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Kyoto Visual Culture in the Early Edo and Meiji Periods

The arts of reinvention

Edited by Morgan Pitelka and Alice Y. Tseng



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Kyoto Visual Culture in the Early Edo and Meiji Periods

The city of Kyoto has undergone radical shifts in its significance as a political and cultural center, as a hub of the national bureaucracy, as a symbolic and religious center, and as a site for the production and display of art. However, the field of Japanese history and culture lacks a book that considers Kyoto on its own terms as a historic city with a changing identity.

Examining cultural production in the city in two periods of political transition, this book promises to be a major step forward in advancing our knowledge of Kyoto's history and culture. Its chapters focus on two periods in which the old capital was politically marginalized: the early Edo period, when the center of power shifted from the old imperial capital to the new warriors' capital of Edo; and the Meiji period, when the imperial court itself was moved to the new modern center of Tokyo. The contributors argue that in both periods the response of Kyoto elites—emperors, courtiers, tea masters, municipal leaders, monks, and merchants—was artistic production and cultural revival.

As an artistic, cultural, and historical study of Japan's most important historic city, this book will be invaluable to students and scholars of Japanese history, Asian history, the Edo and Meiji periods, art history, visual culture, and cultural history.

Morgan Pitelka is a Professor of Asian Studies and Director of the Carolina Asia Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA. His publications include *Spectacular Accumulation: Material Culture, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and Samurai Sociability* (2015).

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Acknowledgments

The idea for this book started as a conversation between Morgan Pitelka and Alice Y. Tseng, who were both researching Kyoto but focusing on different time periods of the city. When they realized that a number of parallel issues and themes ran through their respective investigations of Kyoto arts during comparable moments of political upheaval and marginalization, Pitelka and Tseng saw the potential for a joint project. The first step was organizing two linked panels at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in Toronto, 2012. After an additional author meeting in February 2013 in New York City, and innumerable rounds of email, Skype, and phone exchanges, the book steadily took shape.

The editors are grateful to all the contributors who participated during the multiple phases of this project. We would like to thank as well the mentors and colleagues who listened to our concept for the book, and more importantly, challenged and provoked us to clarify and deepen our thinking process. Warmest gratitude goes to the contributors in this volume for their patience and collegiality.

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Introduction

Morgan Pitelka and Alice Y. Tseng

This book examines cultural production in the city of Kyoto in two periods of political marginalization, when the center of power shifted from the old imperial capital to the new warriors' capital of Edo in the seventeenth century, and with the relocation of the emperor's court from Kyoto to Tokyo in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The responses of the diverse elite residents of Kyoto to these shifts are illuminating, ranging from innovative attempts to bridge the political gap between Kyoto and the new center of gravity using cultural patronage, to intense efforts to reestablish the centrality of the city in the artistic realm by drawing on the rich heritage and history of the imperial court. In both moments of potential crisis, Kyoto's leaders turned to culture—meaning varied forms of artistic production including ceramics, tea ritual, painting, calligraphy, textiles, literature, architecture, gardens, and performance—as a means of establishing new communities of practice, reinforcing the significance of Kyoto in both the past and the present, and buttressing the authority of elites who were increasingly sidelined in the political realm.

The first section of the book examines the seventeenth century, or early Edo period, that has been variably referred to in secondary scholarship as the age of "Kan'ei Networks," or the period of "Kyoto Salon Culture." Politically ostracized by the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate in Edo and increasingly constrained by the emergence of a status system that sought to lock people in place. Kyoto elites responded with a vibrant spirit of renewal and creativity that aimed to grow new cultural practices in the fertile soil of classical court culture and the religious and social institutions that emerged out of it. The section begins with a chapter by Morgan Pitelka on the hybrid cultural activities of the warrior Kobori Enshū in architecture and garden design for the imperial court, in tea practice, and in ceramic connoisseurship and patronage. The next chapter, by Elizabeth Lillehoj, examines Karasumaru Mitsuhiro, an aristocrat who mediated between Kyoto and Edo while also maintaining a vibrant career in the arts. Both chapters demonstrate that the tension of Kyoto's political marginalization also created space for entrepreneurial individuals from different status groups to bridge the gap through artistic activities. The third chapter in this section, by Patrick Schwemmer, examines the activity of elite urban commoners who surreptitiously participated in the city's artistic revival through the case of a

narrative picture scroll (*emaki*). The text and images reveal that the commoner commissioners of the scroll demonstrated a "simultaneous resistance to and collaboration in the new Edo-centric order" in a product that was symbolically powerful but never intended for public consumption.

A similar scenario played out during the Meiji period, when the emperor and his modernizing court moved to the newly named Tokyo, and the city that had been home to the heavenly sovereign for 1,075 years struggled to redefine its identity. The emerging vision of Kyoto as a metropolis that was empowered by its classical and imperial past rather than constrained by it speaks to the dedication of the city's commoner elites-merchants, artists and artisans, and temple and shrine leaders—to modernize their municipality. This section opens with a chapter by Alice Tseng that investigates the practical and symbolic adaptive reuse of the sprawling Imperial Palace grounds vacated by the imperial family for the emerging exhibition practices of the period, as well as the subsequent shift of such activities to the Okazaki area, a newly created cultural park on a site redolent of imperial pedigree. Yasuko Tsuchikane's chapter follows with a focus on the revival of major Kyoto Buddhist temples through their object collections by local cultural activists, accomplished on terms consonant with the national project for formulating a canon of fine art. The third chapter by Julia Sapin examines the resurgence of textile art that combined a millennium-old imperially sponsored trade with the naturalist painting style of eighteenthcentury artist Maruyama Ōkyo to locate an indigenous source of modernism. As all three chapters touch upon, the main strategy of economic and artistic survival for the city at large involved the revival of historic places and endeavors of elite patronage. Whereas the imprimatur of emperors and warriors buoyed the artistic and religious infrastructure of premodern Kvoto, as discussed in Part I, the loss of both groups of benefactors in situ in the second half of the nineteenth century meant that the onus was upon the commoner elite to market the memory of a celebrated past for the purposes of asserting a distinctive identity as well as galvanizing vital revenue. Finally, in the epilogue, Toshio Watanabe tackles the concept-of Kyoto as a site of modern reinvention by way of garden design and the writing of its history. He concentrates on the formulation of a quintessentially Kyoto-based Japanese tradition in the twentieth century as a reaction against the foreign-inspired garden design trends of the late nineteenth century. Watanabe demonstrates that in the early twentieth century, Kyoto was perceived by many native and foreign artists and scholars alike as a pure aesthetic icon, thereby obfuscating the complexities of political and economic motivations that led to its rebirth as a culture city in the dawn of the modern era.

The city of Kyoto

Kyoto serves as the backdrop to the political and artistic struggles and negotiations explored in this book because it is defined to this day by a status it no longer holds. Having been deposed as the imperial capital nearly 150 years ago, Kyoto is now defined by memory, a city that was once home to the emperor, and by extension,

was once site of the imperial court. No city in Japan can claim to possess a more powerful politics of time. From the moment of the decision of the court to relocate the capital away from Nagaoka to Heian in 794, to the removal of the newly elevated Meiji Emperor to Tokyo in 1869, Kyoto remained the center of Japan's symbolic system of authority as well as a key political hub and locus of cultural production. For more than a millennium, the denizens of this city lived and worked in close proximity to the imperial institution, as well as in and alongside the network of Buddhist temple complexes, artisanal and merchant establishments. and mercantile operations that supported and serviced it. The city grew and shrank over the years in response to war, famine, the rise of new governments, and the fall of old ones, but the court remained the center of urban gravity.

Though it seems obvious in retrospect, historians have clarified the degree to which the court directly shaped the material landscape of the city itself.1 The original palace was located in the central northern quadrant (the site of present-day Nijō Castle), modeled on the palace configuration in the Chinese capital of Chang'an, while the rest of the city was laid out along the lines of earlier Japanese capitals that themselves had also borrowed heavily from Chinese capital precedents. The city had a rectangular plan, with thirty-three streets running from the north to the south and thirty-nine traversing east to west. These blocks were grouped into districts, and the entire eastern half of the city was generally known as Sakyō (the Left Capital) and the western half as Ukyō (the Right Capital), indicating the perspective of the court, facing south from the palace on the northernmost edge of the city. The court originally allowed only two Buddhist temples to be constructed in the city, a determined but in the long run unsuccessful attempt to limit the power of Buddhist institutions in its capital. The temple complex Saiji (Western Temple) was built to the west of the southernmost gate to the city while Tōji was (and still is today) located to its east; over time, of course, often with aristocratic patronage, temples proliferated across the city and around its borders. Although the locations of the imperial palace and many streets and avenues changed over the subsequent centuries, and the city morphed and grew in response to the needs of its residents, the basic spatial concept of the imperially planned capital endured.

The cultural history of Kyoto revolved in one form or another around the imperial court even after the rise of aristocratic warriors as major stakeholders in the politics of the archipelago and the establishment of the Kamakura shogunate in Eastern Japan in 1192. The Kamakura shogunate maintained the Deputy Bakufu Headquarters (Rokuhara tandai) in the capital, and pursued regular, ritualized relations with the court that emphasized the still central position of the imperial institution. The brief resurgence of imperial power under Emperor Go-Daigo between 1333-1336 was followed by Ashikaga Takauji's decision to locate his new warrior government in Kyoto in 1338, where it could profit from the cultural authority of the imperial institution and the economic activities of the city's commoner elites, while simultaneously keeping a closer eye on the court's activities. This warrior government gradually subsumed the administration of the city and indeed came to control the revenue streams that had

previously funded court activities; the shogunate continued to patronize the court, which persevered as the symbolic center, but tension between the two persisted, particularly over the issue of the provision of funds for the court's ceremonial activities and occasional rebuilding efforts. These problems were only heightened by the outbreak of the Ōnin War in 1467 and the resulting breakdown of shogunal authority and concomitant rise of provincial warlords and regional conflicts.

The rise of hegemonic warlords who sought to unify Japan without relying on the institutional authority of the shogunate changed the role of Kyoto within Japan's political and cultural landscape. Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the warlords who successively and successfully re-unified Japan in the second half of the sixteenth century, patronized the imperial court and spent time residing and politicking in Kyoto, but both constructed palatial fortresses elsewhere that served as political and cultural rivals to the imperial capital. To differing degrees, Nobunaga and Hideyoshi actively sought imperial ranks that reinforced the authority of the court, and they also patronized Kyoto merchants, artisans, and temples that made up the city's population of elite commoners; but both also defied the accepted structures of power that reinforced Kyoto's centrality by relying on their own military networks and innovative cultural practices and products to buttress their individual authority.

A good example of this occurred in 1585, when Hideyoshi organized a tea gathering at the imperial court as an act of pageantry, a semi-public proclamation of his cultural acumen and impressive collection of art. This followed a series of recent promotions in court rank that Hideyoshi had aggressively pursued through gift-giving and financial support of the ailing imperial institution.² Hidevoshi was the first warrior to attain the rank of Imperial Chancellor (kanpaku), and he seems to have wanted to imprint his distinctive brand of cultural politics on this role. After days of preparation, Hideyoshi arrived at the court in the morning on the seventh day of the tenth month and ritually greeted Emperor Ōgimachi in a private palace building (Tsune no gosho). Next, Hideyoshi's half-brother Hidenaga similarly exchanged ritual greetings in the Hall for State Ceremonies (Shishinden). Then Hideyoshi and his entourage moved to a banqueting room in which he performed the entire ritual of tea preparation and serving for the emperor and five nobles, with the guidance of his advisor and official tea master, Sen no Rikyū, When this was completed, Rikyū moved to another room and served the assembled nobles and imperial shrine and temple heads in groups of seven. The whole event represented an unprecedented opportunity for Hideyoshi to flaunt his most treasured famous objects (meibutsu) to the members of the court; apparently his utensils were set up in two halls of the palace to maximize the quantity on show. Historians might even include Rikyū, who actually received his unique title (he had previously been known as "Sōeki") for this event, in the roster of Hideyoshi's coveted possessions,3 The tea performance, along with a series of Noh plays presented to the court and other regular interactions meant to convey through patronage the magnificent munificence of Hideyoshi, was entirely successful, "the high point in the tea careers of both Hideyoshi and Rikyū" according to one historian. The court was thus both the site for the performance of Hidevoshi's authority and the arbiter of its veracity.

The relationship of the third "great unifier," Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616). with the city is emblematic of the shift away from a politics that relied on the court's influence and history to a politics in which the court, and indeed the city of Kyoto, was understood to be secondary. Ieyasu did not visit the city until 1570, having lived along the Tōkaidō in Sunpu, Hamamatsu, and Okazaki without any known trips to the capital as a boy hostage or young warlord. Thereafter, however, his visits increased as he became more and more involved in national politics, first in the service of his senior partner Nobunaga, and after his assassination, in the service of Hidevoshi. After pledging his loyalty to Hidevoshi in 1586, for example, Ievasu visited Kyoto multiple times each year with the exception only of 1590, the year in which he was transferred to Edo. These visits to the imperial capital typically lasted one to two months, and involved occasional calls to the court as well as trips to Hideyoshi's palatial castle at Osaka.

After Hideyoshi's death in 1598 and Ieyasu's victory at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, however, the Tokugawa lord's time spent in Kyoto increased drastically. It is now taken for granted that Ievasu received the appointment to the post of shogun after his military victory, but in fact it seems that significant politicking in the capital was required. Ieyasu began this process in characteristically brutal fashion, arranging for a public resolution to the conflict that began on the battlefield at Sekigahara. On the first day of the tenth month of 1600, his defeated enemies Ishida Mitsunari, Ankokuji Ekei, and Konishi Yukinaga were executed at the Rokujō-gawara execution grounds in the southern part of Kyoto. Their heads were displayed at Sanjō Bridge in the heart of the city along with the head of Natsuka Masaie, who had committed suicide some days before. "It was a clear day," according to one diarist; "More than ten thousand came to look," claimed another. 5 He spent the next year tacking back and forth between Osaka Castle, where Hideyoshi's son and heir still lived, and Kyoto, making regular visits to the court and sending a stream of gifts to the emperor and various aristocrats in the city. At the end of the third month of 1601, Ieyasu departed Osaka Castle and moved into Fushimi Castle just south of Kyoto. His work while living in Fushimi Castle has been largely ignored, but the period in which Ieyasu built upon his victory at Sekigahara, was appointed to the post of shogun, enacted the early policies of the new Tokugawa government, and then retired from the position in 1605 was mostly spent not in Edo but in Kyoto. In fact, in this period of roughly five years, less than one year was spent in Edo, while more than three years were spent in Fushimi, with the remaining time spent mostly on the road between the two centers (a trip that Ieyasu tended to make in about three weeks, with plenty of time spent hawking along the way).

While in Kyoto, Ieyasu wrote letters of reassignment, enfeoffment, and other matters of feudal appointment and land occupancy, which in effect extended his reach to the farthest corners of the archipelago. He also engaged in the politics