her, she was probably its author. The letter shares the same handwriting with the previous Document II / 7.

This line, also in Suma’s handwriting, suggests that she came from a family of dyers or dress makers, perhaps working as contractors for the Kariganeya. She reports on the order of a male garment, probably for Kōrin himself.
(Back of envelope)

御返事

(Back of envelope)

仏

(Document)

御文はいけんいたし
まいらせ候、此中ハ
御中いたみ申候よし
さそさそ御なんき
さし入まいらせ候、
ちとちと御見まいニ
まいりたくそんしまいらせ
候へとも、わたくしも
せいつき、わつらい申候
ゆへ、御ふさた御めんめん、
わたくし事ハ
両人ながらことの外
はらたてられ、
そのうへふゆ中も
御ひきとりあそ
ハし候やう、そんしられ
候へは、此中ニおけん様
御はなしうけ給、
御しんしよ成申さす
よし、わたくしせひせひ
成申さす候所、かへり
申候とハそんしまいらせ候、
御まへさま御くろうニ
おほしめし候、たかいニ
にくしあししとハ
そんし申さす、かつてん
つく二てにやわしき
かたへもありつけ申候と
両人申され候ゆへ、
To Kōrin  [From] Shinsei [Kenzan]

This requires your prompt attention.
I went to solicit advice from Kōan in the matter of the Mitake [clan?].
Both are now soliciting counsel from the district’s elders. We should receive a reply in the next days.
Also, on our behalf, Sōin informed Dōju about the details [of your situation]. Tomorrow, I will head for Takagamine to ask for more advice. I met with Jizaemon recently to discuss the issue of Zeze [domain?]. Since all this is such an unusual affair, we need to watch how the situation is developing.
First, I would like to see the invoices for the amounts of silver borrowed by you. This way, we can avoid inconsistencies in your ledgers. To my knowledge, the amount of silver [we talked about] is recorded on a separate sheet. Please let me take a look at it. Once again, please do tell me your thoughts [on your money problem]. The problem is not solved yet. I’ll [take a look at] the invoice that I have here with me for the very first four kan [of your debt]. Please think carefully again about everything I have said here and reply with your thoughts within two days.
And, I beg you not to lose your ledgers.

Third month, eleventh day  Shinsei (cypher)

光琳様       深省

53 This might be a reference to one of many unpaid daimyo debts accumulated by Kōrin’s father and forefathers. Like many wealthy merchants, the Ogata acted as creditors for provincial lords.
頼日者御速々敷奉
存候、三宅事好啇へ
申談候処、今一両人も町ノ
年寄候間、是へ尋、近日
返事可申由ニ候、又道寿老ヘも
委細宗因ヲ以申候由申候間、
明日鷹峯ヘ私参候間、弥相尋
可申候、膳所之事、此中
治左衛門ニ逢申候、不思議成
事有之候故、先々様子ヲ
見候て居申候
一 貴様御かり銀指引
致掛御目申候、此通
手前帳之面無相
違候、右之銀子之入
わけ私存寄別紙ニ
書付掛御目申候、又々
御了簡も候ハハ可被仰聞候、
此通ニテハすみ不申候事に御座候、
尤はしめの四貫目之御
手形此方ニ有之候、右御改メ可
被下候、一両日中以前可
得御意候、御書付之帳御
粉失無之様に奉憑候、已上
三月十一日 深省（花押）

・ Document II / 10 - Follow-up by Kenzan on the previous letter, likely sent on the same day, offering further financial advice

KKZ 91 (p. 122)

For your reference
I have looked at your accounts for three years, from 1693 to 1695.
The balance until last winter [1695] amounts to seven kan nine, hundred eight monme, and three bu. But by the New Year [1696] [the amount] was repaid. 54

This amount includes the one kan and one hundred me that were repaid to you by Lord Nagato, Lord Tosa, and Chōkurōzaemon. 55 This is nothing more than the interest.

With their [full] repayments, the original amount would decrease bit by bit. The same is true for Nagai Ichimasa. 56 I also cannot say when he will repay [his debt]. The situation is a nightmare. Even if you had the total amount of [all outstanding loans] in your hands now and received most of the interest, it would by no means match the amount [that you owe].

You have to work off the amount somehow. But I know that it is difficult for you to raise any money on your own at this point. You should show me the invoices of all things you pawned. We could redeem these objects and sell them off. But you must use that money wisely. In your current situation, since the majority [of the money] in your hands was borrowed from Hinoya, it wouldn’t be helpful if you had to pay any unnecessary interest. 57 [Any money you can save] will be practical for whatever may come at this point. Once your debt is repaid and, some day, the four or five credits [to daimyo and others] are redeemed, you may use that money for yourself. Also, if we leave the pawned objects as they are for now, their interest will gradually add up. This way, they won’t be of much use to us at a later time. Don’t you know a way to retrieve them?

Your screen[(s)] entrusted to Recluse Jihei are up for sale since last winter and we agreed that I receive the money once they are sold. When I go to see Jihei next time and the screens are not sold yet, I will ask him to advance the sales price so we can use the money for you. What do you think about this? The screens will surely sell. 58

For four-hundred me, we would be able to retrieve the tansaku album 59 from Sagamiya. 60 [Then] we could also sell it off.

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54 This note seems to have been added after the initial letter was drafted, possibly indicating that Kōrin’s most acute financial problems were solved by 1696.

55 Nagato province was part of Chōshū domain, the western half of today’s Yamaguchi prefecture. The domain was ruled by the Mōri family, and Kenzan here probably refers to a debt repaid by Mōri Tsunamoto (1651–1709), lord of the domain until 1697.

Lord Tosa is more difficult to identify, since this title was carried by a number of people simultaneously. One likely possibility is Yamauchi Toyomasa (1641–1700), lord of Tosa domain.

56 Nagai Naotoki (1638–1680), lord of Takatsuki domain.

57 A person named Hinoya Jirō was the sender of a different letter to Kōrin. The letter also deals with borrowed money. He seems to have acted as a major creditor for Kōrin during the 1690s. See Document I / 18.

58 It is unclear whether Kenzan refers to a work by himself or by Kōrin, or whether the screen was part of their inheritance. During the 1690s, Kōrin pawned or sold several works that appear to have been bequeathed to him by Sōken, so this work might have been inherited as well.

59 An album of rectangular pieces of paper containing calligraphy.

60 Likely a pawn business.

557
These days I met with Tōzaburō to assess [your] lack of money. [He suggested] we should also redeem the pawned implements from Hiranoya. If you could give me your share [of selling those implements], I could pay back the amount in full.

Other than that, you should see if Uzaemon or anyone else has any [advice] at all. I can’t think of anymore [at the moment]. Should you have any ideas on how to solve this problem, please let me know. I will leave it at that for now. I don’t know what we can work out for you and I am at my wits’ end.

Third month, eleventh day Shinsei [Kenzan] (cypher)

To Kōrin

覺
一 西戊亥三ヶ年指引勘定仕掛御目申候、旧冬
迄ニ指引致候て、七貫九百八枚三分ト相見へ申候、但子正月ヲ御取かへし申候
此内に長門守様、土佐守様、長九郎左衛門様三ヶ所之御
納崩銀壱貫百目ヨ、是にては漸利銀ほどならては無之、
其上元銀にて之御納崩故、連々ニ元銀へり申候、其外ニ
永井市正様両通有之候へ共、是モ然と致たる事しれ不申候、
此通ニ仕置候テハ何とも迷惑仕候、此銀高只今手前ニ
有之候へば、大分ノ利得ヲとり候事ニ候へ共、右ノ仕合故
無是非候、貢テハ何とそ銀高減少仕候やうニ仕度候、
然とも只今御手前ヲ銀子御出し候事ハ、定而被成がたく
候半と存し候、何とぞ外ニ有之候テ物共、御かきづけニて
皆々御見せ可被成候、此質物共ヲ手前ヲ請出し、
売出しヲ以、此銀御すまし可被下候、今の通ニては
手前ニモ、ひのやにて大分カリ有之候故、無用ノ利
銀ニ引とられ候事、何のやくニ立不申候、今又
何と成とも調法いたし、此銀相すみ候へば、末々ハ
右ノ四五通之手形ノ銀、御手前へ入候へば、御
為ニモ成可申候と奉存候、又質物共も其まま
におき候で段々ニ利足かさなり、のちにはうけ候トハ
やくニ立不申候半と存候、今にては中々御とり出し候ニ、
手たても有間敷かと被存候、
一 隠居治兵衛方ニ候屏風之事、是ハ旧冬ヲ
此売出し手前へ御渡可被成候由ニて、此中
隠居かたヘ参候へば、未うれ不申候間、何とそ

61 Perhaps Kenzan is referring to the Osaka-based banking business Hiranoya. It is possible that some objects owned by Kōrin were pawned there.
Concerning your request

The woman by the name of San will be sent to you and enter your service. [Her compensation] is set at forty monme for every six months. Like me, she was born in Yoshida [probably Mikawa province, present-day Aichi], the village of our forefathers. Having remained in your service for many a year, [I] shall stand forth as [her] guarantor. Under no circumstances may she disobey your rules or practice Christianity. Should she fail to comply [with such rules], her guarantor shall come forth and question her, so as to cause you no distress. In turn, she must strictly adhere to the rules of your household. She may not engage with men. Even when courted [by someone] from the outside, she may not [engage with him]. Nevertheless, should she engage in any unbecoming behavior, her guarantor shall come forth and respond to it swiftly. [This document] shall act as future proof [of this agreement].

Genroku 7 [1694]

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62 The document was written in a handwriting that resembles that of Kōrin but is not actually by him. It might have been copied by an amanuensis. Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō, 146.
[Year of the] Rat, ninth Month, eleventh Day. Guarantor Magobei63 (seal) of Yoshida Yabunomura

Employee San

Ogata Kōrin, witnessed by
Shōemon
Kiyoemon

請求之事
一 此さんと申女、此度御奉公ニ罷出申候、御給銀半季ニ
四拾夕つつノ御定也、生国吉田ノ生にて、我等先祖ヲ禁
存知候故、幾年ニても御奉公相勤申内ハ、請人ニ立申候、
一 御公儀様御法度相背たる者ニても、切死丹ニても無御座候、
此者取逃欠落仕候ハハ、請人罷出、本人尋出し、御損御難
かけ申間敷候、尤御家ノ御しおき、かたく相守せ可申候、此女
男も不申候、外かまい御座候者ニても無御座候、いかやうノ悪事
仕し申候共、請人罷出、急度埒明ケ可申候、為其仍如件、

元禄九年
子ノ九月十一日 請人 よしたやふノ村
孫兵衛（印）

奉公人 さ ん

尾形光琳様ニて
庄右衛門殿
清右衛門殿

● Document II / 12 - Kōrin’s draft of his agreement with Nakamura Kuranosuke to take in Kuranosuke’s daughter for five years64

KKZ 120 (p. 146)

Personal draft

63 Magobei is San’s elder brother. See Document II / 16.
64 See also Documents II / 13 to II / 15.
One sheet
I [Kōrin] shall take your [Nakamura Kuranosuke’s] daughter Okatsu, born this year, into my fosterage and raise her until she is five years old. For this, I shall be given a yearly [allowance] of one kan silver. I shall use this amount for various expenses incurred by Okatsu’s education. As instructed, I shall return Okatsu in the next Year of the Dog [1706]. [This document] shall act as future proof [of this agreement].

Genroku 15 [1702], Year of the Horse, seventh month, first day.

Ogata Kōrin (seal “Koresuke”)
Nakamura Kurōemon [Kuranosuke]

此方ノ案文

一札
一　貴殿御息女当御出生成之お勝殿、五歳迄
拙者方に御預ケ置被成、致養育候、依之
毎年銀壹貫目宛、可被遣之旨及御相対候、此
銀子を以、お勝殿養育造用諸色相賜
可申候、来ル戊年御指図次第、お勝殿
相返シ可申候、仮而如件、
元禄十五年午七月朔日

尾形光琳（seal 惟富）

中村九郎右衛門殿

• Document II / 13 - Kōrin’s draft of the agreement between him and Nakamura Kuranosuke to take in Kuranosuke’s daughter for a five-year education

KKZ 121 (p. 146)

One sheet
I [Kōrin] shall take your daughter Okatsu, born this year, into my fosterage and raise her until she is five years old. For this, I shall be given a yearly [allowance] of one kan silver. I shall use

65 Katsu later married Kōrin’s illegitimate son, Shinjirō, who was adopted into the Konishi family and later assumed the names Konishi Juichirō and Konishi Hikoemon.

66 The way Kōrin wrote the kō here closely resembles that in his signature on his portrait of Kuranosuke, painted two years later, in 1704. This indicates that Kōrin began experimenting with a different signature style between circa 1701, the time he painted the Irises screens (which bear a Kōetsu-style kō) and this document of 1702.

67 The content here is identical to the previous Document II / 12. Someone drew a large X over the entire document, apparently dismissing this draft in favor of Document II / 14, which became the actual, signed contract between Kōrin and Kuranosuke.
this amount for various expenses incurred by Okatsu’s education. As instructed, I shall return Okatsu in the next Year of the Dog [1706]. [This document] shall act as future proof [of this agreement].

(On backside of document)

Agreement for Okatsu’s Fosterage

一札
一　貴殿御息女当年御出生之お勝殿、五歳迄摂者方に御預ケ置被成、致養育候、依之
毎年銀子壹貫目宛、可被遺之旨及御相対候、
此銀子を以、お勝殿養育造用諸色相貰
可申候、来ル戊年御差図次第、お勝殿相返
可申候、

(On backside of document)

お勝様御養育御証文

● Document II / 14 - Final contract between Kōrin and Nakamura Kuranosuke to take in Kuranosuke’s daughter for a five-year education

KKZ 122 (pp. 146–147)

One sheet

[I entrust] my daughter Katsu, born this year, into your [Kōrin’s] care until she is five years old. To cover her education, I shall advance five-hundred me silver each year, once in the seventh month and once in the last month, amounting to a total of one kan [silver] per year. Such is [the agreement].

Genroku 15 [1702], [Year of the] Horse, seventh month, first day. Nakamura Kurōemon (seal “Nobumitsu”)

Ogata Kōrin

一札
一　摂者娘当歳之出生勝事、至五歳候迄御手前に
預ケ置申候、右為養育料毎年七月極月毎ニ
銀子五百目宛相渡、壹ヶ年都合壹貫目進之

68 Kuranosuke also signed his personal inscription on his portrait by Kōrin with Fujiwara Nobumitsu.
To Kōrin

Thank you for kindly sharing your thoughts with me a little while ago. Regarding your impending fosterage of Okatsu, the contract [with Kuranosuke] has been approved and I forward it to you here. [I am also] sending along a draft of the contract [to be kept by you] for [future] reference. I suggest you approve the conditions set forth in the draft. I am forwarding both along with [this letter].

Seventh month, eleventh day.

尾形光琳様　　森村左衛門

Document II / 16 - San thanks Kōrin for releasing her from service and for arranging a marriage for her

KKZ 124 (pp. 147–148)

69 This letter is related to Document II / 13. Morimura Izaemon seems to have acted either as an intermediary or legal counsel between Kōrin and Kuranosuke. It was Izaemon, who seems to have drafted their contract.
One sheet

I have been serving in your household for thirteen years. I have given birth to Shinjirō [Kōrin’s son] and have been entrusted immediately [after his birth] with raising him as his wet nurse.\(^70\) I have raised him and [seen him] grow into a man. These days you graciously released me [from your service] and arranged my marriage to Matsuta Shūha. I thank you for sending me one sheet of gold, one kosode drawer,\(^71\) one nagamochi for kosode,\(^72\) bed sheets, and other [items]. I apologize to Shinjirō [for marrying and leaving]. I am sending you this letter with my elder brother Magobei’s seal [to approve the marriage] attached. Sincerely.

Hōei 7 [1710], [Year of the] Tiger, fourth month, twenty-seventh day.

Wet nurse,
San (signature)

Ogata Kōrin
Elder brother,
Magobei (seal)

Together with [Kōrin’s] wife
at the [Ogata] household

乳母

さん（筆印）

小形光琳様
兄

\(^70\) In the past, Kōrin avoided raising his illegitimate children in his own household, so the case of Shinjirō (also Juichirō or Hikoemon) stands out.

\(^71\) Tansu. Wooden chests with drawers made to store garments like kosode.

\(^72\) A relatively spacious, oblong chest to store textiles. Larger than a tansu.
Document II / 17 - New Year’s greetings by Kōrin, probably addressed to Chihō, the wife of Konishi Hikokurō

KKZ 125 (p. 148)

Seasons Greetings in this beautiful time of spring!
As we are growing older with every year, I am writing you in the hope that the two of you [Konishi Hikokurō and Chihō, his wife] are in good spirits.24 I am sending you my best for good fortune [this year]. I am delighted [to hear] that Shinjirō is also welcoming spring in good health. My work is going well, too.25 I would like to extend my blessings for the New Year and hope that spring may bring you great fortune.

With all my best.

(Text written in between the first lines of the letter)

I was busy last year, so I haven’t written for a while. [I am much obliged that] you performed the end of the year blessings for Tayo. All the best fortune to you.

1st Month, 11th Day. Ogata
Kōrin

[To] Konishi

春の御めてたさ
一ふて申上まらせ候，
いよいよ御ふたかたさま
御きけんよく御とかさねさせ
られ候ハんと、かすかす御めてたく

---

73 The diction and general wording suggests that the addressee was female, probably Konishi Chihō. This letter shows that Konishi Hikoemon, Kōrin’s son who was adopted into the Konishi family and archived Kōrin’s collection of letters and other documents, eventually combined Kōrin’s correspondence with the Konishi clan and Kōrin’s personal documents. Together, these came to be known as the Konishi Archives (Konishi-ke monjo). Kōrin’s son Shinjirō was adopted by the Konishi in 1708. This letter postdates the return of Kōrin’s wife Tayo to Kyoto in 1708, so it probably dates to 1709/01. At the time of the adoption and this letter, Kōrin resided in Edo. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 84–86.

24 In pre-industrial Japan, a person grew a year older on New Year’s Day.

25 This refers to Kōrin’s painting activities for Edo patrons. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 84–86.
The will is important since it explains how Nakamura Kuranosuke brokered the adoption of Kōrin’s son Juichirō (formerly Shinjirō) into the Konishi family. Konishi Hikokurō, Shinjirō’s adopted father, like Kuranosuke was a silver mint official. The possibility of Kuranosuke’s involvement was first raised by Fukui Rikichirō in 1915. See his Fukui Rikichirō, “Kōrin no shusatsu ni tsuite,” in Fukui Rikichirō bijutsushi ronshū ge (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2000), 176–184, especially 178.

The testament dates to 1713 showing how, three years before his death, Kōrin must have seen his end coming and was perhaps feeling unwell. In fact, Kōrin seems to have suffered from long-lasting abdominal pains that are mentioned in different documents. Evidently, in spite of the adoption into another family, Kōrin saw Juichirō as his favorite son, entrusting him with the execution of his will.

● Document II / 18 - Kōrin’s will

KKZ 126 (pp. 148–149)

76 The will is important since it explains how Nakamura Kuranosuke brokered the adoption of Kōrin’s son Juichirō (formerly Shinjirō) into the Konishi family. Konishi Hikokurō, Shinjirō’s adopted father, like Kuranosuke was a silver mint official. The possibility of Kuranosuke’s involvement was first raised by Fukui Rikichirō in 1915. See his Fukui Rikichirō, “Kōrin no shusatsu ni tsuite,” in Fukui Rikichirō bijutsushi ronshū ge (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2000), 176–184, especially 178.

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Testament
You are my flesh and blood. But since I lack a family business, it was hard [for me] to provide security [for you]. We were in an unfortunate [situation] until, luckily, Nakamura Kuranosuke took pity and [arranged for you] to be adopted into the family of Konishi Hikokurō. Nakamura Kuranosuke then gave you his daughter, Okatsu,77 as your wife. [The privilege that] you will succeed as head and heir to the Konishi family, [we owe] above all to Kuranosuke’s generosity. You should pay him respect and follow his wishes. Okatsu herself is [a woman] without flaw. My house78 and various implements79 I leave to my widow Tayo. Upon Tayo’s death, your younger brother Katsunojō80 will receive [the house]. Since he will inherit my name [Ogata], you shall help him [manage] my estate, so as to avoid any complications.81

As part of his inheritance, one wakizashi and screen[(s)] shall be given to your brother Katsunojō. Please support him.

Shōtoku 3 [1713], [Year of the] Water-Snake, first month, twenty-fifth day. Ogata Kōrin
(round relief seal “Hosei Masatoki”)

[To] Konishi Juichirō

(Envelope)

小西壽市郎

小形光琳

77 The same Katsu who Kōrin raised under his roof from 1702 to 1706.
78 Kōrin’s last residence at Shinmachi Nijōkudari, built in 1711 after his own designs.
79 Implements (dōgu) usually included furniture and interior outfitting, such as tatami, screens, paper sliding doors (shōji), and sugito, outer sliding doors made from cypress wood that were often painted. See also Documents II / 3 and II / 4 for a similar use of the term.
80 One of Kōrin’s illegitimate sons. Since Kōrin refers to Katsunojō as Juichirō’s younger brother, he was born later, probably sometime after Kōrin’s return to Kyoto from Edo in the late Hōei era (1704–1711). A woman named Aya is given as Katsunojō’s mother. She also gave birth to another son, Saijirō. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 6–7 and Yamane, “Zoku Kōrin to Nakamura Kuranosuke,” 34.
81 This passage gives evidence that Katsunojō must have been quite young when Kōrin drafted this will in 1713. Kōrin effectively installed Juichirō as the manager of his estate until Katsunojō comes of age.
遺書之事
一 其方事我等嫡子ニ候得共、我等事唯今
相究タル家業も無之、末々其方身上之
安否難計、不便ニ存候ニ付、幸、中村内藏助様
御憐意故、小西彦九郎殿方へ養子ニ返之候、
中内蔵助様御息女お勝殿、其方妻女ニ被相究、
小西家名跡相継候事、偏ニ内蔵助様御
厚恩ニ候間、随分御意ニ相叶申様ニ孝養
可致候、お勝殿事稟略有之間敷候、

一 我等家屋敷諸道具ハ、後家多代へ譲与申候也、
多代死後ニハ弟勝丞へ譲与、我等名跡相継せ候
様ニ申残候、其方事家督相備タル名跡ヲ
相継キ被申候事ニ候間、我等名跡ニ付違乱ノ事
有間敷候事、

一 為遺物、脢差一腰、屏風譲与申候、
弟勝丞事名跡相続仕候様ニ助分可
給事、以上

正徳三年癸巳正月廿五日 小形光琳（round relief seal 保成方祝）
小西寿市郎殿

● Document II / 19 - Itemized will of Kōrin, written for his wife Tayo

KKZ 127 (pp. 149–150)

(Envelope)

Testament of Ogata Kōrin [for the hands of] his widow Shōtei [Tayo].

(Document)

82 Tayo assumed the name Shōtei upon taking the tonsure after Kōrin's death, a customary procedure for widows. This indicates that the envelope is a later addition and postdates 1716, the year Kōrin died.
Testament
[leave to you, Tayo] two properties: the current house [at Shinmachi Nijōkudari] with a southward width of eleven ken and extending inward for twenty-four ken [along with the other house] at Higashimachi with a front width of two ken and extending inward for fifteen ken, along with various implements. In addition, I leave you the invoices of money loaned to daimyo lords that I inherited from my father Sōken. You shall receive their full amounts in case of repayment. You may sell the houses should you wish to do so. In that case, you shall take charge of the money and receive the interest [of that money]. This way you should be able to lead a decent life.

[My] secondary house I give to [my son] by the name of Katsunojō and his mother. Since he is my flesh and blood, my family shall take him in and raise him. He shall carry the name Ogata and, upon coming of age, he shall succeed to the legacy of [our] ancestors.

To Katsunojō’s mother, Aya, I leave altogether two houses, the small house in northern [Shinmachi Nijōkudari] that is rented out to the lacquer master Kohei, as well as the house in northern Higashimachi, alongside various furnishings from the secondary house [the one given to Katsunojō]. With this inheritance, she should be in a good position to find a suitable partner. Since Katsunojō’s mother is [a woman] of stature and does not devote [herself] to trivial pursuits, please try to get along well together.

I have been unable to provide for [my son] Konishi Juichirō, so it was no difficult decision to have him adopted by the Konishi family. Once Juichirō has come of age, please tell him the details of my reasoning. I leave to him [a] short sword [wakizashi] and screen[s]. Although I would also like to leave him a house, he already has one [as the heir to the Konishi family]. Thus, I am leaving it to Katsunojō. I ask you to guide and advise Juichirō. Make him guard the memory of our ancestors. This is important to me, so I entrust this [to you and him].

Shōtoku 3 [1713], [Year of the] Water-Snake, first month, twenty-fifth day. Ogata Kōrin
(round relief seal “Hosei Masatoki”)

For Tayo

83 This indicates that Kōrin still had hope these debts, already more than thirty years old in 1713, would be repaid some day.

84 Since these are the same properties that Kōrin bequeathed to his wife Tayo earlier, Aya likely gained full ownership after Tayo’s death. It is possible that both women shared the two properties, although only Tayo was specifically entrusted with the option of selling them.

85 At a later point, Kōrin asked for Juichirō to return of screens with paintings of chrysanthemums. The screens mentioned here may have been those works. See Document III / 11. Kōrin instructed Juichirō to give the wakizashi and screen to his brother, Katsunojō once he has come of age. See the previous document.

86 Here, Kōrin likely refers to the assortment of sketches, letters, and other documents that came to be guarded by generations of the Konishi and are now known as the Konishi Archives.
ゆつり状の事

一 当町いふやしき、南かわおもて口拾受けんよ、うらゆき
廿四間よ、ひかし町おもて口拾けん、うらゆき十五けんよ、
右ニヶしよならびニしょとうく、又われらおや
そうけんちゆつられ候御大めう様かたへ御用立
申候金銀の御てかた、両かへのゑたてかたとも、のこらす
そのほうへゆつり申候、右いふやしきは、御のそミの御かたへ
うりはらい候で、其銀子、たしかなる御かたへ御あつけ申、
そのりそくを申うけ、そのほうとせいいたさるへく候事、
一 ヘつたくにかつのぜうト申せかれ、じつぼと一しょに
さしおき申候ままだ、われらしごには、勝のせう事、此ほうへ
ひきとりょういくいたじ、小形となのらせ、せいしんの
のちは、せんぞのゆいせき、さうぞくいたし申うに、
とりはかい申ざるへく候、
一 勝のせう母あや事、当町北かわぬし小ひやうへ
だないのやしきーヶ所、ひかし町北かわいゑやしきーか所、
合ニかしよ、ならびニへつたくのしょとうく、一しき
つかわし、さうあふのかたへ、ゑんつきいたし候
やうに、よろしくはかれい申ざるへく候、勝のせうはは
事、やうすもあるものに候、そのうへ、すきたよりも
なきものにて候まま、此のちはむつましくいたし
申ざるへく候、
一 小西しゆ市郎事、われらかたに、さたまりたる
かたくなく候ゆへ、小西のいゑへ、ようしにつかわし申候、
これ又ふびんのあまりに、かやうにいたし候まま、
しゆ市郎せいしんののち、此わけよくよく申しかせ
申ざるへく候、こしのもの、ひよう風ゆつり申候、しゆ市郎へ、
いゑやしきもゆつりたく候へとも、あのかたに、いゑ
やしきも御さ候ゆへ、そのほう勝丞へゆつり申候、
しゆ市郎へよろつたんかう候で、小形せんその御ゆいせき、
Document II / 20 - Letter by Kōrin to Chihō, the wife of Konishi Hikokurō

KKZ 128 (p. 150)

To Chihō  
[From] Ogata  
In response [to your letter]  Kōrin

I was happy to see you during my visit the other day. I thank you that we continue to keep good company. Also, I have not had the chance to express my regret for all the trouble with your mansion. I am very grateful to you. When Tayo came to see you to extend her gratitude you kindly made her feel at ease. So, after all, I shall come by in a little while to offer [our] deepest appreciation.

Yours sincerely.

Second month, first day.

I wish you all the best on this day of celebration. Until we see each other, please accept my best wishes with our two letters.

ちほうさま  をかた
御返報  光りん

此ほとはしかういたし
御目かかりうれ[two illegible characters]しく
そんし候、そこもとへ

---

87 In this letter, Kōrin expresses his gratitude to Chihō for supervising the transition of her husband’s inheritance to Juichirō, Kōrin’s biological son. Yamane dates the letter to 1713. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 90.

88 Kōrin presumably refers to a house given to Juichirō by the Konishi family. In Document II / 19, Kōrin declares that one of his houses should be given to Katsunojō, instead of Juichirō, since the latter already received a property from the Konishi. This letter, addressed to Chihō the widow of Juichirō’s adopted father, expresses Kōrin’s gratitude to the Konishi for bequeathing Juichirō with a house. The transfer of this property probably was stipulated in the last of Juichirō’s adopted father, Konishi Hikokurō.
御こそあそはし
いよいようちつつき御
心よく御めてたくさんし
まいらせ候、此中は
そんしかけも御さなき
御やしきの事かすかす
かたしきなく、あまりさしてて
御札もゑ申あげまいらせす候
ゆへ、多代御礼ながらに
しんじまいらせ候所二、
ゆるゆる御とめおき
なされ下され、かたしきなく
そんし候、いかさま
のちほどしかういたし
御礼かたかた申あげ候へく候、
　めてたくさんく

二月朔日

今日の御しうき申あげ
まいらせ候、此二しな
文して申あげ候
しろしまて二御めにかけ
　まいらせ候、

● Document II / 21 - Kōrin urges Juichirō to pay his respects to Kuranosuke

KKZ 129 (pp. 150–151)

[To] Konishi Juichirō   [From] Ogata Kōrin

I read your reply from yesterday. I am delighted [to hear] that Chihō is recovering. Concerning your visit to Kuranosuke today, you should go between the eighth and ninth [hour]. Before that, he will be out to meet the district commissioners council. He should be back home by the time I mentioned above. I probably will leave the house around that time, too. So, in case you pick the

89 Dated to around 1714. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 93.
wrong time [and you cannot meet with Kuranosuke], ask for Hori Gen’emon at the entrance. I have informed him yesterday night and he knows [that you are coming]. If you meet Kuranosuke, be sure to tell him about [your] name change. In case you are unable to meet [Kuranosuke] today, I will let you know the time when he is at home tomorrow.

3rd Month, 9th Day.

(Text written before the first line of the main text)

He will probably be out today from the eighth hour.

小西寿市郎殿        小形光琳

昨日者御返事
令被見候、智芳様
弥御快被成御座候由
珍重存候、
一 今日内蔵助殿へ
御出候事、九つ過ぎ而
八つ許御出可有之候、
それちまへニハ
御町奉行衆様へ
御出にて、御留守にて候、
右之時分ハ大方御
帰宅可被成与存候、我等も
随分其時分相考
候て、可罷出候へ共、若々
間違候ハハ、玄関ニ
被罷候塯源右衛門と
申仁ヘ、昨夕頃置候間
其御心得可有之候、
内蔵助様へ御逢候ハハ
変名被遊被下候、忝
奉存候由、御申可被成候、
若々今日間違御逢
不被成候ハハ、明日ニても
御在宿之時分知せ
可申候、以上
Document II / 22 - Kōrin’s personal notes (oboegaki)

KKZ 142 (pp. 175–183)

(One sheet)

Measurements for the lid of the writing box (suzuribako):

Length eight sun and seven bu; width eight bu; height one sun, two bu.

I have been suffering from colic pains in my stomach for many years, so I received this remedy from Arima Jōhaku. [Dissolve] the following ingredients in sencha (steeped tea) water and immediately add plenty of honey.

- Three bu of chestnuts
- Three bu of cinnamon
- Six bu of a potion from Chinese peonies
- Two bu of licorice
- Two pieces of jujube

Add two bu of ginger to the tea water.

Measurements [to be sent to] Shimotachiuri for a screen of five shaku, nine sun, three bu. The screen should be made according to these dimensions.

---

90 The notebook is extensive and contains, for instance, copies of Fujiwara Teika’s poems of the twelve months as well as the poems associated with the Thirty-Six Immortal Poets. Many of these notes lack a clear context, so I decided to omit them here.

91 One sun equals roughly three centimeters. One bu is a tenth of a sun, circa three millimeters.

92 Bu is also a weight unit, measuring circa 0.34 grams.

93 In his notes, Kōrin wrote down a second recipe for medication against stomach aches. The ailment seems to have bothered him to a considerable degree. See Yamane, Kōnishi-ke kyūzō, 183.

94 Probably the location of a screen maker’s business. Kōrin’s oboegaki notes contain the locations of several craftsmen, who supplied the artist with the hardware necessary for painting, such as brushes, glue, and other materials.

95 One shaku equals circa thirty centimeters.
(One sheet)

硯ふた寸法

長八寸 横八寸 ふかさ一寸二分

七分

一 症気二而数年腹痛处、
有馬丈伯老之療治二而、左之
煎湯給、為急用蜜丸メ用之、

黄苘 三分 肉桂サウチ三分
唐

芍薬 六分 甘草 二分
大棗 二筒

煎湯ニハ生姜二分入

一 下立壳、ナケシ内法五尺九寸三分、
屏風、仕立ふち共ニ此寸法ニ仕候咎
III. Art-Related Correspondence

● Document III / 1 - Letter by Kōrin probably to the art dealer Nishimura Seiiku (or Masakuni).96

Thank you for your help the other day, I received the money from my neighbor.97 This is entirely thanks to you and I cannot express how grateful I am. I would like to show you the stacked suzuribako today.98 If it suits you, could you please come and pick it up? If you could also hand over the payment, I would be most grateful. This is all for now. Yours sincerely, [Kōrin]. [1697?], second month, twenty-third day.

I have completed the inrō with butterfly motifs according to your wishes. It is important [to me] and I keep it safely tucked away in my kimono. I would like you to send it to Nagasaki.99 I am also waiting to hear from Nagasaki about the motif of the screen(s) [they ordered]. My neighbor is waiting [to hear from you], so could you please meet him? This is all for now.

此中ハ貴公様より御せわゆへ
御となり様より金子被遺彼下
千万ニ稲奉存候 右之ちぶん
あなたの御事ゆへしんし申候事二候
一長重すりますは今日御
めにかけニ進し申候 もしもし
御きニ入申候ハ、御とり下され候やうに
申しんじ候 御たんかうも
なされ候ハハようしきほとニ
たのみ上申候 其内参上
可申上候 恐惶謹言 以上
壬二月廿三日

—

96 Judging by the style of Kōrin’s writing, Yamane dates the letter to 1697, which would make it the earliest extant document by his hand. The letter shows that Kōrin was highly active in selling artworks of various genres already by the late 1690s. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 66–68.

97 Yamane proposes that this neighbor might be Jūichiya Tokuemon, who resided next to Kōrin’s Nakamachi Yabunouchichō residence and appears in another letter by Kōrin to Nishimura Seiiku. Ibid., 67.

See also Documents I / 24 and III / 2.

98 Uchida Tokugo argued that the suzuribako mentioned here is either the work with a decor of mizuaoi at the MOA Museum, or a box with beniaoi (both species of hollyhock) at the Hatakeyama Memorial Museum. Both works fit the elongated shape described in the letter. See Uchida, Kōrin maki-e no kenkyū, 219–220.

99 Richard Wilson has suggested that, rather than the city in Kyūshū, Nagasaki here presumably indicates the Reiganjima neighborhood of Edo. Wilson’s interpretation is generally accepted by scholars today. See Wilson and Ogasawara, Ogata Kenzan, 125–126.
It has been a while and I hope you are well. Please allow me a quick question since I have not heard from you [for some time]. The other day, I received a letter from Nagasaki.

Letter from Nagasaki:
Concerning the ceramic piece by Kenzan [includes sketch of an ewer], it is ready now and [I will] send it. I have asked Master Jūichiya for advice on this. He advised me on the accompanying box (sotobako) and the place where we should send it. Send it by ship, but make sure it won’t break. I am not sure about the best way to wrap the piece [so it won’t break during transport], so I am sending it to you. Please wrap it well in straw and keep the piece separate from others. Straw is the best material for wrapping. Thank you for kindly assisting with this. With this letter, I am also including the order for your reference.

Second month, twelfth day. Ogata Kōrin

To Nishimura Seiiku

其後は御物遠二打過申候、弥御堅固被成御座哉承度奉存候、少々御尋可申処御無音申候、先日は長崎より書状御届被下査存候
長崎御札

100 Yamane dates the letter to circa 1700 and 1701. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 70-71.

101 Probably refers to a member of the Noguchi family. The Noguchi were wealthy sake brewers in Shiga who maintained a strong connection to the arts. Their business was called Jūichiya.
I am sorry that I could not come since the other day [we met]. Thank you for your hard work. I have completed the screen(s). Could you go to see Ibarakiya Hikbei in order to receive the payment for the screen(s) directly from him? Once you go see him, he should give you the full amount. May I ask you to hand over [my share] afterwards.

Twelfth month, twenty-ninth day.

To Jigiriya Ihei

[From] Ogata Kōrin

---

102 Yamane dates the letter to around 1702. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 75-76.

103 The same person as in Document IV / 4 and the patron who seems to have commissioned the screen.
Thank you for the sake yesterday. I am indebted to you for managing [the sale of my artworks]. I am also grateful to Kyūbei for his loyal services. I thank you both. Concerning the order for a suzuribako from Edo, I received the three sheets of gold. However, I will not finish it in time, so I cannot get paid for it this year. I will come by a little later today to return the money. Perhaps you could ask the district council for advice. Please kindly help me with this matter.

Twelfth month, twentieth day.

Nishimura Seiiku  Ogata Kōrin

昨日者御酒被下収
奉存候 其上彼其御
取持共収奉存候 九兵衛様へも
久々にて得御意御心入
千万収奉存候 宜御禮
奉頼候
一此すすりはこ江戸より
あつらへにて金三枚ニ
うけとり申候へ共 おそく
出来 当年の金子ニ
なりかね 取次よりも断被申
今日の事ニ候間 少々内へ
入候て成共 金子ニ仕度
奉存候 御町内之御衆中様へ
御相談被成可被下候
御世わながら奉頼上候 以上
十二月廿九日

104 The letter is dated to around 1701 to 1703. The letter accompanies a lacquer writing box (suzuribako) with mizuaoi (a type of hollyhock) by Kōrin, now at the MOA Museum, Atami. It is possible that the box referred to in the letter is in fact the MOA Museum piece. See Yamane, “Kōrin maki-e nidai,” 14–18.

105 See also Documents III / 1 and III 2.

106 One sheet (mai) equaled one ryō gold. See Yamane, “Kōrin maki-e nidai,” 15.

107 Oshū, the district council of elders. Townspeople commonly sought their advice and approval on business transactions. Yamane takes this as evidence that Kōrin and Seiiku perhaps lived in the same district of Kyoto, but his conjecture cannot be verified. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 72.
I am forever grateful for your friendship. As an expression of my gratitude for our many encounters, I am sending you here a box with two kinds of fish. Like you said, yesterday I was fortunate to meet [His Excellency]. I am delighted beyond words. For this, too, I am sending you my heartfelt thanks.

Yours respectfully,

Third month, tenth day. Koreshke (cypher)

To Ueshima Gennojō

Ogata Kōrin

The dating of this letter is uncertain. But in light of the affixed “Koreshke” (or “Iryō”) seal which Kōrin used around the early 1700s, the letter may be dated to the last years of the Genroku era. Judging from Kōrin’s cypher on the letter, Yamane proposes a date around 1697. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 69–70.

The identity of this person is unknown, but he seems to have been someone of high rank, perhaps a member of the aristocracy with whom Kōrin began associating around that time. Ibid.

The letter deals with Kōrin’s experiences during his first trip to Edo in 1704. The dating is based on the spelling of Ogata 尾形 here, which he used until around 1705. Ibid., 78–79.
travel], my relations [Tayo?] will join me.\textsuperscript{111} I was overjoyed to be granted an audience with Lord Eshû\textsuperscript{112} soon [after my arrival]. In the meantime, I have been receiving commissions for paintings from various clients (tokorodokoro). I quickly finished a pair of chrysanthemums screens. Kô[ken?] is also well and I take him along to appointments [with clients] to paint.\textsuperscript{113} I am pleased to receive praise from all sides and have even been invited for tea two times already. I am overjoyed. Please also tell [your brother] about [what I said in this letter].\textsuperscript{114} He should let me know if he desires my services.\textsuperscript{115} Please also send my best wishes to your father.

Sincerely,
Ogata Kôrin (cypher)
Eleventh month, fifteenth day.

To Ueshima Gennojû
The other day, Hôshô daifu Nakakuro\textsuperscript{116} was called and performed Seiganji and Hanagatami. It was quite marvelous and I am at loss for words [to describe his performance].

先月十八日之貴札係拝見候 御一家弔御安全御座候由珍重ニ存候 拙者義道中無障当月二日着府仕京橋老丁目銀座屋敷ニ居住仕候 如来？（命、輪、衆？）道中天気能仕合ニ存候 早速江州様へ御目見仕尾能大慶仕候 此間ハ所々より絵を被頼 菊之絵屏風一雙早仕候 光（献？）も無事ニ罷有外ヘも召連絵仕 皆々褒美有之悦申事ニ候 将又御茶被召寄候方へも両度罷大悦不過之候 此段同名方ヘ被仰依可被下候 爱元御用等も御座候ハハ可被仰下候 御家父様ヘも可然様ニ御意得奉頼候 恭々謹言
尾形光琳（花押）
十一月十五日

上嶋源充様
宝生大夫此中九郎右方へ被来 義願寺花形見を御舞被申候 中々面白キ事言語ノ絶候事ニ候

\textsuperscript{111} However, Tayo did not do so before 1707.

\textsuperscript{112} Ogiwara Shigehide (1658–1713), the financial advisor (kanjô bugyô) of the shogunate.

\textsuperscript{113} Evidence that Kôrin had taken in pupils by the early 1700s and also took at least one of them to Edo.

\textsuperscript{114} Ueshima Gennojô. See Yamane, Rinpa kaiga zenshû Kôrin-ha ichi, 66–67. See Documents III / 5 and III / 8.

\textsuperscript{115} In Document III / 8, a letter to Ueshima Gennojô, Kôrin gives him instructions on painting. It was Gennojô who seems to have introduced Kôrin to Gennojô. This line appears to be the first evidence for their teacher-pupil relationship.

\textsuperscript{116} Hôshô Tomoharu (1654–1728), a Noh actor and head of the Hôshô troupe.
Please let me come again in a little while. Thank you.

Thank you for your letter from yesterday. Please also accept my gratitude for your parting gift of five bundles of small paper (kogami).

In the sorrow of our parting, the sleeves of my sunlit robe are drenched with many layers of blossom scent,
alas, this means farewell.

I will visit you in time to express my gratitude.

Yours sincerely.

Fourth month, thirteenth day. Kōrin (cypher)

To Ueshima Gennojū       [From] Ogata Kōrin

尚々後剋御入来
可被下奉待候  かしく
昨日は御状収  殊更
為御餞別小畑五束
被懸意収存候
花染の袖のなこりにた日こ路も
たちかさ年たる別をそ思ふ
期貴面し御礼
可申仲候  恐惶謹言
四月十三日  光琳（花押）

上嶋源充様  尾形光琳

I received your letters and read them all. I am happy to hear that your family is in good health. My family has been well, as usual. I should have replied sooner, but I have been so occupied lately that I was unable to write to you. My wife is also busy from dawn till dusk. For quite sometime, it has been impossible to rest. Even now, in this intensely hot season, it has been anything but rare for me to visit the estates [of patrons]. I paint hanging scroll after hanging

\[117\] Kōrin’s poem and the feeling of farewell evoked by it suggest that Kōrin sent the letter after his second departure for Edo, around 1705/03. The fourth month is too early for the letter to have been written after Kōrin’s first departure for Edo in 1704. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 80–81.

\[118\] The letter is dated to 1708 or 1709. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 54, 82–84.
scroll. Then, [my patrons] prefer this and that—what have I done to deserve this? It is not unusual that I come to [a patron’s] estate and have to paint with others. I am more exhausted than you can imagine. But I smiled when I saw that you made progress at painting. Why don’t you draw a picture on a small sheet of paper (fukusagami) or so and show me. Even without being a [vocational] painter (ekaki), you can enrich your life with painting and should become proficient in no time. If you paint the same motif (zu) repeatedly, for five or seven times, you memorize it and naturally make progress. [This way], you should improve quickly. I, too, practice to get a little better. I would like to see you soon. But at least we always have each other’s letters. If you do not pour in all your heart when painting, the results will not be good. With the yakifude it is better to be careful. As a rule, after drawing the outlines (shirushi sun) for faces, hands, and legs, you should make it a habit to paint the rest in rough [brushwork]. I see about five or seven paintings by Sesshū every day, and I copy most of them. If you do this and that and paint as if in a daze (neburi tsukitaru), the result fails to be a [true] painting. In any case, I sincerely wish you all my best and that you make progress at painting. This upcoming third month, I might return to Kyoto. This is the earliest that I can make time. [The trip] should do me good. I lack nothing, but I am somewhat exhausted by my work here. Poor people, who live day by day (buji ni agari), gain much happiness. Since I am in demand by day and by night and can never refuse, there is nothing I can do. When I work at night, my hands and legs become numb—signs of old age, I think. Now I have [no more than] a decade to live. It pains me that [life] passes by like this. I am not to envy for being brought before daimyo. Although I am poor, I’d like to say that I am feeling happy. Since you are such a dear friend, I did not pay attention and poured out all my heart.

I hope to see you soon.

Please send my best also to your father.

Yours sincerely.

Eighth month, fourth day.

Ogata Kōrin (cypher)
To Ueshima Genno

度々御状被下々相違致拝見候 御一家御安康之由珍重奉存候 自分一家無意義罷有候 此方より早々以書中可申入處何角取粉無音失本意候 愚妻なと御噂は朝暮申御事に御座候 永々逗留柾々こまり申候 いまだ寄妙成仕合も無之酷暑之節屋敷方へ參数幅之画書候事色々の事を好被申時ハ何の因果ニと存事斗ニ候 乍去無別条相務一度参候御屋敷よりハひとと絵書ニ参候 乍去思の外物少越候而草臥申候 一笑々御絵上達可仕と存候 何ぞふくさ畳に絵ヲ御書候て御見せ可被成候 絵書ニ御成なく共御一生ノ御たのしミ昨今ノ内上手ニ御成可被成候 同し図五七返書候へは覚申物ニ候 とかく書きへいたし候へば絵自然と上達申候 近日何ぞ書候て上せ可申候 抑者も少絵上り短様ニ覚申候 近日可懸御目ニ候 とかく常ノ消息を相認候 心ニ絵も書候ハねば絵よくハ無之候 燃筆なとあまりとくとてあてぬがよく候 有増ノ職手足ノしるし斗して其余ハ中にてぐわ

119 In lieu of a brush, the painter uses a slightly burnt wooden stick. This technique was often employed for underdrawings.
さくわさと御書ならい可被成候 雪舟之絵毎日五七幅つつ見申候 随分写申候 とかくねぶり付たる様に書申候ハ絵にてなく候 とかく我か物ニ成やうニ御心へ何とぞ何とぞ上手ニ御成可被成候 来三月比ハいつれニも上京可仕 最早愛元ニあき申候 よき身ニ 成申候 望事もなく候 いかにいかに務申事草雑出申候 何とぞ何とぞ無事ニ上り販成方が楽多ク御座候 昼夜お頭へ断なくてハ他行もならず 夜ハ如例夜話いたしこ気を窓中々ニ手足もしぼられ申し候 老年ノ印と存候 今十ケ年斗ノ余命 此ままノ而過行事無念と 存候 御大名ノ御身ノ上見申候ても少も不満山候 貧に候共心楽ニいたし度候 御心安 きままわけもなき事書つつけ進し申候
早ケ御対顔願事ニ候
御親父様へも宜様ニ
奉頼候 恐惶謹言
八月四日

小形光琳（花押）
上嶋源丞様

● Document III / 9 - Letter by Kōrin to Tachibanaya Ihei.

To Tachibanaya Ihei  Ogata Kōrin

[My apologies for] being brief last evening. I am at Ichimonji’s now. Please come here to discuss his order for a painting, so I can start working on it. Sincerely.
Ninth month, twentieth day.

橘や伊兵衛様 小形光琳
昨夕ハ早々ニ而候 唯今
吉文字ニ罠居候 御約束之絵
書可進候間乍御大儀ちよと
御入来所仰ニ候 為其如此ニ候
かしく
九月廿日

120 Dated to after 1709. Tachibanaya Ihei seems have worked as an art dealer. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 89.
The triptych by Tan’yū Hōgen, depicting Taigong Wang, Chinese pines (karamatsu), and monkeys, is outstanding. The signature, written in such large letters, is rare. Although the triptych was promised to me, Ikari has asked for the flanking picture of monkeys and Esa would like the Chinese pines. This is unfortunate, but I shall give them their desired paintings. The middle one, of Taigong Wang, will remain with me. Please instruct [Ikari and Esa] to take great care of the paintings. Yours sincerely.

Tenth month, sixteenth day. Masatoki (cypher)

To Takabayashi Tokusai

Ogata Kōrin

Please also give my best to Chihō. It has been a while and I hope everything is going well. For my part, since a day or two I have started to get better, so please don’t worry.

Concerning one of the three inrō [we discussed] the other day, the frontal design of tsubaki and young pines should reach around to the backside. The other two were sent back and I will make new ones instead.

Could you lend me the single six-panel screen with chrysanthemums that you have, so I can compare it with my sketchbook? Kindly send it today, so I receive it tomorrow. It is an old screen.

Second month, eleventh day.

---

121 Tokusai may have been an art dealer or collector, akin to Nishimura Seiiku, who appears in different letters by Kōrin. The handwriting suggests a late date of circa 1714 or 1715. Ibid., 96–97.

122 The letter is dated to 1715 or 1716, the last years of Kōrin’s life. It appears that he was not well at the time of writing. Ibid., 95–96.
The promised Karasumaru ware piece should be ready by tomorrow.

To Konishi Juichirō  Ogata Kōrin

智芳様へも宜く申上頼入申候
此間者御物遠ニ打過申候弥御無事に御勤め候哉承度存候 我等も一両日ハ快方ニて可御
心安候
一先日之印籠三ツノ内椿ニ若松之方先方ニ留リ申候 残弔ツ返納申候重而かわり可進候
一其元ノ菊ノ屏風六枚折片少々絵本ニ見合申度候御借シ頼入申候 明日入可進候間今日
御取出示置頼入申候 ふるき屏風の事ニて候 以上
二月十一日
先日御約束ノからす丸焼明日少々可給候

小西寿市郎殿

尾形光琳
IV. Tea-Related Documents

● Document IV / 1 - Letter by Kōrin to Nakagawa Toshitsune, the governor of Tanba (Tanba mori)\(^{123}\)

Two days after tomorrow, on the morning of the third, Lord Shusui\(^{124}\) will be hosting tea. He would be delighted if you could come as well.

Respectfully,
Tenth month, first day. Kōrin (cypher)

Sekisuiken\(^{125}\)

Lord Tanshū [Nakagawa Toshitsune]\(^{126}\) Kōrin

Presently among company.

明後三日之朝
一服申度候 主水殿
御誘引御来臨
奉待候 不宣
十月朔日 光琳（花押）
積翠軒
中丹州様 光琳
人々御中

● Document IV / 2 - Letter by Kōrin to Higuchi Shōzaburō\(^{127}\)

Recently, I received a letter from Ōmori Fujibei and I am writing to let you know that he understands your situation. Please do not worry, it is not necessary to send him a letter. Yesterday, I attended tea at his residence [where he] served a variety of delicacies. I have to say I was quite jealous at seeing his home. We have made arrangements for me to visit him again today, so I can express my gratitude. I wish you all the best and I hope we will have a chance to meet soon again.

\(^{123}\) The family changed their name to Kitaōji in 1698, suggesting a date before that for this letter. Ibid., 68–69. Toshitsune appears frequently in Nijō-ke nainai gobansho hinamiki, also together with Kōrin. The two men seem to have made each other’s acquaintance through Nijō Tsunahira’s agency.

\(^{124}\) Shusui’s identity is unclear.

\(^{125}\) On his earliest extant screen painting, Poetic Meanings of the Twelve Months, Kōrin used a seal reading “Sekisui.” The screens and this letter probably date from around the same time, the late 1690s.

\(^{126}\) On the identity of Lord Tanshū (Governor of Tanba), see Nishimoto, “Ogata Kōrin hitsu Jūnikagetsu kai-e byōbu ni tsuite (jō),” 14–15.

\(^{127}\) The letter is dated to around 1702. The identities of Higuchi Shōzaburō and the other person mentioned in the letter, Ōmori Fujibei, are unclear. Kōrin apparently knew them through tea. Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 77–78.
Second month, twenty-ninth day. Kōrin (cypher)

To Higuchi Shōzaburō Ogata Kōrin

唯今大森藤兵衛殿より手前へ
御手紙被下 其元へ宜御心得申入候様ニト
申参候 御心安おほめし御礼状も
不申遣之由ニ候
昨日者御茶被下
種々御馳走 為
御住居御浦山敷奉存候
今日御礼ノ儀任御約束候
乍略儀以愚札申入候
尚期面謝候 不宣
二月廿九日 光琳 (花押)

樋口庄三郎様 尾形光琳
[four illegible characters]

● Document IV / 3 - Letter by Kōrin to the kettle maker Inaba

I trust you are well.
I kindly ask you to attach a ring to the kettle stand. Please finish the stand for the *furo* soon. It is an old piece and quite elegant. I am asking you to be quick. The ring will be covered and hidden by ash, so it should not be too difficult [to make it]. I am asking you to be as fast as you can. The kettle stand for the sunken hearth (*irori*) can take its time.
Second month, twelfth day.

I would like to have a look at the large iron hearth.

Ogata Kōrin
Kettle Maker (*kamaya*)
Inaba

御無事御座候哉
一此五徳ニ輪を御つぎ合
仲持ニ被成可被下候

128 Dated to before 1705. Ibid., 73.
129 A portable basin for heating water in a kettle. An *irori* is a sunken hearth that is part of a room’s architecture.
I am happy that you returned to Kyoto in good health. I imagine you must be exhausted after acting as *tsume* for so long. Thank you very much for the two souvenirs you brought back for me. I would like to visit and express my gratitude. You are exhausted, so I will come by in the evening.

Twelfth month, fifteenth day.

I would also like to see the [illegible in original] that you have.

To Ibaraki Hikobei   O[gata] Kōrin

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130 The letter is dated to sometime before 1705. Hikobei seems to have returned from a long tea gathering. Ibid., 74–75.

131 An intermediary between the host and guests at a formal tea gathering. For example, the *tsume* passes the tea bowl and sweets to the guest and back.
On the eleventh, Kichibei told me that he does not want to place an [order of] tea for the bureau (yakusho) for now.

Thank you sincerely for [always] handling [everything] so flawlessly. Please proceed as you like.

I received your letter. I am deeply grateful [for the order]. The freshly [picked] tea and the small foods (otsumami) we received this year were wonderful. I would be delighted if you could send an assortment of teas, as well as two moorhens. Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

Ogata Kōrin

Fourth month, twenty-third day. "Masatoki" seal

To Mitsuda Dōrin

尚々十一日岸部氏方
申参候御茶御役所ノ用事ニ候
態表向之沙汰ハ有之間敷候
芳翰拝見受
追々首尾
御座候申珍重ニ
奉存候 当年
新茶無御障

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132 Dated to around 1711 and 1712. Ibid., 87–88.
133 The Ginza official Kichibe Jirōemon. Ibid., 88.
134 Kōrin and Dōrin communicated back and forth using the same sheet of paper. This document combines three different letters by the two men.
御摘被成候由目出度
奉存候  依之
御茶一種井
鶴二羽被懸御
意幾久卜祝入
忝奉存候 賞覧

よきやうに可仕候
可被御心安候 以上
弥御堅固被成
可仕候 期面上御
礼可申仲候 恐惶謹言
小形光琳
四月廿三日  方祝（花押）
溝田道林様

● Document IV / 6 - Letter by Kōrin to the townsman Maruichi Saemon135

The kettle at Byōdōin is elegant.
I won’t forget it so easily.
Thank you for serving me tea yesterday. You have been very kind and
I sincerely thank you for it.
Your scroll is a very rare piece. It was a big wish of mine to see it and I was
amazed.
I very much hope we can see each other soon.
Yours sincerely.
Eleventh month, seventh day.  Masatoki (cypher)136

To Maruichi Saemon  O[gata] Kōrin

平等院之御釜おもしろく候
難忘存事ニ候
昨曰者御茶被下  竁過分
至極存候 難御礼申謝候

135 Dated to around 1714 and 1715. Ibid., 98–99.
136 The cypher here, “kotobuki” 寿, is the same that Kōrin used in several of his ink paintings and sabi-e, suggesting
that these works date to the latter years of Kōrin’s life.
殊ニ珍敷御一軸共 御見せ破成
本望之至御座候 驚目申候
尚々致面謁万々可申伸候
恐々謹言
霜ノ七日 方祝（花押）

丸市左衛門様 尾 光琳
まいる
Come onstage and assume the open posture (hiraki) to a slight degree. On, “This cherry tree,” check your positioning against the orientation pillar (metsukebashira). On, “From the leg-tiring mountain,” advance; on, “I pick flowers to go with my firewood,” kneel, put down the flowers, pick up the cane, and circle to the right. As written. Toward the waki. On, “What a silly thing for a monk like you to say,” face the waki. On, “Indeed, Suma Bay,” advance softly, and on, “storms in the mountain heights,” look up. On, “troubled by the sound of thunder,” circle to the left, and on, “by the winds from the bay,” open pose facing the front. On, “the blossoms of the mountain cherry,” look at a point above the orientation pillar. On, “Indeed, the blossoms are a lodging; let me show you to your room!” toward the waki. Then, on, “Ah, these flowers!” look again. On, “Having walked the day away,” face the front and kneel. On, “Oh you monks,” toward the waki. As written. On, “Here, sit upon a flower-throne; oh how felicitous!” toward the waki. On, “It was in hopes you monks might pray for me,” face the waki. On, “Sleep here in the shadow of the blossoms in the moonlight,” circle to the right, and on, “he vanished, lost to sight,” perform the open posture, then exit: end of first half (nakairi).

Enter the stage and assume the open posture. On, “I have come before you as a ghost, in this world so full of delusion,” turn to the front. On, “this, the greatest cause of my deluded clinging,” toward the waki. On, “But since you are,” turn to the front. On, “the servant of Shunzei who selected my poem,” toward the waki. On, “Oh you winds of Suma Bay,” stick your left foot out straight. On, “Indeed, when one is born into a waka poets’ house,” sit on the stool. On, “and Shunzei edited it,” toward the waki. On, “Kitsunegawa,” get up from the stool and advance. On, “And when I had expressed my poet’s wish,” open pose, toward the waki. On, “and, my wish granted, I took up bow and quiver,” circle to the left, and on, “to Suma Bay where Prince Genji once lived,” open pose, and on, “but for the Heike a mistake,” left-right gesture. On, “So then, at the Battle of Ichinotani,” walk to the bridgeway (hashigakari). On, “We got in our ships, one and all,” return, and on, “we floated upon the sea,” hold the fan aloft and gaze. On, “I, too, thinking to board the ships, went forth to the water’s edge,” run...

(Please note: the text is partially erased or unclear in the original document.)

drop the fan. On, “I grasped Rokuyata in my left hand, then tossed him aside,” On, “Now I’m done for!” toss him away to the left, gaze, sit down with a thud, and on, “You there, out of my way!” point to the left. On, “Let me bow to the West,” bow, and on, “I said,” drop the hand. On, “What a moving sight!,” pick up the fan. On, “Rokuyata drew his sword,” look at the fan. On, “at last he cut off my head,” let the head droop toward the fan. On, “Rokuyata thought to himself,” stand up quietly. On, “To see his dead body,” look at the Starting Point. On, “My hitatare cloak had maple leaves beneath a cloudy sky,” open pose, and on, “from which fell autumn showers,” point [sashi] with one foot and look up. On, “Such was the scene depicted there in brocade,” kneel down and look. On, “How I wish I knew his name!,” stand up, circle to the right, and on, “when he examined my quiver,” mime drawing an arrow, and on, “there was a poem card (tanzaku) attached,” look at it. On, “a poem was written there on the topic, ‘a wayside inn,’” grasp the poem card with the right-hand hem of the robe.

On, “taking shelter there,”

On “traveling until sunset,” softly advance. On, “in the shadows beneath the trees,” face forward. On the beat, drive in (norikomi) to the left, open pose. The music at this point intensifies (kakeri). Turn back, circle around twice, take the tanzaku, and on, “Tonight the blossoms,” softly advance. On, “shall be my host,” drive in to the left, and on, “Tadanori,” pull back your right foot, face forward, and look. On, “Well then, there can be no doubt,” point and circle around (sashimawari) to the left. On, “the Governor of Satsuma,” open pose, and immediately on, “is who you are,” clap hands and drop the tanzaku. On, “When you came by under the shadow of these blossoms,” toward the waki.

Gently [karoku]137 face forward and advance a little at a time. On, “I made the sun set,” kneel. On, “Now there can be no doubt,” stamp a beat. On, “Flowers to their roots fall back,” look down at the fan. On, “to their roots,” pick up the fan again and step in (fumikomi) to the right. On, “fall back,” push in toward the center (kaneme nite woshihe), circle to the left, and immediately, on “Please pray for me!” point in (sashikomi) toward the waki, circle to the right, and face forward. On, “The blossoms are my host,” open your fan and stomp the final beat.

Written [in the Year of the] Water-Rat, Kanbun 12 [1672], tenth month, ninth day.

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137 This seems to be a stage direction for the actor to assume a gentle demeanor, in contrast to the bellicose attitude in the first part of the play.
Atsumori
Upstage, in front of the side seats. Turn toward the orientation pillar, face the tsure.\textsuperscript{138} Sing, “The sweet music of the mower’s flute,” and on, “The men mowing grass on this hill,” and, “time to go home,” toward the tsure. On, “just passing the time,” pass by the tsure on the right side and go to the space in front of the large drum (ōtsuzumi). On, “Yes, it was our music,” exchange dialogue as written. On, “Koeda, Semiore: many are the names of famous flutes,” and “That flute was called Aoba,\textsuperscript{139}” open posture. On, “the water’s edge at Sumiyoshi,” circle to the left, and on “that flute was made of the remains of wood,” open posture, and on, “from the seafolk’s salt-making fires at Suma,” face the waki, sit down, and exchange dialogue as written. On, “I join my palms and pray,” face the waki, join palms. On, “come and make intercession for me,” stand up, face the waki, and on, “and all at once he disappeared,” circle to the right and turn back. On, “lost to sight,” open pose.

At center stage, open posture. On, “Hello there, Rensei,\textsuperscript{140} it is I, Atsumori!” toward the waki. Exchange dialogue as written, and on, “When they say, ‘Forsake evil friends and cleave to good enemies,’” advance. On, “are you the sort of good enemy they mean?,” open pose. On, “Thank you! Thank you!,” circle to the left. On, “all night long, let me tell my sins,”

\[Kōrin’s\ practice\ notes\ end\ here\]

\[various\ blank\ pages\ in\ between\]

(Next page)

[the following pages are notes of performances that Kōrin either witnessed or participated in]  

Group of performers on the first day:\textsuperscript{141} Sōken, Tōzaburō, Kanzabu[rō] [Kenzan], Hirauchi, Chōhei, Shigesuke, Shōemon, Hikobei, Yatarō, Zen’emon, Hisatoku, Juan, Chōgen, Jōyo, Karino Konaburi, Shichihei, Yahei, Sekishin

Group of performers on the second day: Kimuraya Ichimon, Sōken, Tō[zaburō], Ichin[jō] [Kōrin], Kan[zaburō] [Kenzan], Chōhei, Zen’emon, Miya, Matazaemon, Sekishin, Jōyo, Hisasan, Entoku, Chōgen, Shichiyasu, Iwa, Hyakuya Suun, Hakuun, Gorōhei. Hot water from Shimotachiuri or from us [our house?]

\textsuperscript{138} An actor supporting the main role.

\textsuperscript{139} The Heike text refers to the flute’s name as Saeda. See Tyler, \textit{The Tale of the Heike}, 506.

\textsuperscript{140} Fujiwara Tomoie (1182–1258), one of the thirty-six immortal poets.

\textsuperscript{141} Probably community performances of Noh, involving townspeople from the same district.
Shinzaburō, Chōgorō wears the mask. Kanzabu[rō] [Kenzan] and myself bring the money.

Group of performers on the third day: Sō[ken], Tō[zaburō], Ichi[nojō] [Kōrin], Chōhei, Shichémon. Seven performers: Chōgen, Zen’emon, Yatarō, Hisatoku, Juan, Hyakuun, Master Kanseki Kinryū,142 Shōemon, and Yahei.

Spectacle on the forth day at Lord Chūsho’s [estate?].143 Page of Lord Chūsho, Hachimonjiaya, Yatarō, young Lord Chūsho, Zen’an. Sō[ken], Tōzaburō, Ichi[nojō] [Kōrin], Kanzō.

One gallery for the audience. Stage [consisting of] three tatami. The rightmost tatami was returned to Chōhei. Of the two [remaining] tatami, the one used on the left during the first day was returned to [illegible in original] on the third day.

Noh [by] Master Kanze144
First Day [of the performance]
Eleventh Day [of the month] - clear sky, performance
Seventeenth Day - clear sky, no performance
Second Day [of the performance]
Twelfth Day [of the month] - clear sky, no performance
Third Day [of the performance]
Fifteenth Day - clear sky, performance
Fourteenth Day - clear sky, no performance
Sixteenth Day - no performance, rain
Fourth Day [of the performance]
Eighteenth Day - performance

After the trouble last time, [now] were admitted without ticket.

(Next page)

Learned [the play] The Zhong Kui [demon queller] the afternoon (and evening) of the fifteenth of the ninth month of 1672.
Written down on the ninth of the tenth month of 1672.145

142 This person appears to be a professional performer, probably a Noh master of a te-sarugaku troupe.

143 May refer to a member of the Shimazu clan, who frequently used the name Chūsho.

144 Different interpretations have been offered on this performance. Yamane Yūzō reads Kōrin’s record as his account of a performance by Sōken, himself, and his brothers. The theater historian Miyamoto Keizō, however, proposed that Kōrin recorded a performance by Kanze Shigekiyo that he witnessed together with his family. Miyamoto quotes a recorded performance by Shigekiyo that fits Kōrin’s description. The performance took place in Kyoto at the same time. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 29 and Miyamoto, Kamigata nōgakushi no kenkyū, 98–99, 113.

145 This shows that Kōrin took his notes quite some time after his actual practice. In this case, roughly a month after.
The waki’s road song (michiyuki)

When he says, “I look out upon the waves breaking, the day ending,” from the time when he begins to chant, the curtain rises. The shite calls out, “Hello, you there!” and advances. The waki performs the dialogue (ashirai) as written. On, “Though you seek them, they are formless,” advance. On, “the pines do not answer,” open posture. On, “Truly, all the things of this world,” circle to the left, and on, “The flower will one day lose its scent, the maple leaf its color,” open posture. On, “By and by they fade away,” face the waki and kneel down. On, “grief comes quickly,” [turn] toward the waki, [then face] forward. On, “more fleeting than the dew on the flowers of the morning glory,” [look] up. On, “When will I leave this sad mortal world?,” [turn] toward the waki. On, “like the brothers Vimalagarbha and Vimalanetra from the Lotus Sutra,” open pose. Take the beat (kashiratori). On, “high as seven palmyra trees,” look up. On, “ascending to the Realm of the Boundless Space Treasury,” point (sashi) and look up, and on, “coming forth on earth,” kneel on the left knee and drop the fan hand. On, “flames spouted forth,” point, stand up, open pose. From here on, rhythmic chant (hyōshi). Rhythmic chant ends at, “walking on water as if it were land, running away in a flash.” On, “He vanished, leaving only echoes,” circle to the right, turn back, circle twice, open posture, then exit: end of first half.

Run out, open posture on the main stage, encounter, and on, “Gods and spirits,” face forward. On, “Do you not understand my intent?,” [turn] toward the waki. On, “For I am sworn,” advance slightly. On, “to protect the land,” open posture. On, “With jeweled sword,” advance slightly with the feet. On, “gleaming fiercely,” open posture, take the beat (kashiratori). On, “to shame the sun and moon,” look up, take the beat. On, “like the boughs of a pine tree,” point and advance. On, “shaken by the storm,” open posture. On, “evil spirits scatter,” circle softly to the left. Clasp your robe (kariginu). On, “I am that mysterious numen, the Zhong Kui,” open posture. On, “What a felicitous meeting!,” turn to the back and sit (kutsurogi), then circle and advance. On, “The suicidal rage that turned me into the Zhong Kui,” take up the rhythm (hyōshi o torite), circle to the left, and on, “has become an impetus to enlightenment,” open pose, and on, “So it is my felicitous vow,” perform a right-left move (sayū), advance. On, “to protect the Sovereign’s Way, from the towers of the Forbidden City there among the clouds,” point [upwards]. On, “here and there,” circle to the right, and on, “around the palace complex,” return. On, “and the jeweled palace,” open posture. On, “beneath the porticos,” flip sleeves up (sode o kazashi), move towards the main pillar (daijin bashira), circle to the left, open posture, and on, “sure enough,” drop sleeves, and on, “gods and spirits lose their power,” run from the main pillar to the space before the hip drum (ōtsuzumi), and on, “come forth and are revealed,” face the front. On, “All at once,” pull back the left foot. From, “My magic blade sings, snicker-snack!” sing with the beat (hyōshi nari). Sing with the the beat as far as, “I cut them all away.” On, “before your very eyes,” point, circle to the right, and at the front of the stage sink down (mi o hisomu). Look at the sword. On, “shining forth from the heavens,” point [towards the] upstage right, and on, “spreading across the earth below,” kneel on the left knee and look down. Move

[Masks:] Dōji [young boy] and Kobeshimi [grimacing god]146

146 The masks worn by the shite in this play.

147 Chapter 27 of the sutra.
straight to the left, kneel on the right knee, and stand up. On, “a well-governed realm,” circle back twice, open pose, strike a battle pose with the sword, and on, “this is my vow!,” stamp the final beat.

(Cover)

花伝抄
口忠則
仕舞付
尾形市之丞

(Page One)

舞台に入て少ひらく心持又是成桜と目ヲ付ル足引くノ山の方と出テ花を折そうへてと下居て花を下ニおき杖をつき右へまはる
文言のことくワキヘあまりにをろかなる御僧とワキへ実やすまの浦としつかに出テミね嵐やと上ヲ見ル音をこそいといしニ左へまはり浦風にと正面へ向開山の桜とはしの目着付たる所ノ上ヲ見ル実お宿かな参らせ候ハんとワキヘや此華と又見る行暮て此下陰正面向て居るお僧達とワキへもん言のことくさ候へ有かたやとワキヘ御僧にとハれんとワキヘへタへの花の陰にて右へ廻り行方とひらき中入

(Page Two)

舞台にて開て

？か [written in crimson]
こんばく [in crimson] にうつりかわりて来たりさなきたにと正面へ、もうしろうの中の
第一なれとワキヘ、されとも其をと正面
御身へ御内ニワキへ、すまの浦風と左のあしすくにつさ、けにや
和歌の家に生れてとしやうき、是をせんすとワキヘ、
きつね川とせうきはなれ出る、哥の望をなけきしに
とひらき、ワキヘ、望たりぬれば又きうせにと角とり
左へ廻り二へん廻りて、源氏のすみ所とひらき、平家の為ハときら幽、
去程ニ一谷のかつせんとはしかかりへ行、皆々舟にと立帰る、海上ニ
うかふと扇かざへ（し？）見る、我も舟にのらんとて汀の方に打出しにとばしたり
出、うしろを見たれはと右へ立帰り、武蔵の国の住人と正面へ、六七騎力
間追かけたりとひらき、橋かかりの方見る、是こそと左へまわり、駒の
たつを引かへせはと右へまはり、[passaged erased in original]六弥太傾面と袖まき、
むすとくミとくむ、両馬か間にとうとおつと左のひさたて下ニ
居て、彼六弥太をとつておさへとひさ立かへ、左の手ニておきへ、こし
ことく
のかたなと扇にて大刀ノつかにかくる、よせひ右のかいなを打おとせはト

(Page Three)

扇を下におとす、左の御手にて六弥太をとつてなけのけと
今ハかなはしと下ニとと居る
左のほうへとつてすて、見て、そのき給へと、左ニテはしかたへ
西おかままとおかむ、のたまひしと手をおろす、いははやと
扇取、六やた大刀をと扇見て、つひに御くひを扇にておしゆる、
六弥太心に思ふ様トしづかにたち、御しかいを見奉れはと初の
所ヲ見る、うすぐもりとひらき、時雨そと一足ニテはし、上ヲ見る、
にしきのひたれと下ニ居テ見る、御名ゆかしき所にと立、右ヘまはり、
箒ヲ見ねハと矢ぬき、たん尺をつけられたりとたん尺見て、
見れは旅宿の題をすへと右の手にて短冊のすそ取、
やとせはと

行暮てとしぇかに出、此下かけをと正向テ拍子ニ左へのりこみ間（開？）、
此間かけり、立返り二返まはり、たんしやくとつて、花やこよひと
しづかに出、あるしならましと左へのりこみ、忠度と右ノ
足引、正向テ見る、拝うたかいあらしと左にてきまはり、
さつまの守とひらき、すぐに、ますそと手を打、たん尺
すつる、御身此花の陰に立寄たまいしをとわきへ

かろく
むき、少つつ出、日をくらしと下に居、いまはうたかいと拍子、
花ハねにと扇をおろしちって、根にて扇とりなをし、右へふみ
こみ、かへる成とかねめにてをしへ、左へまはり、すぐに、たび給へと
ワキヘさしこみ、右へまはり、正面向、花こそと扇あけてみ、
拍子とめる。

壬子寛文十二年十月九日ニ書

(Page Five [Page Four is empty])

敦盛
あつ 舞台さきわきのまへ、みつけはしらのかたへむき、つれと
もり 向合、くさかりふえとうたい、かのおかと、かへるさとつれへ、すめ
はと斗と、つれを右のわきをとをし大のまへにゆき、
さん候我ら、文言のことくあひしらふ、小枝せミをれと、
あをはのふへとひくく、住吉汀と左へまはり、是ハ須磨の
塩末とひらき、あまのたきさしとわきへむき、したに
ゐ、文言のことくあひしらふ、たなこころをあはせてと
わきへむき、あはせたなこころ、むかいてとたち、わきへむ
かい、かぎけすやうにと右へまはり返、うせにけりとひらく、
舞台内テ
ひらき、あわちかた、いかに蓮性とわきへ文言のことく
あひしらい、はあや悪人のいでて、御身の事かとひらく、
有難くし有難くし々と左へまはる、夜すからいさや申さんと

[Various blank pages in between]

(Next page) [the following pages are notes of performances that Kōrin either witnessed or participated in]

初日手前の衆 宗謙、藤三郎、寛三、平内、長兵ヘ、茂助、庄エ門、彦兵ヘ、谷
太郎、善右エ門、久とく、寿庵、長元、常与、かりのこなふり、七兵ヘ、八兵ヘ、せき
しん

二日きむらや一門 宗謙、藤、市（me）、寛、長兵ヘ、善右エ門、三弥、又左
エ門、せきしん、常与、久さん、ゑんとく、長元、七やす、いわ、百やすうん、白うん、
五郎兵ヘ、下立うりゆか、手前のゆか、

新三郎さん敷、長五郎殿おんめん？？御
寛三 三日手前の衆 宗、藤、市、寛、長兵ヘ、七右エ門、手前の七、長元、
予 善右エ門、谷太郎、久とく、寿庵、百うん、寛赤金柳大夫殿、庄右エ門、
要かね 八兵ヘ、
もち 四日中書殿御見物 中書殿小性、八文字や、谷太郎、中書殿若物、善庵、
参候 宗、藤三郎、市、寛三、
棧敷一間芝居たたみ三帳、右一帳ハ
長兵衛殿ヘ御返、二帳之内三日め初日
一帳左？？殿へかし申候

くわんせ大夫能
初日

600
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>日目</th>
<th>11日</th>
<th>晴、能有</th>
<th>14日</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>三日</td>
<td>13日</td>
<td>雨</td>
<td>16日</td>
<td>無能、雨</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

（new page）

ならいたる日

壬子ノ九月十五日夜前　鐘馗　壬子ノ十月九日二書

えまで　たうし　こへし

ワキ道行

よるほどもなきな咲け夜と云、うたびの時分ち幕上、シテ、いかに
あれならよびかけて出、もんことくウキあらわし、たつ
ぬるにかたつながと出る、松はかたへすと問（問）実し何しもと
左へまわり、ついにハそわぬ花紅葉と開、いつをかいつとわきへ
向、下に居る、かなしみ早く来りとわきへ、正面、朝顔の花、上、

かしら取

はなれはつへきト現きへ、浄蔵浄眼のことくニト開、其たかさ
七たらしゆ（多羅樹）と上みる、こくう（虚空）に上りとさし、うへをミテ、ちに出て
と

是ちひうち

左にひさ付き、扇をろす、くわふん（火焰）とさして立、開、水をふ
むこと六じ（陸路）のことくさら々とはしききて、是迄拍子、
かたちわと右へまわり、立かへり、二へん廻り、開、中入
はしり出る、内にてひらき、あふ鬼神と正面、なんじ

ワキに

しらずわかつ国土をままると少出、ちかい（誓）ありと開、
ほうけん（宝鏡）とあして少出る、ささましくとひらく、
頭取、日月かけおろさかにと上ヲ見、頭取ル、松嵐梢とさして出、

カリ衣のあしらひ有

はらふこと開、悪鬼のと左へしつかにまひり、せい霊と開、
ありかたの御事とくつろき、まひり出、鐘馗及第ノ々拍子取テ
左へまはり、ほつきはたいしんとひらき、実かたき誓ヒとて
Document V / 2 - Notes on the Seven Emotions in Noh, given to Kōrin by Shibuya Shichizaemon (here Shichirōemon)

KKZ 137 (pp. 173–174)

[These notes are meant] for understanding the intricacies of the seven states of the spirit. They are the starting point [for the study] of Noh.

Happiness (yorokobi). When one is happy, the spirit gets warm. [This feeling is found in] the entry of the maejite and nochijite of Takasago; in the bliss of Kamo; and in the essence of the words [chanted] after monogi in Tōsen.

Anger (ikari). When one is angry, the spirit flushes. [This feeling is found in] the entry of Aoi no ue; in the finale of Ukai; in the maejite of Kanawa.

Anguish (urei). When one is anguished, the spirit congregates. [This feeling is found in] the entries of the maejite and nochijite in Utō; the entry of Tōsen; in Kashiwazaki, after the encounter with Kotarō.

---

148 The act of changing costume onstage. While this practice may involve a change of the entire upper garment of the shite, monogi can also encompass donning a courtier’s hat (eboshi) or undressing a sleeve of the upper robe.
Memory (omoi). When one is reminiscing, the spirit becomes fettered. [This feeling is found in] the nochijite of Hanjo; in the maejite of Tōsen; in the demon in Kanawa; in the maejite of Funa Benkei; after monogi in Kashiwazaki and Matsukaze.

Sadness (kanashimi). When one feels sad, the spirit is erased. [This feeling lies in] the maejite of Miidera; the maejite of Ukai; in the entry of the nochijite in Kashiwazaki; in Matsukaze, after the kusumai.\textsuperscript{149}

Fear (osore). When one is afraid, the spirit plummets. [This feeling can be found in] the maejite of Hanjo; in the entry [of the actor] in Rōtaiko; in the finale of Ataka, Shōzon, and Funa Benkei.

Surprise (odoroki). When one is surprised, the spirit is startled. [This feeling lies in] the finale of Miidera; in the finale of Tanikō; in the maejite of Kashiwazaki; in the finale of Shōzon.

These are considered the [seven] spirits, and the different Noh plays should be categorized accordingly.

Study of the methods of various Noh plays
\(<\) [in crimson]\textsuperscript{150} | First, you must consider [and learn] the skill of your master [teacher]; second, you must grasp [a play’s] tempo by learning to play the large and small flutes, and the drums; third, you learn how to chant.
| During the shidai\textsuperscript{151} of the waki, in plays that require nanori,\textsuperscript{152} it is crucial to remember [the text]. When the shite addresses the waki while he enters the stage, the waki turns towards the curtain after entering the stage. \(<\) [in crimson] During the shidai\textsuperscript{153} in such plays [text incomplete]

\(<\) [in crimson] | [Learning how to] ease your shoulders is crucial to improve one’s skill. When you lower your shoulders, that action conveys two expressions. First, you must pay attention to your left and right sleeves; when you are skillful at this, your body, your heart, and both sleeves become one. Further, for [mastering to] lower the shoulders, you must practice to ease them. The grace of your shoulders is paramount. [Learning to] ease your shoulders from the heart is crucial. Lowering your shoulders [too much] by just an inch is undesirable. By way of these two

\textsuperscript{149} Kusemai are rhythmical dances usually accompanied by a kotsuzumi and taiko drum.

\textsuperscript{150} The fact that Kōrin marked this column in red color indicates the importance of this sequence of teachings for Noh apprentices.

\textsuperscript{151} A particular rhythm played at the entry of different characters of a play. Shidai commonly introduce the singing of an actor.

\textsuperscript{152} The practice of introducing the character upon entering the stage.

\textsuperscript{153} Music accompanying the entry of an actor.
methods, you should be able to improve your skill. You should [also] consult with an advanced performer.

(Postscript)

Mastery of the shimai above requires many years. These teachings shall be safeguarded closely, and they must not be shown to others.

Enpō 4 [1676]

Tatsuno, [on the] first month thirteenth day. Shibuya Shichirōemon (cypher), aged 38.

[Given to] Ogata Ichinojō, aged 18 at the time.

(extra sheet attached to postscript)

Total number of 31 sheets.

(Envelope)

Noh Documents

[By] Shibuya Sessai [Shichirōemon]

They contain secret teachings.

Shimaizuke is [the collection] of shimai by the Kobatake family.

七傷気面之内心得也 能ノ出羽と有

幸 よろこぶ時、気あたゝかに成ル 高砂前後ノ出羽、賀茂ノ枯枝、物着ちハ此文字ノ
心ニ唐船

怒 いかる時ハ気さかのほる 葵上出羽、鶴飼ノ切、鉄輪前

小太郎ニあふてち

憂 うれふると時ハ気あつまる 善知鳥前後ノ出羽、唐船出羽、柏崎

物着ち

思 おもふ時気むすはふる也 斑女ノ後、舟橋前、鉄輪ノ鬼、船弁慶前、柏崎、松風

悲 かなしむ時ハ気きゆる 三井寺前、鶴飼ノ前、柏崎後ノ出羽、松風曲舞ち

恐 おそる時ハ気くだる 斑女前、籠太鼓ノ出様、安宅、正尊、舟弁慶切り

驚 おとろく時ハ気はたらく 三井寺切ノ出羽、谷行ノ切、柏崎前、正尊切リノ出羽

加様仕分候間、諸能分別可被立也

諸能仕様覚語之習
＜[in crimson]＞第一其大夫才覚別所、第二大小笛太
打覚拍子ヲ知ル事、第三詠ヲ覚ふ
之吟味専一之事
| わき次第二而も名乗ニテモ出ル作レ有能ニハ、覚語ヲ可仕事専一也、シテワキヘ言か
けニ而出ル能之時ハ、ワキ
出ルト其ま、幕ヘか、リ可然也、＜[red]＞次第之時ハ其能[text incomplete]

＜[in crimson]＞肩ヲクツロゲル事、是能上ル第一之分別也、肩ヲ
落ト言心にニつ有、先はり合たる左右ノ袖に
気ヲ付ケ候ノ、よくよくはり合、身ヲ心ト両ノ袖と一駄ニ
シテ、揃(sate)肩ヲ落ル処ニクツロゲ候事習也、肩之きミ
専一也、心よりクツロゲル事専一也、肩舞ハいやにて候、
此ニツ能ニより仕様可有事也、功者ニ御尋有ヘ

(Postscript)

右之仕舞之心得　数年
　仕習之段、任御執心書付進之申候、
　他人に努々御見セ被成間敷候、以上
延宝四

　行年三十八
　タツノ　正月十三日　　渋谷七郎右衛門（花押）
御行年十八歳ノ時
　尾形市丞殿

(extra sheet attached to postscript)

　紙数三十壱枚

(Envelope)

能ノ書物
　しぶやせつさい殿
　秘書有之
　仕舞付ハ小畠ノ家ノ仕舞付也
VI. Inscriptions on Paintings

● Document VI / 1 - Kōrin’s Dream Painting of Mt. Fuji.

My dream in the night of the ninth day of the first month in Genroku 12 [1699]
After [the dream], I went to Nishi Honganji to see His Excellency [abbot Jakunyo]. He asked me not to leave before I tell him [of my dream]. I explained that, in my dream, I traveled to Edo and saw Mt. Fuji. Once he heard this, [Jakunyo] exclaimed ‘This is a good dream’ and he told me to quickly put it to paper. I did so immediately. [What I saw in my dream] is here before you on this folded scrap of paper. But, when I sketched (shosha) Mt. Fuji, this was also nothing but a dream.

On the morning of the tenth day of the first month.
  Written by Kōrin (cypher)

元禄十二卯年正月九日夜　夢中に
西本願寺召して御前に而　御放候序ニ何方へも不参候哉と　御尋あり
申上ルニ此中夢ニ江戸へ参候と申　上候へはそれは
富士を見つらんト仰られし如何にも
見申候ト申上候へは　それハよい夢なり
急き書写可致由伺仰に折節
御前ニ有りし物包たる料紙ニ　如此ニ (claim to exactitude of painting !)
富士を書写いたし候へは　又是も夢中の事也
正月十日朝
  光琳書 (花押)

● Document VI / 2 - Inscription on Kōrin’s portrait of the renga poet Botanka Shōhaku (Private Collection, Japan) and the painting’s box inscription

(Painting inscription)

In the thirteenth night of the ninth month　Shōhaku
I awoke in the sky and saw the night
So everlasting, was the autumn moon

154 Jakunyo’s prime acolyte and future successor, Jūnyō, was set to travel to Edo one month after Kōrin’s dream. Jakunyo interpreted Kōrin’s dream as a good omen for the journey.

155 The conversation with Jakunyo and Kōrin’s sketching of the dream also happened inside his dream, creating an inversion of two dreams in one. However, Kōrin evidently both talked to Jakunyo and sketched his dream after he awoke as well.
Botanka’s [portrait] inscribed by Koga Dainagon on the tenth day of the tenth month.
Takeuchi, third rank

(Painting inscription)

九月十三夜 肖柏
空にをきて みむ夜や
いく世 秋の月

(Box inscription)

牡丹花賛 久我大納言 十月十日出来 竹内三位

● Document VI / 3 - Inscription on Kōrin’s Cormorant Fisher (Seikadō Bunko Art Museum, Tokyo)

Seeing the iron-caged fires [dangling] from the fishing boats on the Ōigawa river, I am made aware of night’s darkness descending.

大井川うふねのか々りほのみえて
くたすやなみのよるにしらる々

---

156 The courtier Koga Michitomo (1660–1719). See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 64.

157 Takeuchi Koretsune (1640–1704), a courtier who was part of Nijō Tsunahira’s circle. See Emura, Neoi no bungen, 279.

158 Probably refers to Ōigawa, a river in the north-western part of Kyoto. However, there is another Ōigawa known in Edo-period Japan that flows in the territory of Kai province (today’s Yamanashi), which is the setting of the Noh play Ukai. The play thematizes cormorant fishing and, as Emura Tomoko argues, Ukai might have functioned as Kōrin’s inspiration for this painting. The poem, otherwise unidentified, could make reference to the play in this way. On the other hand, the possible author of this poem, Hino Terumitsu, was the official liaison (tensō) of the imperial court at Kamo Shrine in Kyoto. By way of its location at the confluence of the Kamo and Katsura rivers, the shrine maintained a strong relationship with the rivers of the city. Terumitsu most likely observed ukai fishing at Ōigawa in Kyoto, but, given the prevalence of Noh theater at the time, he might have drawn an association with the play Ukai. In the process, the setting of Kai province is not imperative. Rather, the actual place that Terumitsu observed ukai fishing assumes the role of a proxy for a multitude of associations. See Emura, “Kōrin ga ni okeru nō,” 19–38.

159 Sakai Höitsu identified Hino Terumitsu as the inscriber of the poem in his box inscription.
● Document VI / 4 - Inscription by Nakane Genkei on Kōrin’s portrait of Nakamura Kuranosuke

This year, [Ogyū Sorai] bestowed upon Fujiwara Nobumitsu [Kuranosuke], aged thirty-six, the posthumous pseudonym of Recluse of the Bright Heart and the Ever-Radiant Changing Dusk (Shinkōin jōshō iseki koji). Thus, he ordered a picture made. I, then, inscribed that portrait in the northwestern [upper left] corner, as a memento of the [passage of] time. Genroku 17 [1704], [Year of the] Wood Monkey, third Month. Hiraaki Genshin ([square relief seal] “Hiraaki shi”)  

今茲藤信盈季三十六預定殁後號曰心光院常照異夕居士且令画其肖像自筆一句遺于屋漏於是乎識其歳月云　元禄十七祀在甲申三月　平璋元伸 ([square relief seal] 平璋氏)\(^\text{160}\)

● Document VI / 5 - Inscription on Kōrin’s Dream Painting of Daikokuten

My dream on the twenty-ninth day of the third month in the year Shotoku 4 (1714)  
Near some person, there is a wooden statue that looks like Daikokuten, which points to the Seven Expedient Means. When someone came to be granted a wish by this wooden statue, it pointed its finger [at him] and laughed. Looking at the person, [I] did not hear he was Niji, but upon asking the wooden statue, it said Niji laughs the lucky laugh, pointed two fingers [at me] and laughed.\(^\text{161}\) The person in the lower portion [to the left] is watching guard.  

正徳四年甲午三月二十九日夢  
あるのもとに大黒天のような木像をはしちかく  
さし出し置、其木像の心に叶人来れはゆびを  
さして笑ける、人見て汝ハニ字もきかすいかなる  
木像そとたつねけれど、ニ字ハ福恵見とて  
ゆひ二つさしておらいける、下部の者なとあたりに  
守り居ける


\(^\text{161}\) Niji could be a name used by an unidentified cleric. See Yamane, Kōrin kenkyū ichi, 51–52.
VII. Documents Postdating Kōrin’s Death

● Document VII / 1 - Kenzan’s eulogy for Kōrin, inscribed on Kōrin’s painting of plum blossoms beneath the moon

This scroll of plums under the moon by Hokkyō Kōrin, preserves the memory of his brush.
I gave it to Kōzen’in at Tachibana,
[to ensure] his happiness in the afterlife, at day and night.
Hearing the blissful tones of the Mahayana,
I can only think he became one with the heavenly realms.
Kyōhō 1 [1716], eleventh month, second day.

Presented by Shōtei [Tayo].
The flowers in this painting are tainted with
the colors of ever so many years ending.
They are the memento of a [beloved] someone.

梅月の画軸亡失
法橋光琳筆を染
のこし置処也これを
龍華の興善院江納て
冥福にそなふ朝夕
大乗の妙音をきかは
なとか結縁のならさらん
やとおもふ事しか也
千時享保元年
丙申霜月二日
尚貞自敬
うつし絵の花はちとせの
色ながらそのあととめぬ
人のおもかけ

---

162 Half a year after Kōrin had died, his widow Tayo gave the painting to the temple Kōzen’in where Kōrin was buried. Yamane, "Kōrin kenkyū ichi", 53–54.
Document VII / 2 - Invoice for money received by Tayo from Kōrin’s estate

KKZ 130 (pp. 151–152)

(Envelope)

Promissory Note
One kan borrowed from the Konishi
in the sixth month of last year.

In case of dispute:
Concerning any aspect not mentioned in the main [will], please refer to the enclosed document.

(Document)

One sheet
Chihō receives [the amount of] exactly one kan silver and four monme. Since no promissory note can be demonstrated at the time of issue, [this document] was made [and will function] as such. The [amount of] silver mentioned above is taken from the estate of the [recently] deceased Kōrin and does not have to be repaid. Hereafter, several impartial witnesses shall legitimate [the transferral of] the money stated above by attaching their seals to this promissory note. [The conditions of this transaction are] as recorded in this document.

On behalf of Konishi Juichirō
Clerk Rihei (seal)

Kyōhō 1 [1716], [Year of the] Monkey, ninth month, twenty-sixth day.
Ogata Shōtei [Tayo]
Representative [of Tayo]
Tokuhei
Arbitrator
Kiyoemon

(Envelope)

手形
さらノ六月ニ
小にしし老貫日

---

163 Konishi Juichirō was entrusted with handling Kōrin’s inheritance. It was also common for a third party to manage the affairs of a deceased person. When Kōrin’s father died, the temple Kōzen’in distributed his estate. See Documents I / 3 to I / 5.
かり、相すまし申候へとも
ほんし見へ申さぬ二つき、かへりてかたまいり候、この内ニあり

(Document)

一札

一　丁銀壹貫目、又四妙徳ニ請取、則
智芳へ相渡し申候、然者右之手
形、当分相見へ不申候ニ付、請取手
形致進申候、右之銀者光琳様御
死去之節、御用立被申候銀ニ而、只今
御返弁紛無御座候、以後ニおみて
右之銀ニ付、外ノいか様之義申出し候とも、
其手形ほんこ（反古）たるへく候、為其
一札仍而如件、

小西寿一郎內
手代　理兵衛（印）

享保元年申ノ九月廿六日
尾形尚貞様
御内御使
徳兵衛殿
御とりもち
清右衛門殿

● Document VII / 3 - Reply concerning Tayo’s request for money from Juichirō

KKZ 131 (p. 152)

Reply to Ogata

Shōtei　On behalf of Konishi [Juichirō]
[Clerk] Rihei
Tokuhei came to visit and brought the document.\(^{164}\) He handed over one *kan* and four *monme* in silver coins. As you can see, he gave the money to Chihō. I know we have caused you much work while you have a lot on your mind already. But since you are not in the possession of a promissory note, I will draft a proof of payment for you. In the future, we can refer back to it if needed. For a long time to come, the proof of payment shall remain with a government official (*kannin*) [for reference]. Be that as it may, I hope we can meet soon again. I am very sorry for causing you so much trouble.

Yours,

[Rihei]

Ninth month, twenty-sixth day.

尾かた

尚貞様

小西内

御返事

理兵衛

徳兵衛殿御出、殊御ふみ
被下忝そんし上まいらせ候、抜
丁銀壱貫四枚御もたせ被下
徳兵へ殿御覧之通、
ちほうへ相渡し申候、
何かと御こと多御さ候、
よしなき事ニ御くろう
あそはし、さてきて忝
そんし上まいらせ候、しかし
御手かた、折ふし見へかね
候ニ付、かへり手かたいたし
さし上まいらせ候、あとにても
たつね出し、しんし可申候、
万日ふんしついたし
候ハハ、右之手かたニて
御かんにん被下候へく候、
何事も々近々ニ
御めにかかり申上まいらせ候、
折ふしありこみ、ははかり
から、そうそう申上候、
かしく

---

\(^{164}\) See the previous document, VII / 2.
九月廿六日

- Document VII / 4 - Contract for Tayo’s sale of Kōrin’s residence

KKZ 132 (p. 152)

Concerning the permanent sale of [Ogata Kōrin’s] mansion
One property taxed at level three (sankenyaku) [at] Kami-Goryō Yabunouchichō
Front [Dimensions of] seven ken and two shaku Extends until the river to the east, river [access] may be used [by owner]
Back [Dimensions of] twenty-four ken Borders on [the property of] Jūichimonjiya Fujibe to the west

Due to special circumstances, the property above, owned by the undersigned [Ogata Shōtei, or Tayo, the widow of Kōrin], is sold for the amount of five ken and 450 me silver. [To finalize the sale], the full amount must be paid. No others but family members may interfere with the [sale] of this property. In case of future claims of any kind, this document shall be shown and swiftly settle [any disputes]. This contract [acts as proof] of the permanent sale of [the property in the case of] future [disputes of the sale].

Kyōhō 2 [1717], [Year of the] Rooster, third month. Seller Shōtei
Arbitrator Hachimonjiya Kanbei
Elder Kahei
Nijōdōri Chōjiyachō
Guarantor Ogata Shinsei
[Kenzan]
Concerning the permanent sale of [Ogata Kōrin’s] mansion

One property  
add taxation [level] here  
[at] Nakamachi Yabunouchichō

Front  
[Dimensions of] add [width] here  
Borders on add [width] here to the west,

Back  
[Dimensions of] add [width] here  
Borders on add [width] here to the east

Due to special circumstances, the property above, owned by the undersigned [Ogata Shōtei], is sold for the amount of ten kan silver. [To finalize the sale], the full amount must be paid. No others but family members may interfere with the [sale] of this property. In case of future claims of any kind, this document shall be shown and swiftly settle [any disputes]. This contract [acts as proof] of the permanent sale of [the property in the case of] future [disputes of the sale].

Year

Month, day.

Seller

Wife

Arbitrator  
add [name] here

Elder  
add [name] here

Guarantor  
add [name] here

永代売渡申候家屋敷之事一札之事

壱ヶ所者  何軒役  中町裏内町

表口何問何尺  西隣  何屋たれ

---

167 Evidently, Tayo modeled her sales contract after that of a person named Ōguro Genzaemon, named as the addressee of the draft here. Genzaemon’s name does not appear on the final contract or anywhere else in the Kōrin-related documents of the Konishi Archives. The fact that this draft refers to seller and wife—although Tayo herself was the seller and her husband, Kōrin, had passed away—indicates that this draft represents an early modern template for property sales. The final contract is based on this generic sample, with the individual property name inserted at will. However, both sample and final contract use the same handwriting, thus both were likely written by the same person, probably a clerk or professional scribe in service of the district.
Document VII / 6 - Draft for sales certificate of Tayo’s sale of Kōrin’s mansion

KKZ 134 (p. 153)

One sheet

This is to certify the sale of one mansion, owned by [Ogata] Shōtei and located in this district, for the amount of one kan and 550 me silver.

To be put in writing hereafter [i.e. this document is merely a draft]

The content is the same as stated here.

Year, month, day. Kami-Goryō Nakachō

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elders</th>
<th>Lacquerer</th>
<th>Heibei</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shōjirō</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counsel of Five</th>
<th>Silk merchant</th>
<th>Shirōbei</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>Shōjirō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arbitrator</th>
<th>Carpenter</th>
<th>Kichibe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seller</td>
<td>Shōtei</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guarantor Nijōdōri Chōjiyachō Shinsei

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168 The amount of ten monme recorded here is higher than in the contract VII / 4. This document is related to Documents II / 9 and II / 19. Yamane, Konishi-ke kyūzō, 153.

169 The original is lost, but this document relates to VII / 3 and VII / 4. The buyer of Kōrin’s estate is unrecorded.
Buyer

一社之事
一 当町尚貞所持之家屋敷壱ヶ所、代銀壱貫五百五拾目ヲ
相究メ今度
文言
此奥同前

年号月日 上御霊中町
年寄 塗師 平兵ヘ
大工 庄次郎
五人組 絹屋 四郎兵衛
大工 次郎兵衛
吹挙人 大工 吉兵ヘ
売主 尚貞
売請人 二条通丁子や町
深省
買主
VIII. Other Translations

● Document VIII / 1 - Excerpt from Sanbōin hinamiki on Kōrin’s first recorded Noh performance

Ogata Tōzaburō and Ichinojō [Kōrin] of the same name were summoned to perform divine Noh (shinrai nō) together with Shibuya Shichirōzaemon. Ichinojō was asked by His Excellency [Abbot Kōken] himself to perform before him one time [and then] another. Both performers [Tōzaburō and Kōrin] were brought before His Excellency and given a drink. Tōzaburō presented a violet fukusa [cloth used to purify tea utensils] and a chakin [a small fabric also used for purification]. Ichinojō presented three fans. ¹⁷⁰

尾形藤三郎、同市之丞、神来能渋谷七郎左衛門ニ被仰御請之為先伺公申体より、市之丞一二番勤仕申由噂申也、両人御目通御杯被下、藤三郎紫服沙一茶巾一進上、市之丞扇面三本入進上

● Document VIII / 2 - Excerpt from Matsushita Kōjo Tekiko saiyō

Since His Lordship Seikyū [Sakai Tadataka (1648-1720)] had an affection for [Kōrin’s] paintings, on the sixth day of the first month of 1707, [Tadataka], in his kindness beyond compare, graced [Kōrin] with ten retainers (fuchi). [Kōrin] had left his wife in Kyoto, so he went there in the fourth month of the same year [1707] to fetch her. Then, too, [His Lordship] bestowed Kōrin with one bottle of awamori [an alcoholic drink from Okinawa], two dried salmon, and two rolls of silk. This is also recorded in [his lordship’s] correspondence. In the next year [1708], Kōrin returned to Kantō and on the twelfth day of the fifth month was granted twenty retainers for as long as he remained in Edo. On the eighteenth day of the same month, as an expression of gratitude for the retainers, [Kōrin] extended a box of delicacies. This is also recorded in the [Sakai family’s] official ledger of gifts. Such as it is, [Kōrin] did not remain in Edo and frequently went back and forth [between Kyoto and Edo]. Kōrin died on the second day of the sixth month in Kyōhō 1 [1716].

咸休君の御代彼が画を愛ひて宝永四年丁亥の正月六日出入扶持十人扶持を賜ふて懇命を蒙る事あふかたならず 彼京都に妻を残して下りたるに同じ年四月妻を具し来らんと京都に登る頃も泡盛一德利寒洗鮎二尾鰤二匹はなむけとして光琳に玉はる その事元約方の御音信帳に見えたり 又翌五年光琳開東へ下りしにや五月十二日小形光琳在江戸中二拾人扶持宛玉ハリ同十八日御扶持方の御礼箱肴を以て申上し趣日記にも見へたり 如

¹⁷⁰ The performance took place on 1675/07/23. My translation follows the transcription provided in Igarashi, Kinsei Kyōto gadan no nettowaaku, 131.
Hokkyō Kōrin; [Common] name - Shōroku; pseudonym - Seiseidō; Master from the Capital [Kōrin] followed Kōetsu and was an elegant person, [possessing] high refinement. He was proficient at painting and established a lineage [of followers]. His inrō follow Kōetsu’s examples and are excellent. His lacquer works have pictures in the so-called Kōrin manner (Kōrin-fū), which he made in mother of pearl and patterns in precious metals (kanagai). Although the [lacquer] ground has sunk-in flakes of [precious metal], it does not contain nashiji.171 [Kōrin applied] thick gold dust. On the reverse of the lid, as if traced by a tiny gimlet, he meticulously records his name.

171 Nashiji decor consists of little flakes in gold or silver that are added onto a lacquer surface and covered by a thin, transparent layer of lacquer. Tsūryū notes that, although the ground of Kōrin’s designs contains flakes of precious materials, his technique does not create the appearance of nashiji designs. Nashiji designs were a common trope of early modern lacquer and Tsūryū’s specific mention of their absence possibly aims at highlighting the idiosyncrasy of Kōrin’s designs.
Glossary

Aikawa 合川

akikaze 秋風

Amida dō 阿弥陀堂

Amida 阿弥陀

Amrakuan Sakuden (1554–1642) 安楽庵策伝

Aoji 青地

Arai Hakuseki (1657–1725) 新井白石

Ariwara Narihira (825–880) 在原業平

Ariwara Yukihiira (818–893) 有原行平

Asai Fukyū 浅井不旧

asamurasaki 浅紫

Asaoka Okisada (1800–1856) 朝岡興禎

ashide 葺手

Asukai Masachika (1417–1491) 飛鳥井雅親

Asukai Sukemasa 飛鳥井祐雅

azuma kudari 東下り

Azuma river 遠戸川

Bai Juyi (772–846) 白居易

Banpō zensho 万宝全書

Bizen 備前

Botanka Shōhaku (1443–1527) 牡丹花肖柏

Bungo 豊後

chanoyu 茶の湯

Chikusai 竹斎

Chōgonka 長恨歌

Chōnin kō kenroku 町人考見録

Chōshū 長州

chōyō no sekku 重陽の節句

Chūgen 中元

Cizhou 磁州
Daigoji 醍醐寺
Daihatsu nehankyō 大般涅槃経
Daikyōji mukashi goyomi 大経師昔暦
Dai Nippon 大日本
Doi 土井
Dokushō Seien (1617–1694) 獨照性円
dōgu 道具
Dōjo (d. 1249) 道助
dōsa 磐水
Dōza 銅座
Echigo 越後
Edo period (1600–1868) 江戸時代
Eguchi 江口
Ehon tekagami 画本手鑑
Eidai hōshiki 永代法式
Enki shigaku kappō zensho 円機詩学活法全書
eya 絵屋
fudō 不動
Fujiwara Kamatari (614–669) 藤原鎌足
Fujiwara Teika (1162–1241) 藤原定家
Fujiwara Tomoie (1182–1258) 藤原知家
Fujiwara Toshiyuki (d. ca. 901) 藤原敏行
Fujiwara 藤原
Fukae Roshū (1699–1757) 深江蘆舟
Fukurokuju 福禄寿
Fukushima Masanori (1561–1624) 福島正則
Fukuō Moriyoshi (d. 1625) 福王盛義
furisode 振袖
Furukawa 古川
fusuma-e 簿絵
Fusō meikō gafu 扶桑名公画譜
Fuyuki Goroemon 冬木五郎右衛門
Fuyuki Masachika (d. 1703) 冬木正親
Fuyuki 冬木

_gabai_ 画梅

_Gadō jitsuroku_ 画道実録
_Gadō yōketsu_ 画道要訣 (1680)
_Gahō saishikihō_ 画法彩色法
_Gajō yōryaku_ 画帖要略

Genbu nikki 玄武日記
Genpei 源平

Genroku era (1688–1704) 元禄時代

Gettan Dōchō 月潭道澄

Gien (1558–1626) 義演

_Gien jugō nikki_ 義演准后日記

Ginza 銀座

go-fun 胡粉

Goki 呉器

GoMizuno’o (1596–1680) 後水尾

_Gosen wakashū_ 後撰和歌集

_gosu_ 呉須

GoTsuchimikado (1442–1500) 後土御門

GoYōzei (1571–1617) 後陽成

Hachijōnomiya Toshitada (1619–1662) 八条宮智忠

Hachisuka 蜂須賀

_haikai_ 俳諧

_Hakubyō Ise monogatari emaki_ 白描伊勢物語絵巻

Hakurakuten 白楽天

Hanabus Itchō (1652–1724) 英一蝶

Hara Yōyūsai (1769–1845) 原羊遊斎

_Hasshu gafu_ 八種画譜

Hatakeyama Sazumi 畝山政純
Hatakeyama shōsakutei shika 畠山作亭詩歌
Hatakeyama Yoshitada (d. 1463) 畠山義忠
hatamoto 旗本
Hayashi Tadamasa (1853–1906) 林忠正
Heian period (794–1185) 平安時代
Heike nōkyō 平家経
Higashiyama (r. 1687–1709) 東山
Higashizono Motokazu (1653–1710) 東園基量
hikaru 光
Himeji 姫路
hinagata bon 雛形本
hinagata 雛形
Hino Terumasa (1577–1637) 日野輝勝
Hino Terumitsu (d. 1717) 日野輝光
Hirosaki banchō nikki 弘前番長日記
Hirosaki 弘前
Hitomaro 人麻呂
Hitotsubashi Tokugawa 一橋德川
Hiyoshi Yasaburō 日吉弥三郎
Honchō gahō taiden 本朝画法大伝
Honchō gaka inpu 本朝画家印譜
Honchō gashi 本朝画史
Honchō kokin shoga binran 本朝古今書画便覧
Honchō seiji danki 本朝世事談綺
Hon'ami gyōjōki 本阿弥行状記
Hon’ami Kōetsu (1558–1637) 本阿弥光悦
Hon’ami Kōho (1602–1682) 本阿弥光甫
Hōshō Tomoharu (1654–1728) 宝生知栄
Hosoi Tsune 細井つね
Hosokawa Yūsai (1534–1610) 細川幽斎
hossu 法主
Hotei 布袋
Huang Tingjian (1045–1105) 黄庭堅
*Hyakunin isshu* 百人一首
Hōei era (1704–1711) 宝永期
Hōrin Jōshō (1593–1668) 鳳林承章
Hōshō Yasaburō (1654–1728) 花城
Ibaraki 茨城
Ichijō Kanetō (1605–1672) 一条兼遼
Ichinotani 一ノ谷
*Iehiro kō-ki* 家熙公記
Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693) 井原西鶴
Iharu 伊春
*Ihon Ise monogatari emaki* 異本伊勢物語絵巻
Ikeda Denshichi 池田伝七
Ikeda Koson (1801–1866) 池田孤邨
Ikeda 池田
Imaeda Minbu (1614–1679) 今枝民部
*Imaeda Minbu tomegaki* 今枝民部留帖
Imashiro Sadatsune (d. 1702) 今城定経
Inaba Tsūryū (1736–1786) 稲葉通竜
*inrō* 印籠
in 顔
*iro* 色
*Ise monogtari shōmonshō* 伊勢物語肖聞抄
Ishida Yūtei (1721–1786) 石田幽汀
Ishiyama Honganji 石山本願寺
Isshiki Norichika (1419–1451) 一色教親
Itō Jakuchū (1716–1800) 伊藤若冲
Iwashimizu Hachimangū 石清水八幡宮
Izumiya 和泉屋
Jakanyo (1651–1725) 寂如
Jittoku 拾得

623
Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗
Jūnyō (1673–1739) 住如
Jūsan meigen ki 拾纂名言記
kabu no bosatsu 歌舞の菩薩
Kadenshō shimaizuke 花傳抄舞付
Kaganroku 過眼録
Kaga 加賀
Kaiji higen 絵事鄙言
Kai 甲斐
Kakitsubata (Noh play) 杜若
Kakitsubata 杜若, or 燕子花
Kakumeiki 隔寥記
Kakutei (1607–1661) 観定
Kamakura period (1185–1336) 鎌倉時代
Kameda Bōsai (1752-1826) 亀田鹏斎
Kamenokōya 亀甲や
kamishimo 神
Kanamori Sōwa (1584–1656) 金森宗和
kanjō bugyō 勘定奉行
Kano Eikei (1662–1702) 狩野永敬
Kano Einō (1631–1697) 狩野永納
Kano Motonobu (1476–1559) 狩野元信
Kano Naonobu (1407–1560) 狩野尚信
Kano Tan'yū (1602–1674) 狩野探幽
Kano Tsunenobu (1636–1713) 狩野常信
Kano Yasunobu (1613–1685) 狩野安信
kanshi 漢詩
Kanzan 寒山
Kanzawa Tokō (1710–1795) 神沢杜口
Kanze Kokusetsu (1566–1626) 観世黒雪
Kan’ei sanpitsu 寛永三筆
kan 貫
karamonoya 唐物屋
karamono 唐物
Karasumaru Mitsuhiro (1579–1638) 烏丸光広
Karatsu 唐津
Kariganeya 雁金屋
katsuji 活字
Katsunojō 胜之丞
Katsu かつ
katte byōbu 胜手屏風
Kawaguchi Tsunetoshi (1702–1769) 川口恒壽
Kawai Heiemon 川合平右衛門
Kawazu Sanbaku (d. 1807) 河津三白
Kazahaya Sanetane (1632–1711) 風早実種
kaō 花押
Keichō era (1596–1615) 慶長期
Keisei hangon kō 傾城反魂香
kemari 蹴鞠
kenbō 憲法
kesa 裾$GLOBALS[47] $
Ketsugishō 闇疑抄
kigo 季語
kiin 気韻
Kii 紀伊
Kiku jidō 菊慈童
Kikuoka Tenrō (1680-1747) 菊岡汎凉
kingindei 金銀泥
Kinginza kakitome 金銀座書留
Kinoshita Kiyobei 木下清兵衛
Kinuta maki-e suzuribako 砧莳絵硯箱
Kitagawa Sōsetsu (act. late 17th c.) 喜多川相說
Kitamura Nobuyo (1784–1856) 喜多村信節
Kitano tenjin engi emaki 北野天神縁起絵巻
Kita ryū 喜多流
Kita Takekiyo (1776–1857) 喜多武清
Kitaōji Toshitsune 北小路俊恒
Kiyohara Yukinobu (1643-1682) 清原雪信
ki 気
ko'i 古意
Kobatake Ryôtatsu (d. 1710) 小畑了達
Kobori Enshū (1579–1647) 小堀遠州
kobusuma 小脇
Kōetsu-ryū 光悦流
Koga bikō 古画備考
Koga Michitomo 久我通誠
Kōgetsu Sōgan (1574–1643) 江月宗玩
Kohitsu Ryôetsu (dates unknown) 古筆了悦
ko hōgen 古法眼
Kōken (1639–1707) 高賢
Kokin wakashū 古今和歌集
kokoro hirakete 心開けて
kokoro nashi 心なし
Koküzō bosatsu 虚空蔵菩薩
komurasaki 濃紫
Konishi-ke monjo 小西家文書
Konishi Hikoemon 小西彦右衛門
Konishi Hikokurō 小西彦九郎
Konishi Juichirō 小西寿市郞
Konishi Masamori 小西方守
Konoe Iehiro (1667–1736) 近衛家熙
Konoe Nobuhiro (1599–1649) 近衛信尋
Konoe Nobutada (1565–1614) 近衛信尹
Konparu Zenchiku (1405–before 1471) 金春禅竹
kōrai 高麗
Kōrin 浩臨
Kōrin ehon michi shirube 光琳絵本道知辺
Kōrin gafu 光琳画譜
Kōrin hitsu 光琳筆
Kōrin hyakuzu 光琳百図
Kōrin moyō, or Kōrin mon’yō 光琳模様, or 光琳文様
Kōrin mume 光琳梅
Kōrin no ippa 光琳の一派
Kōrin shinsen hyakuzu 光琳新撰百図
Kōsai 浩齋
Kōshin Sōsa (1613–1671) 江岑宗佐
Kōshoku fumi denju 好色文伝受
Kōshoku ichidai otoko 好色一代男
Kōsoshū 後素集
kosetsu 古拙
kosode 小袖
Kujō Kaneharu (1641–1677) 九条兼晴
Kujō Yukiie (1586–1665) 九条幸家
Kuki Ryūichi (1852–1931) 九鬼隆一
kuramoto 蔵元
kuro-e 黒絵
Kurodani 黒谷
kusabana no eyō 草花の絵用
kusa makura 草枕
kusuri no mizuwa 薬の水涌
Kuwayama Gokushū (1746–1799) 桑山玉州
Kyōbashi 京橋
Kyōhō era (1716–1736) 享保期
kyōka 狂歌
Liang Kai (J. Ryōkai; early 13th century) 梁楷
Li Sigong (d. ca. 886) 李思恭
Madenokōji Atsufusa (1653–1709) 万里小路充房
Maeda Toshiharu (1618–1660) 前田利治
Maeda Toshitsune (1594–1658) 前田利常
Maeda 前田
maejite 前ジテ
Magobei 孫兵衛
mai 枚
Maki-e tamei warabegusa 薨絵為井童草
Manshuin 曼殊院
Man'yōshū 万葉集
Maruyama Ōkyo (1733–1795) 円山応挙
Maruyama 円山
Masako (1673–1746) 栄子
Masuda bon 増田本
Matsudaira Narimitsu (1897–1974) 松平斎光
Matsudaira Naritami (1814–1891) 松平斎民
Matsukaze Murasame 松風 村雨
Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694) 松尾芭蕉
meisho 名所
Mikawa 三河
Mimyōkō on'yawa 微妙公御夜話
Minamoto Yorimasa (1104–1180) 源頼政
Mitsubo kikigaki 三壺聞書
mizuaoi 水葵
mokkotsu 没骨
Mokuan (ca. mid-14th century) 黙庵
momo no sekku 桃の節句
Momoyama period (1573–1600) 桃山時代
mondō 問答
monogatari 物語
monzeki 間跡
Mōri Tsunamoto (1651–1709) 毛利綱元
moriage 盛り上げ
Morimura Izaemon 森村猪左衛門
Muqi (J. Mokkei; late 13th century) 牧谿
Muromachi period (1336–1573) 室町時代
Musashino 武蔵野
Myōhōin 妙法院
Myōkōji 妙光寺
Myōshō gonnō honji hon 妙築観王本事品
Nagai Naotoki (1638–1680) 永井直時
nagamochi 長持
naidaijin 内大臣
Nakagawa Kiyoroku 中川清六
Nakagawa Toshitsune 中川利常
Nakamachi Yabunouchichō 中町鷲内町
Nakamura Höchū (d. 1819) 中村芳中
Nakamura Kuranosuke (1668–1730) 中村内蔵助
Nakane Genkei (1662–1733) 中根元圭
Nakanoin Michikatsu (1556–1610) 中院通勝
Nakanoin Michimi (1668–1740) 中院通躬
Nakanoin Michishige (1631–1710) 中院通茂
Nakayama Atsuchika (d. 1716) 中山篤近
namiji 波路
Nanpōroku 南方録
Narutaki no chaya 鳴滝の茶屋
Narutaki 鳴滝
Nezu Kaichirō (1860–1940) 根津嘉一郎
Nichi’i 日意
Nihon eitai kura 日本永代蔵
Nihonga 日本画
Nihon kaigashi 日本絵画史
Nijō-ke nainai gobansho hinamiki 二條家内々御番所日次記
Nijō Chōjiyamachi 二条丁子屋町
Nijō Mitsuhira (1625–1682) 二条光平
Nijō Tsunahira (1672–1732) 二条綱平
Nijō Yoshimoto (1320–1388) 二条良基
nikawa 膠
Ninnaji 仁和寺
Nishi Honganji 西本願寺
Nishikawa Sukenobu (1671–1750) 西川祐信
Nishimura Seiiku (or Masakuni) 西村正郁
Nishiyama Sōin (1605–1682) 西山宗因
nochijite 後ジテ
Noda Tōmin 野田洞珉
Nonomura Chūbei (dates unknown) 野々村忠兵衛
Nonomura Ninsei (act. 1647–1678) 野々村仁清
Nonomura Seimon 野々村清門
nō tayū 能太夫
oboegaki 識書
Ogata Gonpei 尾形権平
Ogata Ichinojō 尾形市之丞
Ogata Kanzaburō 尾形寛三郎
Ogata Kenzan (1663–1743) 尾形乾山
Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716) 尾形光琳
Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu 緒方流略印譜 (1813) and 尾形流略印譜 (1815)
Ogata Sōhaku 尾形宗柏
Ogata Sōken (d. 1687) 尾形宗謙
Ogata Tōzaburō 尾形藤三郎
Ogata-ryū 緒方流 or 尾形流
Ogawa Haritsu (1663–1747) 小川破笠
Ogazarisho 御飾書
Ogiwara Shigehide (1658–1713) 萩原重秀
Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728) 萩生徂徕
Okakura Tenshin (1862–1913) 岡倉天心
Okina gusa 翁草
omoi 思
Omotesenke 表千家
Omuro 御室
Omuro gyoki 御室御記
on’e hajime 御絵初
onrei 御礼
Oribe 織部
Osenmaru おせん丸
Oshikōji 押小路
otogi 御伽
Quan Tang shi 全唐詩
rai 羅衣
raigō 来迎
Raku 楽
Raku Chōjirō 楽長次郎
rakuchū rakugai zu 洛中洛外図
Reiganjima 霊岸島
Reigen (1654–1732) 霊元
Reizei 冷泉
Reizei-ke ryū Isse monogatari shō 冷泉家流伊勢物語抄
Reizei Tamemitsu's (1559–1619) 冷泉為満
renga 連歌
rikka 立花
Rinpa 琳派
Rokuonji 鹿苑寺
rusu moyō, or rusu mon’yō 留守模様, or 留守文様
ryoshuku 旅宿
Ryōshō (1622–1693) 良尚
sabi-e 錫絵
sadaishō 左大将
Saeda 小枝
Sahara Kiku’u (1762–1832) 佐原鞆塚
Saigyō monogatari emaki 西行物語絵巻
Saijirō 才次郎
Sakai Hōitsu (1761–1828) 酒井抱一
Sakai Ōho (1808–1841) 酒井鶴蒲
Sakai Tadakatsu (1587–1662) 酒井忠勝
Sakai Tadataka (1648–1720) 酒井忠掟
Sakai Tadazane (1756–1790) 酒井忠以
Sakakibara Masakuni (1675–1726) 橿原政邦
sakari naru さかりなる
Sanbōin 三宝院
Sanbōin hinamiki 三宝院日次記
Sanetaka kō-ki 実隆公記
Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (1455–1537) 三条西実隆
sankin kōtai 参観交代
San さん
Sano 佐野
Sarashina 更級
sawarabi 早蕨
Seigan Shōtetsu (1381–1459) 清巖正徹
Seikanji Hirosada (1662–1707) 清関寺熙定
Seken musuko katagi 世間息子気質
sekiga 席画
sencha 煎茶
Sencha uta 煎茶歌
Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591) 千利休
Sesshū (ca. 1420–1506) 雪舟
Sesson Shūkei (1504–ca. 1589) 雪村周継
setsuwa 說話
Shibuya Shichirōemon shonō shiyō oboegaki 渋谷七郎衛門諸能仕様覚書
Shibuya Shichizaemon, or Sessai 渋谷七左衛門, or 雪斎
Shiga 志賀
shigajiku 詩画軸
Shigaraki 信楽
Shigi no hanegaki 鴫羽挿
shikishi 色紙
shimai 仕舞
Shimoreizei Mochitame (1401–1454) 下冷泉持為
shinchiku 新竹
Shingon 真言
Shinjirō (or Tatsujirō) 辰二郎
Shinjōsaimon’in (1653–1712) 新上西門院
Shinmachi 新町
Shino 志野
Shinran (1173–1262) 親鸞
Shinsen Tsukuba shū 新撰芸考波集
shinshutsu bon 新出本
shiro 白
shoin 書院
shōbu (or ayame) 葛蒲
shōji 障子
Shōkadō Shōjō (1582–1639) 松花堂昭乗
Shōkokuji 相国寺
Shōren’innomiya Sonshō (1651–1694) 青蓮院宮尊証
Shōren’in 青蓮院
Shōtei 尚貞
Shōwa era (1926–1989) 昭和時代
Shōzoku zuke hyakujūban 装束付百十番
shū 衆
Shūkōgōjin engi emaki 実金剛神縁起絵巻
Shū bun (15th century) 秋文
Shū gusu 拾遺愚草
Shū seidō 習静堂
Shū seidō-ki 習静堂記
sugito 杉戸
Suma すま
Suma 須磨
Sumida gawa 隅田川
Sumiyoshi 住吉
Sumiyoshi Myōjin 住吉明神
Suzuki Harunobu (ca. 1725–1770) 鈴木春信
Suzuki Kiitsu (1796–1858) 鈴木其一
suzuribako 築箱
Sōami (d. 1525) 相阿弥
Sōgi (1421–1502) 宗祇
Sōken kishō 装剣奇賞
sōmoku 草木
Tada 多田
Tadanori 忠則
Taira Kiyomori (1118–1184) 平清盛
Taira Tadanori (1144–1184) 平忠度
Takabayashi Tokusai 高林徳斎
Takagamine 鷹ヶ峰
Takahashi Yoshio (1861–1937) 高橋義雄
takarabune 宝船
Takatsukasa Kanehiro (1660–1725) 鷹司兼熙
Takatsukasa Norihira (1609–1668) 鷹司教平
Takeuchi Koretsune (1640–1704) 竹内惟庸
Takimotobō 瀧本坊
*Takimotobō zōchō 瀧本坊蔵帳
Takuan Sōhō (1573–1646) 沢庵宗彭
Tanabata 七夕
*tango no sekku 端午の節句
*Tan'yū ryū 探幽流
*tarashikomi たらし込み
Tatebayashi Kagei (dates unknown) 立林何帛
*Tawaraya no e 俵屋の絵
Tawaraya Sōri (d. ca. 1782) 俵屋宗理
Tawaraya Sōsetsu (act. mid-17 c.) 俵屋宗雪
Tawaraya Sōtatsu (d. ca. 1640) 俵屋宗達
Tayo 多代
*te-sarugaku 手猿楽
*Tekiko saiyō 摘占採要
tensō 伝奏
Togashi 畠檜
*tokonoma 床の間
Tokudaiji Kintomo (1678–1720) 徳大寺公全
Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) 徳川家康
tokusei bon 特製本
Tosa 土佐
Tosa Mitsunobu (ca. 1434–ca. 1535) 土佐光信
Tosa Mitsuoki (1617–1691) 土佐光起
Tottori 鳥取
Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536/37–1598) 豊臣秀吉
Tsuda Sōkyū (d. 1591) 津田宗及
Tsugaru 津軽
Tsugaru Nobumasa (1646–1710) 津軽信政
tsukinami 月次
tsukuri-e 作絵
Tsunahira kō-ki 綱平公記
Tsune つね
Tsurezuregusa 徒然草
tsuta no hosomichi 葉の細道
Tōfukumon’in (1607–1678) 東福門院
Tōhoku 東北
tōin 陶隠
Tōji seihō 陶磁製法
Tōkō hitsuyō 陶工必用
udaijin 右大臣
Uda Kinnori 打它公軌
Ueshima Gennojō 上嶋源丞
Ueshima Gennojū 上嶋源充
Umegae 梅枝
Uramatsu Norimitsu (d. 1707) 裏松意光
utaibon 詞本
utaizome 詞初
utai 詞
Utsuyama 宇津山
waka 和歌
Waka chiken shū 和歌知顕集
Wakan shoga ichiran 和漢書画一覧
Wang Shizhen (1526–1590) 王世貞
Wankyū issei no monogatari 楊久一世の物語
Washino’o Takanaga (1672–1736) 鳳尾隆長
Watanabe Shikō (1683–1755) 渡辺始興
Watanabe Soshin 渡辺素信
Wei 魏
Xuanzong (685–762) 玄宗
Xu Wei (1521–1593) 徐渭
Yamada Shirōemon (ca. 1610–1686) 山田四郎右衛門
Yamamoto Soken (d. 1706) 山本素軒
Yamamoto Sōsen (1679–1760) 山本宗川
Yamamoto Yūga (dates unknown) 山本友我
Yamanoue no Sōji ki 山上宗二記
Yamanoue Sōji 山上宗二 (1544-90)
Yamashina Honganji 山科本願寺
yamato-e 大和絵
Yamauchi Toyomasa 山内豊昌
Yang Guifei (719–756) 楊貴妃
yatsuhashi 八橋
Yonosuke 世之介
Yoshida Kenkō (1283?–1352?) 吉田兼好
Yuishinshō mon'i 唯心抄文意
yukari 縁
Yoku hotaru 行く蛻
Yukō niki 逾好日記
Yōjuji 養珠寺
Yokoi Tokifuyu (1860–1906) 横井時冬
yō nashi 用無し
yōshū 雍州
Yūgao 夕顔
yūgen 幽玄
Yūshiken Masafusa 由之軒政房
Zokuruibon 嘘累品
Zuiryūsai Sōsa (1650–1691) 随流斎宗佐
Ōbaku 黄檗
Ōigawa 大井川
Ōoka Shunboku (1680–1763) 大岡春卜
Ōtomo Kuronushi (dates unknown) 大伴黒主