Aesthetics of Colours in Japanese Paintings and Woodblock Prints in the Edo Period

by

Siying Wang
Bachelor, Suzhou University, 2014

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies

Supervisory Committee

Aesthetics of Colours in Japanese Traditional Paintings and Woodblock Prints in the Edo Period

by

Siying Wang
Bachelor, Suzhou University, 2014

Supervisory Committee

M.Cody Poulton, Pacific and Asian Studies.
Supervisor

Tsung-Cheng Lin, Pacific and Asian Studies.
Departmental Member

Abstract

Supervisory Committee
M.Cody Poulton, Pacific and Asian Studies.
Supervisor
Tsung-Cheng Lin, Pacific and Asian Studies.
Departmental Member

The aim of this thesis is to examine and study Japanese traditional colours: gold and red for the Kanō school, blue and purple for the *ukiyoe*, including their symbolic meanings, pigments, how they were applied in art works and how they were related to Japanese aesthetics.

This thesis is comprised of four chapters: the Introduction, Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Conclusion. The introduction indicates the research purpose, theory, and research method. It also demonstrates the reason why the four colours and the two schools were selected. A combination of western colour theory, represented by Goethe, and Asian colour theory, represented by Five-elements theory and Confucius, is used in the following studies.

In Chapter 2, studies on the colour gold and red for the Kano school are presented. These show that Japanese aesthetics is not a simple concept, but an aggregation of conflicting senses of values.

The thesis then examines the colour blue and purple for the *ukiyoe* in Chapter 3. The two colours illustrate the concept of Japanese aesthetics, especially *wabi-sabi*, 侘び寂び, *shibui,* 渋い, and *iki*, 粋".

In the two detailed central chapters, the thesis provides readers with resourceful charts and pictures of paintings that are helpful to understand the statement.

Finally, the thesis concludes the studies on Japanese traditional colours and their relations to Japanese aesthetics. This thesis hopes to not only help scholars in the field of Japanese traditional art and art history, but also offer some inspiration to readers who are doing research on Japanese contemporary design and modern art.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Colours and Japanese Aesthetics

Japanese art has its own characteristic colour system. Among all the fascinating colours in Japanese art, I intend to focus on gold (金色, *kiniro*), red (赤, *aka*) for the Kanō school, and purple (紫, *murasaki*) and blue (青, *ao*) for the ukiyoe. Gold and red, which represented fortune, wealth and power, were popular in the Kanō school, especially for decorative paintings. On the other hand, blue and purple were representative colours for ukiyoe. *Aizuri-e* (藍摺絵), referring to woodblock prints using mainly blue colour, is nowadays valuable and highly worth-collecting. It goes without saying that the iconic Japanese masterpiece is *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (神奈川沖浪裏 *Kanagawa-oki nami ura*), by Katsushika Hokusai. Purple has been the noblest colour in Japanese society since the Heian period. It was the representative colour for the Japanese royal family. The pigments and colour symbolism are significant elements in ukiyoe. Both blue and purple are subtle and delicate colours, which will be briefly introduced in the following chapters. Gold and red are both bright and showy colours, but were also highly appreciated during the Edo period. Studies on these two contrary sets of colours are not only helpful, but also necessary for readers to understand that Japanese aesthetics are not simple concepts but conflicting and contesting senses of values, especially with a complicated and conflicting cultural background in the Edo period. However, it needs to be emphasized that the two different schools that will be studied (the Kanō school and ukiyoe) are neither completely contrary, nor non-relevant independent styles. As an official art, it is obvious that the Kanō school had a wide influence among all different formats of Japanese traditional art. A large

number of ukiyoe artists studied under the Kanō school and were affected by art works of the Muromachi and Momoyama period. On the other hand, as a type of popular culture, ukiyoe had its conflicts with the official Kanō art. Unlike the decorative Kanō art, ukiyoe had a rather commercial purpose. It could be an advertising poster, or a picture book for sale. The audience for the Kanō art was nobility, however, ukiyoe was for commoners in the Edo period.

From the Kamakura period, Japanese samurai gradually developed their admiration towards heavy metal colours, especially gold. Gold colours were widely used in all formats of art. Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1359-1398) had the famous *Kinkakuji*[1] built. Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598) built a golden tea house, where the column, ceiling, even the windows, tea wares and carpets were gilt with gold. Gold represents power and wealth.[2] As samurai society grew powerful and wealthy, ruling classes had larger properties with larger scale decorative paintings. Gold colour could not only display their power and wealth, but also create more light and warmth in the room. Gold-leaf painting was the most representative format of art in the Kanō school. As either a painting material, or a representative colour, I believe it is worth studying comprehensively.

In Japan, red had a more complex social symbolic meaning throughout Japanese history. It could mean life, as the colour of the sun, or it could mean danger, as the colour of fire and blood. Under Chinese influence, the Japanese empire also began to use red to

---

[1] The site of Kinkaku-ji was originally a villa named Kitayama-dai (北山第), belonging to a powerful politician, Saionji Kintsune（西園寺公経）. Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu purchased the villa and transformed it into Kinkaku-ji's in 1397.

[2] Yizhou Zhang, Hu Liu, *Study of Heavy Metal Materials in Japanese Painting* (金属材料在日本重彩画中的地位研究)
Hubei Art Academy (湖北美术学院学报)，2014. 02 p.95.

indicate a higher class in the Edo period. Red is also widely used to represent luck, fortune and happiness, especially combined with white.

In Japanese ukiyoe painting, "*ao*" (blue) was favored by a large number of artists,. *Ao,* as a colour, is now sometimes understood as the colour of indigo. However, in both Japanese language and art, *ao* has a wider meaning and application. In some circumstances, *ao* can also refer to a greenish colour. Blue is considered to be a cool and cold colour, simple, but elegant. A remarkable number of masterpieces of ukiyoe art were impressive by the use of blue colour, such as Katsushika Hokusai's world-famous *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*.

Finally, Japanese admiration towards *murasaki* started over a thousand years ago. Purple had an irreplaceably leading status in both Japanese art and literature. In the Heian period, purple was the most difficult colour to dye, and clothing in purple was forbidden to common people. Thus, it became the official colour of the royal family and government. As techniques developed, purple became popular among the upper class and in kabuki in the Edo period. The Japanese respect and love for purple has never changed. The new Tokyo — Sky Tree is designed on a theme of Edo-*murasaki*.

In order to study how these four colours (red, gold, blue and purple) fitted Japanese aesthetics, firstly, the concepts of Japanese aesthetics should be introduced. Although the Japanese have been producing great art and writing about it for many centuries, the modern study of the philosophical discipline in Japan corresponding to Western "aesthetics" did not start until the nineteenth century.[3] Generally, Japanese aesthetics includes such

[3] "Japanese Aesthetics" *(Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy)*. Retrieved 2016-05-10. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/japanese-aesthetics/

concepts as *yūgen* (幽玄), *wabi-sabi* (侘び寂び), *shibui* (渋い) and *iki* (粋). Not all of these concepts would be studied in this thesis, because some of them were more related to art formats other than painting, for instance, nō theatre and literature. Even so, in my introduction, I would like to give a brief examination on all these concepts, in order to give a rather comprehensive understanding on Japanese traditional aesthetics.

"*Yūgen"* (幽玄)

Yūgen (幽玄) is a significant concept in Japanese aesthetics. The translation of this word highly depends on the circumstance. It generally refers to something dim, deep, and mysterious, which is beyond understanding. This aesthetic concept is deeply related to the religious tradition of Zen Buddhism. The word came originally from the Chinese Han dynasty. Chinese poet Wang Jun (482-550) used this word in the expression 「究竟微妙, 洞达幽玄」 ("To figure out the beauty of the subtle and delicate, observe the concept of *youxuan*"), referring to the nature of the world. After a long time of incorporating Chinese culture, Japanese found the beauty in subtle profundity. It was given prominence in the Japanese aesthetics by Zeami Motokiyo (1364-1444). In his writings about the nō theatre, *yūgen* was referred to as a quality of gentle gracefulness.[4] In Kaula's study[5], *yūgen* refers to the obscure, dark, and half-revealed; to some extent, the beauty of *yūgen* is expressed with soft sadness. Japanese believes that *yūgen* refers to a quality that cannot be explained or expressed in words.[6] Ōnishi Yoshinori (大西克礼) discussed his theory of *yūgen* in his

---

[4] Allan Casebier, "Japanese Aesthetics."*Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*. 23.1-2 (Annual 2000), p.54.

[5] Kaula David, "On Noh Drama." *Tulane Drama Review*, 1960.9, p.69-70.

[6] Allan Casebier, *Japanese Aesthetics.* Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics. 23.1-2 (Annual 2000), p.53.

book『幽玄・あはれ・さび 大西克礼美学コレクション』*(Yūgen*, *Aware*, *Sabi: Onishi Yoshinori Bigaku collection)*. According to his analysis, beauty is hidden behind truth, coming from the substantial content of a phenomenon that is hard to understand and beyond description. It is the opposite of frankness, plainness and sharp, direct emotion. Instead, it is soft, calm and elegant. This serenity is highly related to Buddhist philosophy. The beauty of *yūgen* is usually signified in Japanese *nō* and *waka* (Japanese poems) by the subtle profundity that Japanese scholars created. Monochrome painting of the Nanga school was highly related to this concept. However, it has only a tangential relationship to the four colours (gold, red, blue, and purple) that will be primarily studied in this thesis, therefore, there will be no further study in the following thesis.

Wabi-sabi (侘び寂び)

The concept of *wabi-sabi* (侘び寂び) was originally from the Buddhist idea of the three marks of existence ("*sanbōin* 三法印")[7], specifically impermanence (*mujō* 無常). According to the *Encyclopedia Nipponica* (『日本大百科全書（ニッポニカ）』, *Nihon-Dai-Hyakka-Zensho*, published by Shōgakukan) *Wabi* (侘び), in Japanese, literally means "Awareness of inner repletion despite imperfection and insufficiency" (貧粗, 不足のなかに心の充足をみいだそうとする意識). *Sabi (*寂び*)* means "Beauty of richness inside tranquillity and depth" (閑寂さのなかに、奥深いものや豊かなものがおのずと

[7] S*anbōin (*三法印) is a reference in Mahayana buddhism, including three concepts that indicate three different standards of buddhist justice: impermanence (*Shogyō-mujō*, 諸行無常), non-self (*Shohō-muga*, 諸法無我), and Nirvana (*Nehan-jakujō*, 涅槃寂静).

感じられる美しさ). *Wabi-sabi* (侘寂) represents a comprehensive Japanese aesthetic, appreciating the beauty of transience and imperfection. The aesthetic is well known as "imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete"[8]. The Japanese obsession for *sakura* (cherry blossoms) is one particular instance of the Japanese aesthetic that appreciates the beauty of transience.

According to Andrew Juniper, *wabi-sabi* can be defined as "if an object or expression can bring about, within us, a sense of serene melancholy and a spiritual longing, then that object could be said to be *wabi-sabi*."[9] For Richard Powell, "*wabi-sabi* nurtures all that is authentic by acknowledging three simple realities: nothing lasts, nothing is finished, and nothing is perfect."[10] I tend to support Richard Powell's idea on *wabi-sabi.* The three concepts of "imperfect, impairment, and incomplete" are signatures that distinguish *wabi-sabi* from other Japanese concepts of aesthetics. Juniper's suggestion, however, is closer to the general idea of Japanese aesthetics. It is true that Japanese appreciate objects or expressions that can bring a sense of peace and longing, while it is less convincing to describe it as the definition of *wabi-sabi*. Japanese monochrome painting is famous for its beauty of leaving blank, which fitted the beauty that the concept of *wabi-sabi* appreciated. However, I will suggest that the use of gold and red colours also matched Japanese aesthetics of *wabi-sabi.*

Shibui (渋い)

---

[8] Koren, Leonard (1994). *Wabi-Sabi* for Artists, Designers, Poets and Philosophers. Stone Bridge Press.
[9] Juniper, Andrew (2003). *Wabi Sabi*: The Japanese Art of Impermanence. Tuttle Publishing.
[10] Powell, Richard R. (2004). *Wabi Sabi Simple*. Adams Media.

Shibui (渋い) is another significant concept of Japanese traditional aesthetics. It also refers to an appreciation of simplicity and refinement. The original meaning of this word was "a sour and astringent taste, such as raw persimmon". It can also mean "rough" ("not smooth") or "meager". As a verb, *shiburu* can mean to be reluctant or grudging. Used as a word of aesthetic judgment, however, it maintained its original definition and extended to implying objects which are subtle, quiet, profound, simple, unobtrusive and unostentatious. In other words, it refers to things that are not showy but in good taste.[11] *Shibui* is used frequently in modern Japanese and the concept of s*hibui* also influenced Japanese daily life deeply. People describe a simple but subtle dress as s*hibui*, and it is used to describe voice, styles, houses, etc.

Kawakita Michiaki brilliantly contrasts the two words hade (派手) and jimi (地味), which shares a similar fashion concept to *shibui*:

> Two adjectives used in a rather similar fashion are the words *hade* and *jimi*. *Hade* is used of colouring, dress, or ways of speaking that are bright or showy; of anything that is brilliant or gaudy; of things that are heavily decorated or over-conspicuous. *Jimi*, on the other hand, refers to the opposite state: to the plain and the quiet, whatever is conservative and restrained. Where the former tends to the extrovert, the latter is introvert. *Shibui*, now, looks at first glance as though it should be the opposite of *hade*. That does not make it the same as *jimi*, though. To be paradoxical, it is *jimi* with an element of *hade*, and *hade* with an element of *jimi*.[12]

---

[11] Kawakita Michiaki, *The World of Shibui Japan Quarterly*, 1961.1.1, p.33.
[12] Kawakita Michiaki, *The World of Shibui Japan Quarterly*, 1961.1.1, p.34.

Although, in my opinion, the concept of *shibui* has a rather more elusive meaning than *hade* and *jimi*, Kawakita's suggestion was an inspiration for understanding what *shibui* stands for. It is always easy to equate it to *jimi,* or consider it as the opposite of *hade.* On the contrary, what Japanese admire is the elegance hidden behind simplicity.

Compared to *wabi-sabi*, which emphasizes imperfection, *shibui* is less artificial but a more contrasting concept of elegant and rough, or spontaneous and restrained. *Shibui* beauty arises from the basis of human life and the profoundest depths of spirit. It was a rather natural beauty. The concept of *shibui* is adequately reflected in Japanese paintings, tea ceremony, gardens, etc.

Iki (粋)

Iki is considered to be the a concept of Japanese aesthetics with unique national characteristics. The most systematic and comprehensive explanation on *iki,* I believe, is Kuki Jūzō's (九鬼周造) *The Structure of Iki (*『いきの構造』*Iki no Kōzō)*. *Iki* is defined according to four approaches: intentional structure, extensional structure, natural expression, and artistic expression. As the intentional structure, Kuki suggests that *iki* is constituted by three important factors, including coquetry[13] (媚態[14], *bitai*), brave composure (意気地[15], *ikiji*), and resignation (諦め[16], *akirame*). Coquetry implies the ability to understand and deal with social occasions, especially within sexual relations.

---

[13] Translated by John Clark, *Reflections on Japanese Taste the Structure of Iki* Power Publications Sydney, 1997, p.37-46.
[14] Kuki Shūzō, *Iki no Kozo* Iwanami Shoten, 1967.9, p.19.
[15] Kuki Jūzō, *Iki no Kozo.* Iwanami Shoten, 1967.9, p.22.
[16] Kuki Jūzō, *Iki no Kozo.* Iwanami Shoten, 1967.9, p.25.

Brave composure demonstrates a sense of haughtiness and independence, which was deeply related to the colour *Edo-murasaki* (purple of Edo) that I will study comprehensively in chapter 2. Resignation, however, suggests a generous, chic and elegant attitude towards life, even after all the misery and pain that life puts one through. According to Kuki's explanation, *Iki* tends to be a combination of sensibility and intellectuality, an aesthetic concept of freedom and demeanor. This concept of Japanese aesthetics is deeply influenced by Buddhism, which appreciates a worldview of optimism towards bad luck, and calmness towards destiny. Similarly, *iki* appreciates the beauty that survives tribulation and suffering, yet remains elegant, unrestrained and unconventional.

As for the extensional structure, Kuki values the concept of *iki* by comparing four pairs of Japanese modern aesthetic concepts: elegance-vulgarity, showy-plain, refined-unrefined, and astringent-sweet. Among these concepts, Kuki suggests that what *iki* values is elegance, plain, refined, and astringent. Using this idea, he also created a hexahedron to show the connections between these different, or even contrary aesthetic concepts.[17]

Colour Theory: European and Asian Approaches

I believe it is unreasonable to explain either the origin or the social meaning of Japanese traditional colours (particularly colours in the Edo period) only on a basis of Western colour theory, which is using rather different approaches compared to Asian colour theory. Western colour theory can nonetheless be a useful approach for modern studies to help examine Japanese traditional colours.

---

[17] Kuki Jūzō, *Iki no Kōzō*. Iwanami Shoten, 1967.9, pp.57-58.

The tradition of western colour theory was invented in the 18th century, starting with Isaac Newton's theory of colour. Isaac Newton figured out that colours could be created by mixing colour primaries during his experiments. In his *Opticks*, Newton published a colour wheel to show the geometric relationship between these primaries. Primary colours are sets of colours that can be combined to make a range of other colours. However, a multiplicity of primary colours can be confusing. Isaac Newton's path-breaking theory of 1704, *Opticks*, is based on seven primaries. However, in modern colour theory, two schools of colour theory suggest differently. The additive[18] and the subtractive[19] theories believe that there are three primary colours. In the additive system, the sets of primary colours are chosen according to reaction from the spectral sensitivities in human brain.[20] The additive suggests red, green and violet, while the subtractive suggests red, green and yellow. The subtractive colour system is the early scientific colour system, widely used in the art field, particularly painting. Thus, the subtractive colour system will be the primary colour theory that should be discussed in this thesis. The other school, the perceptual, believes that there are four primary colours: red, yellow, green and blue.[21] The additive system is commonly used in fields such as television, and the

---

[18] Additive colour is colour created by mixing different lights of colours. Lights of red, green, and blue are the most primary colours used as base in additive colour system. In another word, additive colour system is a composition of colour lights.

[19] A subtractive colour model explains the mixing of different dyes, inks, paint pigments or natural colourants to create a wider range of colours. Subtractive colour is created by subtracting or absorbing some wavelengths of light. In another words, the subtractive colour system is a substraction of lights that are present in white light. The colour that a surface displays depends on which parts of the visible spectrum are not absorbed and therefore remain visible.

[20] Steven K. Shevell, *The Science of Colour.* Optical Society of America, 2003, pp.4-5.

[21] Charles A.Riley II, *Colour Codes: Modern Theories of Colour in Philosophy, Painting and Architecture, Literature, Music and Psychology*.
University Press of New England, 1994, p.3.

subtractive is generally used in fields such as printing. On the other hand, red, yellow, and blue are commonly used as primaries when painting or drawing.[22] These three colours are considered to be the best set of three colourants to combine the widest range of high-chroma colours.[23] As the topic of this thesis is about painting art, I would like to continue my study with the RYB model, which indicates that the primary colours are red, yellow and blue (sometimes also known as magenta, yellow, and cyan).

The combination of any two primary colours creates a secondary colour: orange, purple, and green. Red and yellow create orange. Red and blue create purple. Yellow and blue create green. In the RYB system as used in traditional painting and interior design, tertiary colours are typically named by combining the names of the primary and secondary colours as below:[24]

Red + orange = vermilion

Orange + yellow = amber

Yellow + green = chartreuse

Green + blue = teal

Blue + purple = violet

Purple + red = magenta

---

[22] Chris Grimley and Mimi Love, *Colour, Space, and Style: All the Details Interior Designers Need to Know but Can Never Find.* Rockport Publishers. 2007, p.137.

[23] James Gurney , *Colour and Light: A Guide for the Realist Painter.* Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2010, p.75.

[24] Adrienne L. Zihlman. *The Human Evolution Colouring Book.* Harper Collins, 2001.

Compared to western colour theories, which value objectivity and the scientific approach, the origin of Asian colour theories was deeply influenced by the Chinese feudal hierarchy, Confucianism, and Taoism. The earliest colour theory was related to the famous Theory of Five Elements, which was described in Confucius's *Book of Documents*[25]:

> The first is named water; the second, fire; the third, wood; the fourth, metal; the fifth, earth. The nature of water is to soak and descend; of fire, to blaze and ascend; of wood, to be crooked and to be straight; of metal, to obey and to change; while the virtue of earth is seen in seed-sowing and ingathering. That which soaks and descends becomes salt; that which blazes and ascends becomes bitter; that which is crooked and straight becomes sour; that which obeys and changes becomes acrid; and from seed-sowing and ingathering comes sweetness. (translated by James Legge, reprinted by Hong Kong University Press, 1960, vol. III)[26]

The system of five elements was originally used for describing interactions and relationships between phenomena. Five fundamental colours were related to the Five-Elements Theory: Metal-white, Wood-blue, Water-black, Fire-red, and Earth-yellow. The following chart demonstrates the generating and overcoming interactions and relations between these five elements. Both Laozi[27] and Confucius mentioned the five fundamental

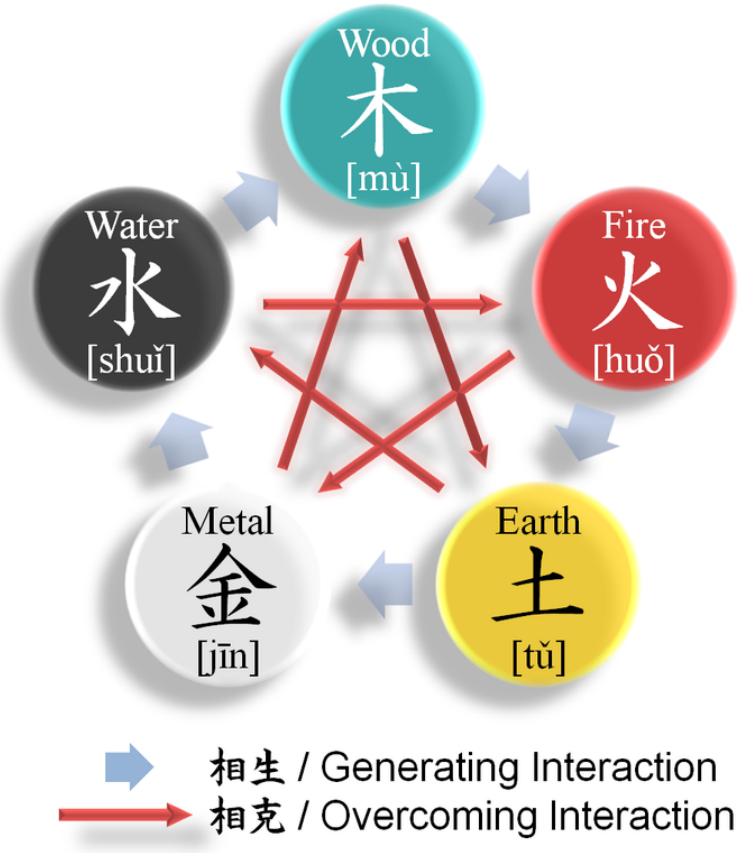
---

[25] *Book of Documents (*尚书*)*: is one of the Five Classics of ancient China. It is a collection of rhetorical prose attributed to figures of ancient China, and served as the foundation of Chinese political philosophy for over 2,000 years.

[26] In Chinese: 一、五行：一曰水，二曰火，三曰木，四曰金，五曰土。水曰潤下，火曰炎上，木曰曲直，金曰從革，土爰稼穡。潤下作鹹，炎上作苦，曲直作酸，從革作辛，稼穡作甘。

[27] Laozi was an ancient Chinese philosopher and writer. He is known as the reputed author of Dao De Jing and the founder of philosophical Taoism, and also as a deity in religious Taoism and traditional Chinese religions.

colours in their works. Since the Zhou dynasty, the ruling class started to rank colours in order to maintain social etiquette and demonstrate power. Five colours that were related to



the five elements were ranked the noblest colours. From then on, colours played a significant role in emphasizing, stipulating and perfecting rituals and etiquette to condition the behavior of the citizens. The Five-elements Theory was not only used to explain philosophy, politics, astronomy, but also used in fortune-telling, history, etc. It was a theory that ran through Chinese history.

Confucius's colour theory supported the Five-elements Theory. Confucianism valued colour's role in protecting social etiquette. *The Book of Rites*[28] particularly recorded different colours that should be used in different formal situations, as well as what colour to wear according to various official positions. Furthermore, Confucianism also valued moral integrity, and Confucian theories endowed colours with other symbolic meanings that influenced Chinese culture profoundly. For instance, in Beijing opera, white represents duplicity, black represents honesty, red refers to bravery, etc. As Chinese culture was introduced to Japan, colour ranking also became an important part of social symbolism. Colours were not only artistic elements in art works, but more importantly, they reflected the social and cultural environment during that period.

Japanese Colours

The Japanese traditional process of creating pigments or dyes can be proven scientifically by modern colour theory. However, in the Edo period, when the western colour theory had not yet been introduced, Japanese colour naming was distinguished from the western colour naming system. Instead of a scientific colour system, the traditional Japanese divided colours into three broad categories: 1. botanical colours (植物の色, *shokubutsu no iro*), 2. the colours of animals (動物の色, *dōbutsu no iro*), and 3. the colours of nature (自然の色, *shizen no iro*).[29] James Stanlaw examined the Japanese history of its

[28] The Book of Rites (礼记，*Liji*): a collection of texts describing the social forms, administration, and ceremonial rites of the Zhou dynasty as they were understood in the Warring States and the early Han periods.

[29] James Stanlaw , "Language, Contact, and Vantages: Fifteen Hundred Years of Japanese Colour Terms." Language Sciences 2010, Vol.30, p.205.

colour nomenclature system. He suggested a possible set of Japanese primary colours as below:[30]

shiro 白

White

kuro 黒

Black

aka 赤

Red

ao 青

Blue

ki-iro 黄色

Yellow

midori 緑

Midori

cha-iro 茶色

Brown

murasaki 紫

Purple

pinku ピンク

Pink

[30] James Stanlaw , “Language, Contact, and Vantages: Fifteen Hundred Years of Japanese Colour Terms.” Language Sciences 2010, Vol.30, p.196.

orenji オレンジ

Orange

hai-iro 灰色

Grey

kon-iro 紺

Dark-blue

Stanlaw suggests that English loanwords such as pink and orange are inevitable in the Japanese modern colour system, which I agree. Since the Meiji period, western culture and language had influenced Japanese traditional culture and language. At the same time, the Japanese traditional colour naming system was also affected by the western style. For instance, before the English word "pink" was introduced to Japan, a similar colour was commonly called *sakura* (cherry). However, my thesis will focus on Japanese traditional colours in the Edo period, therefore, pink and orange would be removed from the list in my study.

Based on the three texts mentioned above, Stanlaw also demonstrates the history of Japanese colours in the following chart.[31]

colour category	orthography	kun-yomi reading	on-yomi reading	frequency	year of appearance
White	白色	shiro-iro	haku-shoku	298	712
Black	黒色	kuro-iro	koku-shoku	302	720
Red	赤色	aka-iro	seki-shoku	510	712
Yellow	黄色	*ki-iro*	*ō-shoku*	1101	720
Blue	青色	*ao-iro*	*sei-shoku*	394	712

[31] James Stanlaw, *Language Science 32* (2010) pp.196-224.

colour category	orthography	kun-yomi reading	on-yomi reading	frequency	year of appearance
Green	緑色	*midori-iro*	*ryoku-shoku*	1170	720
Brown	茶色	*cha-iro*	*kas-shoku*	871	1158
Purple	紫色	*murasaki-iro*	*shi-shoku*	1524	759
Pink	桃色	*momo-iro*	———	1611	759
Orange	橙色	*daidai-iro*	———	2135+	1905
Grey	鼠色	*nezumi-iro*	———	2135+	934
	灰色	*hai-iro*	———	1659	1818
Dark blue	紺色	*kon-iro*	———	1609	990

The prime resource of my pigments research in this thesis will be the following:

John Winter, *East Asian Paintings: Materials, Structure and Deterioration Mechanisms*;

Elisabeth West FitzHugh, *A Database of Pigments on Japanese Ukiyo-e Paintings in the Freer Gallery of Art*;

Elisabeth West FitzHugh, John Winter and Marco Leona, *Studies Using Scientific Methods, Pigments in Later Japanese Paintings*.

Colour theories nowadays are being widely used in fashion and design, while I tend to use these colour theories to study traditional colours. It is said that "creation started from the study of tradition"（創造は古典の研究から始まる）.[32] It is therefore significant for people who work in art-related field, and readers who are keen to learn about

[32] Nagasaki Seiki (長崎盛輝), *The Traditional Colours of Japan (*日本の伝統色 その色名と色調*)*.
Seigensha, 2013.2, pp.326.

Asian art, to study traditional colours. It helps not only to develop an understanding about art history, but also to explore the creation of colours in modern art and design.

The Age and Artistic Schools to be Studied in this Thesis

The Edo period started from 1603 and ended in 1867. After Toyotomi Hideyoshi's (豊臣秀吉, 1537-1598) death, Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川家康, 1543-1616) united Japan, putting an end to Japan's long disunited history of constant conflicts and wars. The whole country was under the government of the Tokugawa shogunate (*bakufu*) during the Edo period. It was the last feudal society in Japanese history. After the unification, the Japanese social and political environment became relatively peaceful and stable, which led to technological and economic development The Tokugawa shogunate established a severe social system, with four classes: the samurai (warriors), peasants, artisans, and merchants. The Samurai was the highest class among all, for which the shogun was the head. Daimyo all belonged to the samurai class, and the nobility as well as priests shared a nearly equal status as samurai. The appearance of artisans and merchants marked the development of the Japanese economy. As economy and technology developed, education also advanced. Japanese people had more time and energy to search for spiritual satisfaction, which led to the flourishing of art, including painting, literature, theatre, and arc.

Tokugawa Ieyasu encouraged foreign trade, before he became suspicious and started to control existing trade. Tokugawa Iemitsu enacted the *sakoku* policy (closed

country policy)[33] in 1633 and the policy remained in effect until 1853. Despite the *sakoku* policy, Japan fortunately was not completely isolated. Communication with China continued, although trade policy with the Europeans was strict. Therefore, I suggest that the isolation policy did not obstruct Japanese art development. On the contrary, the strict foreign relations policy motivated domestic artists to create artistic works with remarkable self-identity. For instance, *ukiyoe,* a Japanese original art form, flourished under such circumstances and developed into a major industry. The complicated relationships with foreign countries may have helped domestic artists concentrate their own artistic creation.

Studies on the history of the Edo period convinced me that this was an ideal time for art development because of its political stability, economic and technological development, which was the reason why I chose this period as my study on Japanese traditional colours and aesthetics.

Under such a relatively stable social and political environment in the Edo period. Japanese art flourished in various schools, such as the Kanō school, the *Rinpa* school, the *Nanga* school, the *Maruyama-jijō* school, and *ukiyoe*. Sasaki Jōhei categorized these schools into two varieties: the Kanō and *Yamato-e* schools.[34] His categorization is based on the fact that during the Edo period, the Kanō School was the only official art school of the government. The other art schools, however, were considered to be achievements of scholars and the common people. According to Sasaki, Japanese art started to thrive in luxurious architecture and decorative paintings since the Muromachi

---

[33] *Sakoku* policy: the word "*sakoku* (鎖国)" was not invented until 17th century. It originated from Shizuki Tadao (志築忠雄)'s work "*Sakoku-ron* (鎖国論)" in 1801. From then on, it has been widely used as the name of this policy.

[34] Sasaki Jōhē, *Bunkazai Koza- Japanese Art 3 - Painting (Momoyama, Edo)* Daiichi-hōki Press, 1977.11, p.63.

period. The development of decorative paintings continued in the Edo period. Meanwhile, schools and artists with different backgrounds and remarkable characteristics stood out.

The Kanō School (狩野派, *Kanō-ha*)

During the Edo period, the Kanō School was regarded as the only official school of Japanese painting, which means it represented the military aristocracy. Thus, the Kanō school became the dominant school of art from the early 15th century. Furthermore, artists from other different schools sometimes had experience learning skills from the Kanō school, for instance the famous ukiyoe artists Keisai Eisen and Katsushika Hokusai. Thus, studies on the Kanō school will be necessary to acquire further understanding of Japanese Edo art.

There was a pyramid-like system inside this huge group and the speedy growth also led to the resultant lack of individuality in the family style. The power of their influence also spread to Kyoto, where a new branch of the Kanō school, named Kyōkanō, was established. The Kanō style inherited the bold and unrestrained features of the Momoyama school and were deeply affected by Chinese traditional paintings (especially from the Ming dynasty). Under the influence of Chinese traditional painting, brighter colours and more detailed techniques were highly valued. Gold-leaf art works, as an impressively decorative art format thrived within the Kanō family during the Edo era. Although the Rinpa school shared many similarities as the Kanō school, I chose to study the Kanō school, as it was the only official school. This art style was deeply influenced by the Japanese social and political environment.

Ukiyoe (浮世絵, *ukiyoe*)

My second focus will be one of the most significant artistic styles of the Edo period: *Ukiyoe*, which means "pictures of the floating world". Compared to schools such as Nanga and Rimpa, which were deeply influenced by Chinese traditional painting, ukiyoe tends to be more of an original Japanese traditional art that has had a wide influence on the world, and the influence continues in modern art.

Ukiyoe started around 1657 after the Great Fire of Meireki. It has been a significant part of Japanese popular culture. It is also worth mentioning that a large number of ukiyoe artists had studied under the Kanō school. Thus, ukiyoe was deeply influenced by art style of the Muromachi and Momoyama period. At first it was basically hand-painting on paper, rarely with monochrome wood-block prints. Afterwards, with the development of *nishikie*[35], most *Ukiyoe* work was produced by wood block prints. A remarkably large number of ukiyoe artists appeared in the Edo period and the early Meiji period and there were huge changes in pigments during this time. In order to print from the wood blocks to handmade paper, colours need to be brighter and last longer. After the 1760s, portraits became extremely popular, especially portraits of beauties, such as Kitagawa Utamaro's *Kushi* (Comb) in 1785. Suzuki Harunobu and Kitagawa Utamaro were two of the representative artists of the middle period of Ukiyoe. The 19th century is considered to be the mature period of Ukiyoe. During this time, landscapes became a new trend, since travel started to be popular among ordinary people. World-famous artists included Katsushika Hokusai and Utagawa Hiroshige. Japanese ukiyoe art inspired western

[35] *Nishikie*: "brocade picture (錦絵)", refers to Japanese multi-coloured wood block painting, which was the completed version of ukiyoe. The technique was invented in the 1760s.

artists such as Vincent van Gogh. As one of the most influential art forms in Japanese art history, I believe it is definitely necessary to study ukiyoe in my thesis.

Although the Rinpa school and the Nanga school will not be studied in the following thesis, as two important art schools in the Edo period, it is necessary to briefly introduce them in the introduction to provide a better understanding of general Edo art.

The Rinpa School(琳派, *rin-pa*)

Rinpa was a Japanese art school, led by three extraordinary artists: Tawaraya Sōtatsu (俵屋 宗達), Ogata Kōrin (尾形光琳, 1658-1716), and Sakai Hōitsu (酒井抱一, 1761-1828). The Rinpa school was founded by Tawaraya Sōtatsu (俵屋宗達) and Honami Kōetsu (本阿弥光悦, 1558-1637). Thus, the Rinpa school is also called Sōtatsu Rinpa in some studies. However, others argue that Ogata Kōrin (尾形光琳, 1658-1716) achieved greater success, so that this school should be called Kōrin-pa instead. I believe that the great achievements of these two outstanding artists were not comparable and they shared similarities but also differences in their art creation.

Kōrin was most famous for his paintings of flowers and birds. He was highly appreciated for brilliant brushwork and unique composition on decorative paintings, especially gold-leaf screen paintings. Kōrin was born into a *kimono* dealer's family in Kyoto. In such a family, he had many opportunities to study noh theatre, tea ceremony and calligraphy. Thus, Kōrin had a better understanding in Japanese traditional aesthetics from an early age. Similar to many other artists in the same period, Kōrin started to study painting by artists of the Kanō school. Yamane Yūzō (山根有三) and Kōno Motoaki (河

野元昭) argue that the Kanō school had gradually lost its creativity after Kanō Tanyū, although its leading status in Japanese art history remained. Artists in the Edo period generally started their art studies with the Kanō school. However, it was not rare that students of the Kanō school achieved a remarkable success by personalized art styles.[36] Kōrin's reputation had helped the Rinpa school become one of the most remarkable art schools in the Edo period.

Kōrin's successor, Sakai Hōitsu (酒井抱一, 1761-1828) was said to be the second leader of the Rinpa school a century after Kōrin's death. His appearance consolidated the status of the Rinpa school. Like Kōrin, Sakai Hōitsu started his art career under Kanō Takanobu, who was also an artist of the Kanō school. Afterwards, he showed an interest in ukiyoe and started to learn from Utagawa Toyoharu. Meanwhile, he was also influenced by the Tosa school[37] and the Shijō school (also known as Maruyama-shijō school)[38]. But finally, he focused on Kōrin's Rinpa school and achieved a great success on decorative paintings.[39]

The Nanga School (南画, *nanga*)

---

[36] Yamane Yūzō and Kō Motoaki, *Bunkazai Kōza- Japanese Art 3 - Painting (Momoyama, Edo)*
Daiichi-hōki Press, 1977.11, p.123.

[37] The Tosa school (土佐派 *tosa-ha*): a Japanese art school that was funded in the early Muromachi period (14th-15th centuries), specializing in subject matter and techniques derived from ancient Japanese art (yamatoe), as opposed to schools influenced by Chinese art, such as the Kanō school.

[38] The Maruyama school: a Japanese art school founded by Maruyama Ōkyo in the late 18th century. The school is a typical Kyoto art style, and it is named after the street in Kyoto where many major artists were based; *Shijō* literally translates to "fourth avenue."

[39] Yamane Yūzō and Kō Motoaki, *Bunkazai Kōza- Japanese Art 3 - Painting (Momoyama, Edo)*
Daiichi-hōki Press, 1977.11, p.135

Nanga was an abbreviation of *nanzonghua* (南宗画, Paintings of the Southern Song). Moreover, similar phrases such as *bunjin-ga* (文人画), *nansō-ga* (南宗画), and *nan-ga* (南画) all refer to this same particular art school. Nanga originated in China during the Song dynasty (960-1279). It was introduced to Japan over 400 years later, and then developed into a new school, adapted to Japanese aesthetics. According to Yoshizawa Tadashi, in China, *nanzonghua* was developed within the scholar class, which was highly educated and with government background. On the other hand, the scholar class in Japan indicates professional artists, who made a living by selling their artistic works.[40] In the Muromachi period, as communication with the Chinese Ming government grew more frequent, Japanese scholars, such as Sesshū (雪舟, 1420-1506), had opportunities to visit China and learn from Ming artists. Since then, Chinese art and Confucian culture affected most Japanese artists and art schools. Afterwards, the famous artist Kanō Tanyu (狩野探幽, 1602-1674) absorbed the spirit of Chinese *nanzonghua* and created a highly-appreciated brand-new style within the Kanō school. Meanwhile, Ike no Taiga (池大雅, 1723-1776) was considered to epitomize the Nanga school. Ike no Taiga was born into a farming family in Kyoto, and moved to Edo in approximately 1748. He was deeply influenced by Kōrin's Rinpa school in his childhood. He started his painting career under the Tosa school and was deeply affected by Chinese *nanzonghua.* Furthermore, he showed his interest in western art in his late year, which affected his sense of space and structure in his late career.[41]

---

[40] Yoshizawa Tadashi, *Bunkazai Kōza - Japanese Art 3 - Painting (Momoyama, Edo)* Daiichi-hōki Press, 1977.11, pp.143-144

[41] Yoshizawa Tadashi, *Bunkazai Kōza - Japanese Art 3 - Painting (Momoyama, Edo)* Daiichi-hōki Press, 1977.11, pp.151-152

As one of the representative forms of art, both Chinese *nanzonghua* Japanese *nanga* were famous for monochrome ink and wash painting. However, it is still debated as to whether black and white are supposed to be considered as colours or not. Therefore, studies on monochrome paintings will be barely examined in this thesis.

Chapter 2 The Kanō School

The first chapter will focus on the dominant school, which is known as the Kanō school, during the Edo period. The chapter will be conducted in four main parts. The first part is the introduction of the Kanō school, which includes the origin of the Kanō school, a brief history of how it became the dominant school of Japanese art, the school system, the famous artists who belonged to the families and how the Kanō school was influenced by Chinese paintings. The second part focuses on the colours red and gold, which were the representative colours of the Kanō school. I will examine the use of gold on three different formats of decorative paintings, culture and social symbolisms regarding to these respective colours, and the studies on pigments. Finally, I will discuss the prevailing aesthetic ideas from the representation of these two colours, red and gold as well as how they can be seen in masterpieces from the Kanō school in my conclusion.

2.1 Introduction: the Kanō School

The Kanō school was one of the most important streams in Japanese art history. It originated in Kyoto during the end of 15th century, and lasted for over 400 years until the Meiji period. Masters of the school had served as official artists to the Ashikaga Shogunate of the Muromachi period (1333-1568), the warlords of the Momoyama period (1568-1600) and the Tokugawa Shogunate of the Edo period (1600-1868). The school began with the influence of *Kanga*.[42] The Kanō school was founded by Kanō Masanobu (1434-1530) during the Muromachi period, when Chinese *Shuimo* (in Japanese: *Suibokuga*,

[42] *Kanga*: indicated a style derived from the Chinese ink-painting traditions of the Southern Song (1127–1279) and Yuan (1279–1368) periods and first practiced in Japan by Zen monks.

meaning monochrome ink painting) was dominant. [43] *Shuimo* from the South Song dynasty, which was also known as "*Liangsong Yuanti* (两宋院体)", had a tremendous influence on Japanese Yamatoe[44]. Japanese aesthetics can be seen in all formats of Japanese art, including Japanese painting, architecture, Japanese gardening, tea ceremony (*chadō*, 茶道), and art of flower arrangement (*kadō*, 華道), etc.

The Kanō school was organized by a hereditary system within the Kanō family, who passed the leadership from father to son, or the nearest male relatives (see the family tree below) to protect their painting traditions. Young men (or in some rare cases young women, such as Kanō Yukinobu[45]) of outstanding artistic talent were also taken into the family as apprentices. Furthermore, in exceptional cases, those with extraordinary talent, such as Kanō Sanraku and Kanō Kōi, were able to be adopted into the family and some of them were even considered as representative artists of the Kanō school in their generation. Studios of the Kanō school undertook an enormous number of art projects from a broad spectrum of sponsors, ranging from the shogunate, Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, to provincial lords and rich merchants. Answering the demand from their patrons, Kanō artists produced work in a variety of formats, including fan paintings, scrolls, portraits, screen paintings, wall paintings, sliding doors and plaques. The hereditary lines within the

---

[43] The monochrome ink painting of the Song dynasty was easily accepted by Japanese Muromachi art, because they shared the same ideas of aesthetics, such as "幽玄 *youxuan*" (in Japanese: 幽玄 *Yūgen*) and "空寂 *kongji*" (in Japanese: 侘び寂び *wabi-sabi*).

[44] *Yamato-e* (大和絵) is a style of Japanese painting inspired by Tang dynasty (618-907) paintings and fully developed by the late Heian period (794-1185). It is considered the classical Japanese style. From the Muromachi period (1336-1573), the term "*Yamato-e"* has been used to distinguish work from contemporary Chinese style paintings (*Kara-e*), which were inspired by Chinese Song and Yuan ink wash paintings.

[45] Kanō Yukinobu, originally Kiyohara Yukinobu (1643-1682), was born in an art family in Kyoto. Her father was a painter, under whom she studied.

Kanō family guaranteed Kanō artists to have enough human resources to assist their masters with all the tasks, which also encouraged the preservation of their painting traditions over many generations.

Kanō Masanobu (狩野正信, 1434-1530)

Kanō Masanobu (狩野正信, 1434-1530) was the founder of the Kanō school. His father had been a samurai, and he was the first professional artist in his family. Masanobu was deeply influenced by his contemporary Sesshū (1420-1506), who had visited China in his mid-career (1434-1530). Sesshū, as well as Masanobu, were under the influence of a Japanese Zen Buddhist painter Tenshō Shūbun (天章周文). Masanobu started his artistic career in Kyoto around 1463, when he undertook a commission to paint the Sixteen Arhats (*Rakan*) in *Shōkoku-ji* (相国寺), which was the first record of him serving the Ashikaga Shogunate. After that, the record was unfortunately lost for almost 20 years, until in 1483 he undertook a project in *Tōzan-sansō* (nowadays known as 慈照寺 *Jishō-ji*, popularly known as *Ginkaku-ji*). Other than that, he also worked on portraits for the shogunal court as well. Unfortunately, few of the works from Masanobu survived. One of his the most famous works is considered to be the Chinese style "Zhou Maoshu Appreciating Lotuses" (周茂叔愛蓮図), now in the collection of the Kyushu National Museum. This work was based on a well-known Chinese story "Ode to the Lotus Flower" (Ailian-shuo, 愛蓮説), written by Zhou Dunyi. In this article, the most famous sentence "The lotus grows in mud, yet is never contaminated by it. And she floats on waving water, yet she never dances with it."（出淤泥而不染，濯清涟而不妖）represented Chinese aesthetics in the Song dynasty. A part of Chinese traditions always valued the qualities of

simplicity, elegance, and purity. Chinese ink painting was also a reflection of this tradition, which was deeply incorporated by Japanese scholars in the Muromachi period.

Kanō Motonobu (狩野元信, 1476-1559)

After Kanō Masanobu established his artistic career, his son Kanō Motonobu (狩野元信, 1476-1559) organized the Kanō school into a powerful painting academy by training young artists so that they could be capable of undertaking large painting projects. During the Temmon era (1532-1555), for instance, Motonobu carried out a project for a series of paintings at the Ishiyama Hongan-ji temple, in Osaka. In order to meet the demands of this commission, which was impossible for him to complete all alone, Motonobu employed a number of artistic assistants. Unfortunately, few of these paintings have survived, otherwise they would be symbolic *Shōhekiga* (障壁画, paintings on formats as screens, sliding doors, walls, etc.)[46]. In spite of a chaotic political and social environment, Motonobu managed to create a framework for his studio, which was something that Masanobu had not accomplished. It is also the reason why some scholars argue that although Masanobu was the beginner of the Kanō tradition, Motonobu was considered to be the founder of the Kanō school.[47]

During the Muromachi period, Chinese ink and wash painting was in great fashion, influencing many Japanese artists, including Motonobu. Motonobu's accomplishment was

---

[46]障壁画 (*shōhekiga*) includes 襖 (*fusuma*, sliding screen), 杉戸 (*sugido*, door), 壁貼り付け (*kabeharitsuke,* wall painting), 衝立 (*tsuitate*, nonfolding, standing screens), etc. These will be studied in detail later.

[47]Tsuneo Takeda (translated and adapted by H.Mack Horton and Catherine Kaputa), *Kanō Eitoku*
Kodansha International Ltd, 1977, p21-23

not only in establishing the system within the Kanō family, but also in the development of monochrome painting. Motonobu was extraordinary at producing landscapes, and his most famous works included "Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons"（四季花鳥図）and "Eight Views of Xiaoxiang" (*Shōshō hakkei,* 瀟湘八景).[48]

Kanō Eitoku (狩野永徳, 1543-1590)

Kanō Eitoku (狩野永徳, 1543-1590) did not receive his early painting training from his father, but from his grandfather Motonobu, who passed away when Eitoku was sixteen. Eitoku later turned out to be a revolutionary artist of the Kanō family, while his early style was still within the tradition of Muromachi painting standards.[49] His works "Birds in a Plum Tree" and "Plum Blossoms and Birds" (Ink and gold on paper) in Jukō-in, Daitoku-ji (located in Kyoto) were done when he was twenty years old. Both these paintings were nearly monochrome paintings, while the extraordinary skill of using gold, especially gilding gold leaf on the surface in these two works marked Eitoku's revolution. After that, Eitoku started to use brighter colours for decorative paintings. His famous works of screen painting in and around Kyoto (Pair of six-fold screens, ink and colours on gold-leaf ground), illustrated below, was an example of his transition. During the Momoyama

---

[48] Eight Views of Xiaoxiang includes: The rain at night on the Xiaoxiang (Chinese: 潇湘夜雨), the wild geese coming home (平沙落雁), the evening gong at Qingliang Temple (烟寺晚钟), the temple in the mountain (山市晴岚), the snow in the evening (江天暮雪), the fishing village in the evening glow (渔村夕照), the moon in autumn on Dongting Lake (洞庭秋月), and the sailing ship returning home (远浦归帆).

[49] Tsuneo Takeda (translated and adapted by H. Mack Horton and Catherine Kaputa), *Kanō Eitoku*
Kodansha International Ltd, 1977, p25

period (1568-1600), after the process of national unification, which was begun by Oda Nobunaga and completed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598),

Hideyoshi's flamboyant taste set the trend in Japanese arts. Kanō Eitoku became his favorite fine artist, and their relationship was established even before Hideyoshi

Figure 1-1 Eight-panel screen attributed to Kanō Eitoku of a Cypress Tree, 1.7 x 4.61m

succeeded Nobunaga in 1582.[50] In such a way, the Kanō School became the only official art school for the hundreds of years.

Kanō Tan'yū (狩野探幽, 1602-1674)

[50] Tsuneo Takeda (translated and adapted by H. Mack Horton and Catherine Kaputa), *Kanō Eitoku*
Kodansha International Ltd, 1977, p36

Kanō Tan'yū (狩野探幽, 1602-1674), whose original name was Kanō Morinobu, was the grandson of Eitoku. After Eitoku's death, Mitsunobu and Takanobu attempted to ensure the Kanō school's survival by dividing it into two different streams: one that served the Tokugawa Shogunate in Edo, and the other one that remained in Kyoto. Tan'yu, who was born in Kyoto, but officially started to serve the shogunate at the age of sixteen, played an extremely significant role during this period of division.[51] He is considered to be one of the most talented artists in the Kanō family. He was appointed by the Tokugawa shogunate to be one of the official artists when he was fifteen years old. During the following years, Tanyu undertook many large-scale commissions for famous castles, including Edo Castle, Nijō Castle, Nikkō-Tōshōgū, Osaka Castle and Nagoya Castle, winning him high reputation in the field. Tanyu was prolific in a variety of styles. The prime style of Tanyu's art works in his early career was considered to be the typical Momoyama style, using bright colours and gold to depict natural objects such as birds, flowers, leaves, as well as background elements such as clouds, rivers and lakes. However, he was also deeply influenced by Sesshū Tōyō, who had actually studied in China, known for works modeled on famous paintings of the Song and Yuan dynasties. Sesshū created an album of works emulating famous Chinese painters, whose names were noted on each image.[52] Tan'yu also produced paintings that were modeled on his own collection of Chinese famous exemplars. Thus, he created a new style by incorporating Chinese

---

[51] Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano*
Philadelphia Museum Of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014, p40

[52] Tokyo national Museum and Kyoto National Musem, *Sesshū: Botsugo 500-nen tokubetsuten*,
Mainichi Shinbunsha, 2002, p56-59

monochrome paintings into his former Momoyama style.[53] This style and his numerous brilliant works ensured the leading status of the Kanō School in the Edo period.

Tan'yu was also one of the earliest artists who started to sketch the iconic Mount Fuji based on a true view of the peak. The earliest sketch is dated back to 1661.

Kanō Sanraku

Kanō Sanraku (狩野山楽, 1559-1635) had been working for Toyotomi Hideyoshi as an artist, and under Hideyoshi's order. Sanraku was adopted by Kanō Eitoku, becoming a member of the Kanō family. However, due to his deep relationship with Hideyoshi, after the Siege of Osaka[54], Sanraku had to stay in Osaka and Kyoto, establishing the new stream of the Kanō School: *Kyō-Kanō* (京狩野). Compared to Kanō Tanyu, Sanraku specialized more in the Eitoku style, which was known for bright colours, subtle details and a plump structure.

It is well known that during the Muromachi, Momoyama and Edo periods, contemporaneous with the Chinese Ming and Qing dynasties, Japanese art was deeply influenced by Chinese art. In the Chinese Tang dynasty, Chinese painting started a magnificent era with bright-colour landscapes, fine art portraits, flowers and birds. However, after the Song and Yuan dynasty, monochrome painting thrived and it became

---

[53] Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano* Philadelphia Museum Of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014, pp. 27-28

[54] The Siege of Osaka (大坂の役 *Osaka no Eki,* or, more commonly, 大坂の陣 *Osaka no Jin*) was a series of battles undertaken by the Tokugawa shogunate against the Toyotomi clan, and ending in the Toyotomi's destruction.

as significant as the highly-coloured painting (*zhongcai-hua* 重彩画)[55]. Under the influence of ink and wash painting in the Song dynasty, Muromachi painting also started the trend of monochrome painting. Until the end of the Momoyama period, which was the Ming dynasty in China, decorative painting with bright colours again became popular in the ruling class. On the one hand, the artists in the Momoyama period appreciated the aesthetic of simplicity and imperfection. On the other hand, the art of this period was characterized by a more dynamic and opulent style, with gold applied to a range of different art works.[56] Among all the decorative bright colours, I have chosen gold and red colour to do further research. Gold, no doubt, is the most symbolic colour for decorative paintings during the Edo period. Except for white paper, gold leaf was the second material that was widely used as a ground of art works. On the other hand, red is the colour that contained a rather complicated meaning in Japanese culture because it was deeply influenced by Chinese culture. The cultural influence and differences surrounding the colour red can be comprehensively demonstrated by art. Also, the introduction of new pigments marked the development of red colouring in art. This will be one of the key points in the third part of this chapter.

---

[55] Highly-coloured painting (*zhongcai-hua* 重彩画) refers to a significant category of Chinese *Gongbi* painting, which uses highly detailed brushstrokes that delimits details very precisely and without independent or expressive variation.

[56] Retrieved from: https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/momo/hd_momo.htm Department of Asian Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art 2015.10.15

2.2 Gold (金色, *kiniro*)

Since the Kamakura period (1185-1333), Japanese painting had been remarkably influenced by Chinese *Gongbi* painting. In the Chinese art history book *Xuanhe Collection* (*xuanhe-huapu* 宣和画谱)[57], which was written in the Song dynasty, there was a volume named *ribenguo* (日本国, the country Japan), saying that "It is said that, heavy colours, especially gold and blue were used on art, such as landscape painting, in this country" (chi: 传写其国风物，山水风景，设色甚重，多用金碧。).[58] From the Kamakura period, Japanese samurai increasingly favoured heavy metal colours, especially gold. Gold colours were widely used in all formats of art. Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1359-1398) had the famous Kinkakuji (Temple of the Golden Pavilion) built. Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598) built a golden tea house, using more that 40 thousand pieces of gold leaf papers in a room of 2.7 meters long, 2.55 meters wide, and 2.5 meters high. The column, ceiling, even the windows, tea wares and carpets were gilt with gold. Gold has a similar gloss as a samurai's sword (*katana*). As samurai society grew powerful and wealthy, ruling classes had larger properties with a larger scale of decorative paintings. The gold colour not only emotionally resonated, but also created more light and warmth in the room. Most importantly, it represented growing power and prestige in political status.[59]

---

[57] *Xuanhe Collection* (*xuanhe-huapu* 宣和画谱): An art collection book edited during the Song dynasty. The collection mentioned Japanese paintings in chapter 12.

[58] Wenjiang Zhao, *Studies on the Structure of Chinese and Japanese Landscape Painting,*
Beijing Rongbaozhai Press，2011， p14.

[59] Yizhou Zhang, Hu Liu (张一舟 刘虎), *Study of Metal Materials in Japanese Heavy Multi-chrome Painting* (金属材料　在日本重彩画中的地位研究)
Hubei Art Academic Journal (湖北美术学院学报)，2014. 02， p.95.

In the history of the Kanō school, the colour gold (金色 *giniro*) was first used in decorative painting by Kanō Eitoku during the Momoyama period (1568-1600), which was also known as the Azuchi-Momoyama period. It may seem confusing that bright colours such as gold, suggesting a sensuous aesthetics, were used in painting at a time when the monochrome ink and wash painting was popular. Understanding the social and political background may help us to understand that while art works of simplicity were highly appreciated during that era, there was also a desire for bright and cheerful colours. During the last century of the Muromachi period (1333-1568), Japan lapsed into a state of continuing conflicts because of the Ashikaga shogunate's weakness at governing the country, until Oda Nobunaga emerged as the most powerful among contesting feudal lords. However, it was Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who was one of Nobunaga's vassals, who succeeded in completing the unification of Japan. During the Momoyama period, Japan was predominantly under the control of Nobunaga and later the Toyotomi clan. After the unification, Japanese culture and art were able to thrive in a rather stable social and economic environment. Thus, the ruler of Japan tended to use gold to create a splendid and magnificent era. Nobunaga built his castle in Azuchi (in present Shiga Prefecture), and Hideyoshi built his Fushimi Castle in Kyoto, in order to display their power. Almost all of those castles were built with material of gold, but unfortunately, none of these survived. The most representative one must be the donjon (*tenshu-kaku,* 天守閣) that Nobunaga built in *Azuchi-jō* (安土城). The tiles of the dojon were built with gold leaf and the inside was painted by gold leaf. At the same time, a great number of temples were also built, such as Juko-in, Daitoku-ji and Shinju-an. Moreover, a large amount of paintings with brighter colours were ostentatiously mounted in the castles and temples to flaunt their newly

acquired power, which was one of the social reasons why the colour gold became predominant.

"According to the fifteenth century Zenrin Kokuho-ki, a record of Japanese relations with China and Korea, folding screens covered with gold leaf were among the gifts that the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, who ruled Japan in the late fourteenth century, sent to the ruling dynasty in China. Because the screens themselves were highly decorative, it is probable that some gold-leaf screens of that time were further adorned with decorative paintings in the *Yamato-e* style."[60] This is a statement of Tsugiyoshi Doi, who thinks that the Japanese admiration towards gold-leaf art works may be dated back to the Muromachi period (1336-1573). The fact that the Ashikaga shogunate sent gold-leaf screens to China absolutely can prove that Japanese considered gold as an extremely precious material. This is also a basis of the development in gold-leaf art in the following period.

There is also an interesting theory, saying that Japanese admiration towards gold colour dated back to samurai society from the Kamakura and Muromachi period. The samurai class originated from the peasant class. The peasant class, however, regarded the gold colour as a representative of bumper harvest. Therefore, in their deep mind, gold always represents a horn of plenty.[61]

The colour gold was widely used in different formats of Japanese painting, especially in the following three formats: *shōhekiga* (障壁画, wall painting), *byōbu* (屏風, screen painting) and ō*gie* (扇絵, fan painting). The material of pigments for gold was mostly *kinpaku* (金箔, gold leaf). Michael and Deborah Clarke explain that gold leaf is "A

---

[60] Tsugiyoshi Doi (translated by Edna B. Crawford), *Momoyama Decorative Painting* The Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art Volume 14, 1977, p66.

[61] Liu Li, *Art in the Japanese Gold Era*. Art Time, p43-44.

piece of gold which has been beaten until thin and can then be applied to a wide range of objects or artworks, for example furniture, picture frames, or gold ground panel paintings."[62] In other words, gold leaf is gold that has been beaten into thin sheets to make it available in a wide variety of shades. Artists used gold leaf to gild antiques including furniture, paintings, architecture, etc. Gilding (or gold leafing) is a highly difficult technique for layering gold leaf over a surface. In Japanese art during the Edo period, gold leaf was often used as the background of painting.

Knowing that real yellow gold leaf can be about 91.6% pure gold is a start to understand the reason why gold leaf decoration was so popular within the nobility, samurai and ruling classes during the Edo period. In this thesis, I will focus on the following three formats mentioned above: wall painting (障壁画, *shohekiga*), screen painting (屏風, *byōbu*) and fan painting (扇絵, *ōgie*).

Wall painting (障壁画, *shōhekiga*)

Generally speaking, *shōhekiga* is not only the painting on *fusuma*[63], but also scroll painting pasted on walls and ceilings as decoration. This format of art appeared during the Nara period and flourished during the Muromachi period, especially after Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi introduced it into their castles. Japanese art historian Doi Tsugiyoshi (土居次義, 1906-1991) argued that although screen painting started from the

---

[62] Michael Clarke and Deborah Clarke, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms (2 ed.)* Oxford University Press Print Publication, 2010, p.84.

[63] *Fusuma* (襖), in Japanese architecture, refers to vertical rectangular panels which can slide from side to side to redefine spaces within a room, or act as doors. They typically measure about 91.5 centimeters wide by 183 centimeters tall, the same size as a tatami mat, and are two or three centimeters thick.

Nara period, it was unknown whether *shōhekiga* started from the same period or not. He stated that as an architectural art, it appeared in the early Heian period.[64] However, I agree that screen painting was considered to be one branch of *shōhekiga*, therefore, I tend to agree that the origin of *shōhekiga* dated back to the Nara period. *Shōhekiga* was more than an art object in Japanese culture; it was also a spatial element in the tatami room, where tea ceremony, flower arrangement and garden viewing took place. In the early Heian period, Japanese *shōhekiga* imitated the Chinese Tang style. It was not until the Heian period that *Yamatoe* started to thrive, which was the first flourishing of Japanese *shohekiga*. The second period in which *shōhekiga* played an important role was the Muromachi. The golden age of *shōhekiga*, however, was the Momoyama and Edo period, which was due to the construction and prosperity of cities and castles. Momoyama *shōhekiga* retained the magnificent style of Chinese wall painting, and further refined into a Japanese elegant style. To fit the increasing space of castles, *shōhekiga* was evolved. Painting giant birds and flowers on walls or sliding doors was a formidable job. Kanō Eitoku was brilliant at painting oversize flowers and portraits. His work included ten to thirty to sixty meters of plum trees or pines, and nine to twelve meter figures. Another feature of Momoyama and Edo *shōhekiga* was its decorativeness, using gold leaf to create elegant and splendid decoration for the room. Gold-leaf *shōhekiga* became popular since the Muromachi period, and as the technique improved, the popularity grew in the following period. On the one hand, as a symbol of prosperity, gold-leaf *shōhekiga* was used to show the power of governors. On the other hand, gold-leaf *shōhekiga* was an efficient way to collect more

---

[64] Doi Tsugiyoshi (translated by Zhu Chongshou), *Study of Shōhekiga in the Momoyama Period* (桃山障壁画鉴赏)Baoyun Press, 1943, p.46.

light in a Japanese room and make it brighter. A large number of masterpieces were produced during the renovation of Nijō Castle in 1626, which involved all 11 members of the Kanō family during that period.

Byōbu （屏風, screen painting）

A folding screen consists of multiple, joined panels. Evidence of the existence of screen painting can be dated back to the Zhou dynasty (4th century B.C). The original meaning of *Byōbu* in Chinese was preventing (屏 *ping*) wind (风 *feng*) from blowing into a room. Detailed descriptions of *byōbu* did not appear until the Han dynasty (202 B.C - 220). Screen painting was introduced to Japan in the Tang dynasty (618 - 907) and became widespread around the 7th century.[65] In the Edo period, screen painting grew more popular. As a significant part of *Yamatoe*, Japanese screen painting was deeply influenced by Chinese screen painting. During the Nara era (710 - 794, which was the Tang dynasty in China), *Tanghui*[66] was considered the trend. "the blue and green landscape painting *(*金碧山水*, jinbishanshui)*" was highly praised and most imitated.[67]

The difference between *byōbu* and *fusuma* is that although they are both used to define spaces, *byōbu* cannot act as doors. Functionally speaking, *byōbu* is more decorative, and *fusuma* is more of a part of the architecture.

---

[65] Liu Minghui, *Across the Gold Sky——Exhibition of Japanese Screens in St.Louis Art Museum* （越过金色云天——美国圣路易斯美术馆《五百年来的日本屏风珍藏》展） Artist Foreign Scenery (艺术家 境外胜景) p.44-56.

[66] *Tanghui* ("唐绘") specifically refers to paintings from the Tang dynasty in China.

[67] Lei Yang, Ding Miyun, Zheng Yun, *Integration and Creativity —— Study of Japanese Yamato-e Screens* (融合与创新——日本大和绘屏风美学探幽) ART EDUCATION , 2011, Vol.10, p.35.

According to Liu, Chinese screen paintings are rather single functioned. They are not often moved around because they are mostly used as heavy partition curtains. Thus Chinese screens are usually made of heavy thick wood. However, Japanese screen paintings focus more on the details and decorativeness. In order to deal with different situations, such as *Sadō* (茶道, tea ceremony), *nō* (能), Buddhist activities, etc., Japanese screen paintings were made of lighter materials so that they could more easily be folded and moved around. There are varieties of forms, including vertical border, horizontal border, double-panel, six-panel, eight-panel, dozen-panel, single-border, and twin-border. Japanese screen paintings combine paintings with calligraphy (which was another influence from China), gilding, framing, and carving, to make it highly decorative and indispensable in daimyo residences, Buddhist temples, and shrines.[68] Here are some pictures of folding screens in the Ming dynasty, from which one can see that thick and high quality of wood, as well as beautifully carved stone, is a common material for making a folding screen.

However, in the Momoyama period (17th century), Japanese screen painting combined blue and green landscapes with bright colours and strong ink, to finally develop a Japanese style screen painting with distinguished Japanese aesthetics, which was also known as an important part of *Yamatoe*. The "Screen of Tōji's Landscape" *(Tōji-sansui-byōbu,* 東寺山水屏風*)* was one of the most famous screens made during that period. It is composed by six framed panels as a continuous horizontal border.

---

[68] Liu Minghui, *Across the Gold Sky——Exhibition of Japanese Screens in St.Louis Art Museum*（越过金色云天——美国圣路易斯美术馆《五百年来的日本屏风珍藏》展） Artist Foreign Scenery (艺术家 境外胜景), p.44-56.

Ōgie (扇絵, fan painting)

Ōgie (扇絵, fan painting) is also called "*senmenga* (扇面画)". The explanation of *ōgie* in the Japanese edition of Encyclopedia Britannica (ブリタニカ国際大百科事典 *buritanika-kokusai-hyakka-jiten*) is as follows:

"Since the Heian period, two different fans were favored by the nobility. One was the summer fan (*kawahoriōgi*, bat fan), which was shaped by bamboo and layered with paper. The other was the winter fan (*hiōgi*, cypress fan), which used cypress as a framework and was bound together. Both these two different fans were painted with beautiful colours. Men and women were fascinated by their pretty painting and interesting design." (平安時代以来，竹の骨に紙を張った夏扇（蝙蝠扇〈かわほりおうぎ〉），ひのきの薄板を綴合せた冬扇（檜扇〈ひおうぎ〉）の両種が貴族たちに愛用されたが，それにはいずれも美しい彩色画が施され，男女ともに画面の美しさや趣向のおもしろさを競った。)

The origin of the fan is a divisive issue. However, the one opinion that has convinced a majority of scholars is that the fan originated in Japan. In Chinese *History of the Song dynasty- Japan (*宋史 日本传*, Songshi-ribenzhuan)* , Japanese clergy visited China in the first year of Duangong (988), the North Song dynasty. Among the gifts brought to China, there were twelve *hiōgi* (cypress fans) and two *kawahoriōgi* (bat fans). Furthermore, a writer in the Ming dynasty named Zheng Shungong, who had travelled to Japan for research, also wrote that the bat fan was first introduced to China in the first year of Duangong (988). This format of art spread fast among the Song scholars. Craftsman absorbed the original Japanese technique and developed it by using varieties of materials

such as bamboo, ivory, and sandalwood, etc. They used sandalwood to make the framework, carved the handle with Chinese poems, and decorated the bottom with jade. In this way, they created a characteristic Chinese fan. During the Tang dynasty, the Chinese fan, which was layered with painting or calligraphy on double sides, was introduced to Japan.[69]

An occupation known as *ōgi-ya* (扇屋) appeared in the Muromachi period, when painted fans enjoyed their widest circulation. Since the late Muromachi period, the combination of fan painting and screen painting grew popular. Craftsmen used paper that was shaped as a fan to paint, and then layered it on the screen. There were also other art products applying real fans on screens.[70] The primary function of the fans was for personal cooling, but their use was not only restricted to the warm season. Since the Muromachi period, the fan could be given as a gift, or used for cherry blossom viewings, and other seasonal events. Although large amounts of fans were produced in the Muromachi period, surviving works are scarce. Fans were easily damaged and quickly discarded due to their portability.[71] Most fan paintings survived because they were pasted onto folding screens or in painting albums, among which the most well-known example would be the *Assembled Fan Paintings* screen in Nanzen-ji, Kyoto. Similar to China, subjects painted on fans were various, including historical figures, stories, flowers, birds, landscapes, etc. Fan paintings

---

[69] Wu Mingyan, *Comparison of Chinese and Japanese Fan Painting—— during the Ming and Qing Dynasty* (中日扇面画之比较——明清时期之折扇扇面画), Literature Life (艺术生活)， 2011-08， p.48.

[70] Wu Mingyan, *Comparison of Chinese and Japanese Fan Painting—— during the Ming and Qing Dynasty* (中日扇面画之比较——明清时期之折扇扇面画), Literature Life (艺术生活)， 2011-08, p.48-49.

[71] Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano,* Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014, p13.

can be painted on paper ground or gold ground. On these four sets of six-fold screens, there were 72 gold-ground fans, and 48 paper-ground fans. However, we cannot say that gold-leaf fans held higher appreciation than paper, since paper paintings were more easily discarded and damaged than gold-leaf.

The material that was used on gold-ground fan painting was gold leaf, while the skills to gild on fan painting were different from that used on screen painting. The technique of making gold foil (in Japanese: *kinsen,* 金笺 or kinpaku, 金箔; in Chinese: *jinjian*, 金笺 or jinbo, 金箔)[72] came from China. It can be sorted into two categories by colour: one named red-gold (赤金), which is a warmer reddish colour; the other named indigo-gold (青金), which is a colder colour close to yellow. Gold foil paper can also be categorized by techniques. One named gold-leaf paper (*ni-jinjian*, 泥金笺), existed since the Shang-zhou dynasty. The gold colour of *ni-jinjian* is rich and uniform. The technique was complicated as the craftsmen needed to grind gold leaf into powder, then modulate it with lacquer, and finally paint on paper. Another kind was named gold-dusted paper (*len-jinjian*, 冷金笺), a technique that dates back to the Tang dynasty. Gold-dusted paper is also richly-coloured; however, the colour is not very uniform. Because the colour is not uniform, gold-dusted paper can also be sorted into two varieties according to whether it has distress or not. The third type is gold-powdered paper (*sa-jinjian*, 洒金笺). Technically speaking, *sa-jinjian* was the easiest one to make among the three. The process is to powder the paper with gold

[72] The difference between *kinsen* (金笺) and *kinpaku* (金箔): *kinsen* (金笺) generally refers to gold-powdered paper, which is usually used for painting and calligraphy; *kinpaku* (金箔) is also known as gold leaf, which refers to gold that has been hammered into thin sheets by gold beating and is often used for gilding.

leaf or coarse gold. The prime paper is easy to be seen.[73] The three different varieties of materials introduced above are those that have been used since the Tang dynasty in China, when Chinese developed Japanese *ōgie* (fan painting) and then introduced it back to Japan, as I mentioned before. Therefore, the technique was introduced back into Japan, and Japanese craftsmen started to create their own gold-leaf fan art since then. Gold-dusted paper and gold-leaf paper is hard to distinguish on a picture because it is difficult to tell if the gold colour on the paper is uniform or not. The techniques of making these two are quite similar as well. Therefore, I would like to regard both gold-dusted paper and gold-leaf paper as the same. It was the most popular material during the Edo period. However, gold-powdered fan painting in the Edo period is hardly to find, especially in Kanō art. This is why all the case studies about Japanese fan painting during the Edo period below are all created on gold-leaf paper.

Both Chinese and Japanese value the colour gold as a symbol of the harvest, a representative of fortune, and also a symbol of power. The ruling classes tended to show their power by gilding gold leaf on their architecture, walls, and furniture. It was also common for nobility to use gold leaf decorations in their properties to demonstrate their wealth. On the other hand, gold is a better colour for reflecting lights in the rooms, as well as warmth.

In the following, I would like to use the Kanō school as a case study to analyze Japanese aesthetics of the colour gold in the Edo period. The study will be based on different artists in the Kanō family.

---

[73] Zhao Pingjia, *Studies of Gold-leaf Fan Art in the Ming Dynasty* (谈明代的金笺扇面艺术) Zhejiang Art Academic Journal 05, 2005.9.

Before Kanō Eitoku, monochrome painting was considered to be the trend among the Kanō school. Eitoku was a student of Motonobu, from whom Eitoku inherited the soul of monochrome painting. At the age of ten, Eitoku was granted an audience with the thirteenth Ashikaga shogun, Yoshiteru (1536-1565). Later, Eitoku began his long period of service to Oda Nobunaga, and after Nobunaga's death in 1582, he continued to serve Hideyoshi before his art career ended. However, the technique of applying gold leaf as ground can be dated back to the founder of the Kanō school, Masanobu. An example is his fan painting 1. *Water Buffalo and Herdboy* (late 15th century). It can be seen that during the early period of the Kanō history, the technique and skills of gold-leaf painting was relatively poor. The gold-leaf surface was rather uneven. The content of the painting, however, represents the Kanō school's aesthetics of simplicity. Half of the water buffalo is under the water, and the abundance of white space represents the beauty of imperfection. The bright gold colour does not affect the soul of his monochrome painting style at all.

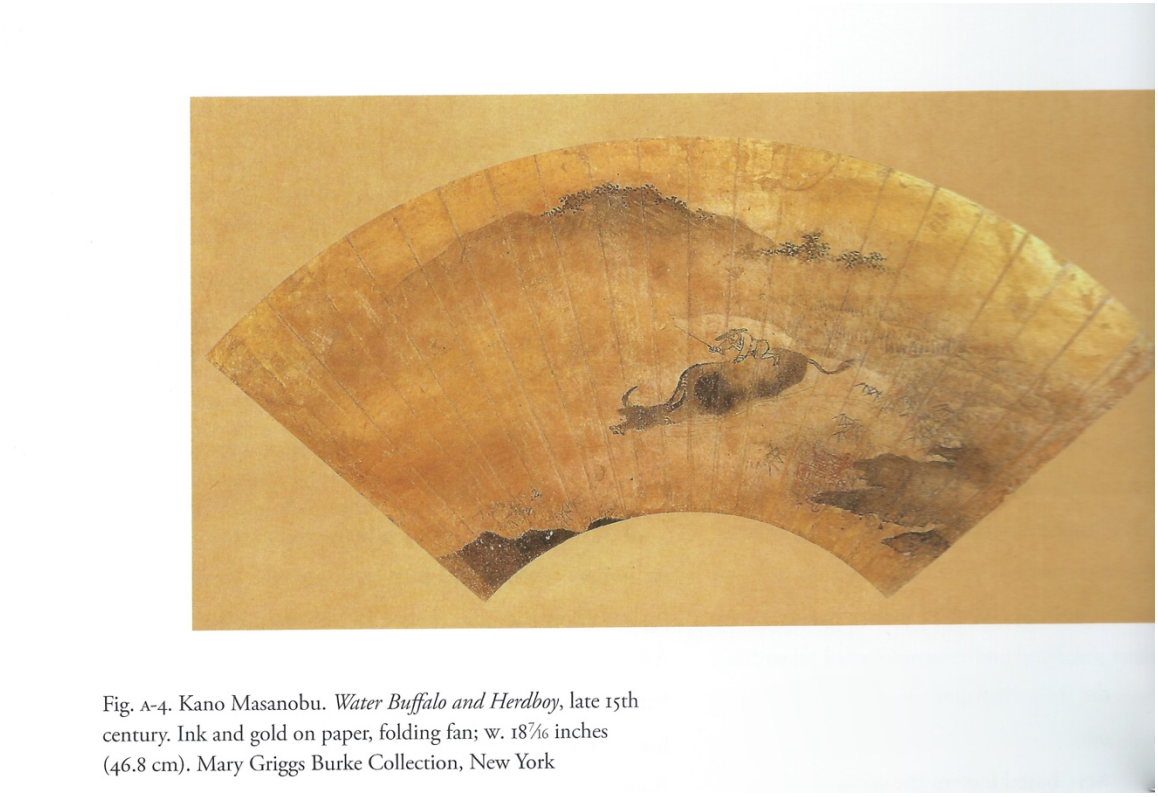


Fig. A-4. Kano Masanobu. *Water Buffalo and Herdboy*, late 15th century. Ink and gold on paper, folding fan; W. 18 7/16 inches (46.8 cm). Mary Griggs Burke Collection, New York

Figure 1-1. Water Buffalo and Herdboy (late 15th century). Source: Tsuneo Takeda (translated and adapted by H. Mack Horton and Catherine Kaputa), *Kanō Eitoku*

When it came to Eitoku, colour selection became much more abundant. An example is his famous screen painting series 2. *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons*. He started to use pink, blue, green and other colours to fill out the space, which successfully evokes the fullness of spring.[74] On the gold-leaf ground, Eitoku paid more attention to detail, such as the feathers of the two cranes. We can see that there are gold colours decorated on the

[74] Tsuneo Takeda (translated and adapted by H. Mack Horton and Catherine Kaputa), *Kanō Eitoku* Kodansha International Ltd, 1977, p.106.

edge

Figure 1-2. Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons. Source: Tsuneo Takeda (translated and adapted by H. Mack Horton and Catherine Kaputa), *Kanō Eitoku*

of those feathers, which is an improvement from simply painting on the gold ground. The following is 3.*A Tartar Hunt*[75], which was a fan painting of Eitoku's. Comparing to Masanobu's monochrome painting with gold-leaf ground, Eitoku obviously used brighter colours on his work. A vivid picture of horsemen pursuing wild deer and hare can be seen on this painting, which was highlighted by the gold ground. Gold was a colour that

[75] Tsuneo Takeda (translated and adapted by H. Mack Horton and Catherine Kaputa), *Kanō Eitoku* Kodansha International Ltd, 1977, p.117.

represented power and strength, which was perfect in this situation to heighten their

Figure 1-3. A Tartar Hunt. Source: Tsuneo Takeda (translated and adapted by H. Mack Horton and Catherine Kaputa), *Kanō Eitoku*

vigorous action. More bright colours being used in this fan artwork shows the new trend of detailed art works and skillful technique. Another characteristic point of his work is the way he used gold clouds to create a rhythmical landscape painting. For instance, in his work 4. *Waterfowl in Winter,* gold clouds were used to cover some of the reeds, but also to emphasize the wild goose. Leaving white space was supposed to be the key point of monochrome painting, but it is obvious that this point is also suitable in the gold-leaf

painting.

Figure 1-4. Waterfowl in Winter. Source: Tsuneo Takeda (translated and adapted by H. Mack Horton and Catherine Kaputa), *Kanō Eitoku.*

Mitsunobu was Eitoku's first son, who followed Eitoku's steps on gold-leaf decorative paintings. The attached shows an assemblage of his work. 5.*Flowers and Trees of the Four Seasons*[76], which is a large scale (twelve panels) of *fusuma* (sliding doors) in Onjō-ji. According to Tsuneo Takeda, it is located in the main guest room of the Kangaku-in in the northwest corner. In the twelve panels, Mitsunobu shows various natural objects including plum blossoms, a grove of evergreens and cypresses, blossoming cherry trees,

[76]Tsuneo Takeda (translated and adapted by H. Mack Horton and Catherine Kaputa), *Kanō Eitoku*
Kodansha International Ltd, 1977, p.121.

and a cascading waterfall amid snow-laden mountains, etc. What reminds me of Eitoku is that the way that he organized all this multiple natural objects by applying gold clouds, to make the four seasons harmonized in such a large scale of sliding doors.

67. *Flowers and Trees of the Four Seasons*, by Kanō Mitsunobu. Detail. Twelve *fusuma* panels in the *jōdan no ma*. Ink and colors with gold-leaf ground.

hydrangeas and irises (representing summer) metamorphize into the red foliage of fall. Mitsunobu reserved the large *tokonoma* area of

Figure 1-5. Flowers and Trees of the Four Seasons. Source: Tsuneo Takeda (translated and adapted by H. Mack Horton and Catherine Kaputa), *Kanō Eitoku.*

Mitsunobu was the first leader of the Kanō school in the Edo period. Tan'yu, however, is considered to be the peak of the Kanō art in this era. Tan'yu was deeply influenced by Chinese Song monochrome painting. Therefore, compared to Eitoku and Mitsunobu, his work evolved by perfectly combining the soul and technique of

monochrome painting with highly decorative gold-leaf painting. For example, in his work *6.Pine Trees in the Four Seasons*, Tan'yu simply used four young to old pine trees (one with snow, one with red

Figure 1-6. Pine Trees in the Four Seasons. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano.* Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

maple leaves, one with lush leaves and bamboos around and one with withered leaves, standing tall and straight) to delineate the atmosphere of the four different seasons. It was

a heavy, complex and skillful showpiece of using gold leaf, cut gold leaf, and gold powder. Natural figures that he chose were also more diverse, among which worth mentioning is the tiger. The tiger was a significant figure for the shogunate family, a symbol of their power and strength. Obviously, the colour of the tiger was also another reason that it became popular in gold-leaf painting. Tigers were perfectly suitable in gold-leaf screens, as they really seemed to come to life in this setting. Other than landscape painting, Tan'yu was also a leader in figure painting. Let us take his work 7.*Wasteful Payment for an Observation Tower* (1634) as an example. In this *fusuma* (sliding doors) painting, Tan'yu

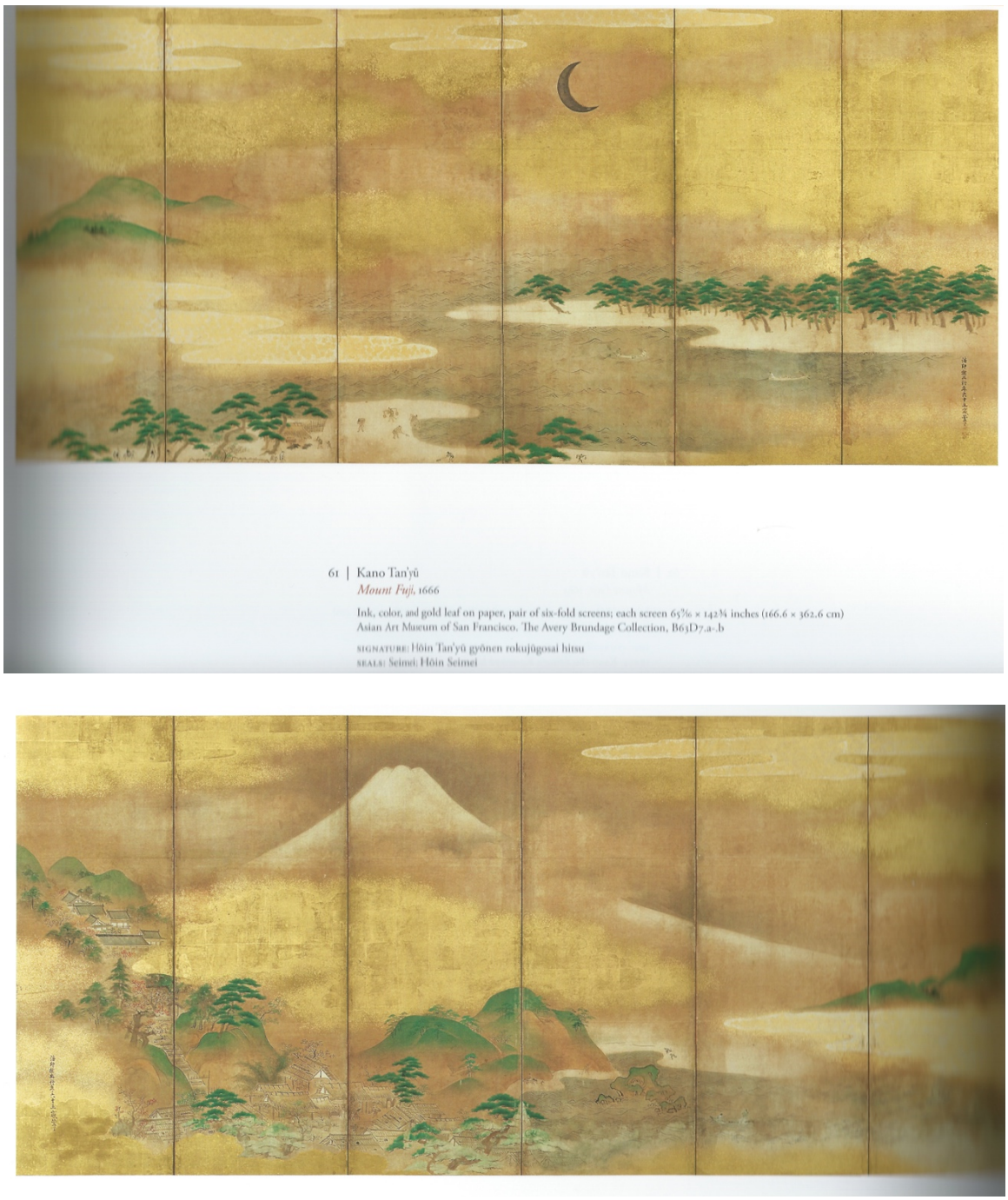
used gold-

Figure 1-7. Wasteful Payment for an Observation Tower. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano.* Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

leaf mist to divide the whole picture into different parts, including the primary-figure part, secondary-figure part and scenery part. The white part, which we can see under the gold leaf, is supposed to be the paper ground. This technique visually resembles the gold-powdered paper (*sa-jinjian*, 洒金笺), which I mentioned above.[77] The paper leaf helped to create a dim atmosphere, and also organizes the structure. It merged so gorgeously with

[77] "*The process is to powder the paper with gold leaf or coarse gold.*" p.16.

Tan'yu's simple but elegant monochrome painting (despite the white and green colour applied to clothing and architecture, the painting is basically monochrome). A similar technique can be seen in another screen painting of his, *8.Mount Fuji* (1666). It is brilliant for Tan'yu to use the paper ground to delineate Mount Fuji and use the gold-leaf fog to express a silent and peaceful environment.



61 | Kano Tan'yū
Mount Fuji, 1666

Ink, color, and gold leaf on paper, pair of six-fold screens; each screen 65⅞ × 142¾ inches (166.6 × 362.6 cm)
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. The Avery Brundage Collection, B63D7.a–.b

SIGNATURE: Hōin Tan'yū gyōnen rokujūgosai hitsu
SEALS: Seimei; Hōin Seimei

Figure 1-8. Mount Fuji. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano.* Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

2.3 Red (赤, *aka*)

Compared with the colour gold, the social and culture meaning for red was more complicated in Japan. In Chinese mythology, the ancestor of human was a man named Shennong, who is also known as Yan Emperor (*yandi*, 炎帝). *Yan*, in Chinese, means fire. Chinese are used to calling themselves the Descendants of Yan and the Yellow Emperor. It is obvious that the colour red has an incomparable social status in Chinese culture. Red is considered to be the colour of blood, which means that it is the colour of life. Red is also a colour of light and warmth, since it is the colour of the sun and fire. For the rulers of China, red was always used to demonstrate their power and status. Liu Bang, the emperor of the Han Dynasty, called himself the Son of the Red Emperor, when he started to dominate Han. The colour red represented the ruling classes. For example, during the Tang dynasty, only high-ranking queens and concubines were allowed to dress in red. Governors also regarded red as a symbol of power. Red pillars were common in governors' properties. They also used palanquins painted in red as transportation.[78] However, although red was such a noble colour, it was not the nobility's privilege. Red has always been a colour that was associated with ordinary Chinese people. It is a colour that represents fortune, luck and happiness. For instance, the main colour for a Chinese traditional wedding is red, which can be seen on the wedding dress, palanquin, decoration, candles, etc. Moreover, people give out red eggs and red packets after giving birth, not to mention that almost everything is decorated red during the Chinese New Year.

However, the original meaning of the colour red in Japan was not as positive as in China. The traditional red in Japan had multiple meanings. In the very ancient era, red was

---

[78] Huang Hui, *Comparative Studies on Japanese and Chinese Colour Culture* (文化视野下中日色彩崇拜比较研究) Zhejiang Academic Journal, 2010.06.

regarded as an evil colour since it was the colour of blood and fire. This is why that, in the Japanese ruling class, red clothing had been hardly found before their contact with Chinese. As the colour of the sun, red was also a mysterious colour in Japanese culture. In the *Kojiki* (古事記)[79], red is described as a significant colour among legendary stories. In *Kojiki*, Izanami is a goddess of both creation and death. She died from burns after giving birth to the god of fire *Kagutsuchi*. Red is the colour of blood, as well as the colour of fire. Symbolically, it represents the start of life, but also the evil of anger, which is a reflection of terror, ominous sign and threat.[80] Since the Heian period, under the influence of China, red started to obtain another social meaning, to symbolize power. For instance, the imperial jade seal of the Japanese emperor has been red since then, representing the highest power of the government.[81] Furthermore, it is also general for both Chinese and Japanese to regard red as a lucky, happy colour, which they prefer to use for celebrations. Huang Hui noticed that Japanese also like to use the combination of red and white to celebrate their festivals. For example, the uniforms in shrines are red and white; the New Year TV show is also named Concert of Red and White (*kouhaku-utagassen*, 紅白歌合戦); and white envelopes with red bows are used as gift cards.[82]

Pigments

---

[79] "古事記 (*kojiki*)": The earliest history book in Japan, finished in 712. It is contributed by two parts. One starts from the start of the universe, until the ancient *Tennō*. The other part is about Japanese myth and legends.

[80] Miura Sukeyuki, *Japanese Mythology and Colour*, http://miuras-tiger.la.coocan.jp/jiten-shikisai.html, accessed 2016.9.1.

[81] Qi Huijun, *Comparison of Chinese and Japanese Colour Culture——Focusing on Red and White* (中日色彩文化比较——以"红"和"白"为中心)Yuwen Weekly, 2013.6 p.35.

[82] Huang Hui, *Comparative Studies on Japanese and Chinese Colour Culture* (文化视野下中日色彩崇拜比较研究) Zhejiang Academic Journal, 2010.06.

Some tombs of the fifth-seventh centuries were found decorated with paintings. Most of these decorations were as simple as concentric circles or triangles painted in red alone. According to Yamasaki's examinations, the pigment of this red was impure red ochre. Emoto also identified a mixture of kaolinite and feldspar with the red ochre on a seventh century painting of the Torazuka tomb.[83] From these evidences, it is not difficult to see the early origination of red colour being used on paintings. In the Edo period, as techniques developed, more stable red colourants were used by artists. The most widely used pigments were: cinnabar and vermilion, red ochre, red lead, and organic red colourants.

In the eighth centuries, the technique of applying red pigment was improved, compared with the pigments mentioned above. The brightness of the colours is admirable on the paintings of a tomb found in March 1972. Except for red ochre, cinnabar and red lead were also found on the side wall paintings. Red pigments used in the wall paintings of the Daigoji Pagoda (10th Century), Hō-ōdō (11th Century), and in the Sliding Doors (16th-17th Centuries) were also examined with cinnabar (朱 or 辰砂, *shu* or *shin-sha*), red ochre (紅柄 or 弁柄, *beni-gara* or *bengara*), and red lead (鉛丹 or 丹, *entan* or *tan*). [84] Pigments technique highly developed during this period. From then on, these three mineral pigments: red ochre, cinnabar, and red lead, have been the main pigments that were widely used by Japanese artists.

---

[83] Kazuo Yamasaki and Yoshimichi Emoto, *Pigments Used on Japanese Paintings from the Protohistoric Period through the 17th Century,* Ars Orientals, Vol.11, 1979, p.2-4.
[84] Kazuo Yamasaki and Yoshimichi Emoto, *Pigments Used on Japanese Paintings from the Protohistoric Period through the 17th Century,* Ars Orientals, Vol.11, 1979, p.8.

Red lead (鉛丹 or 丹, *entan* or *tan*) is an artificial pigment, which is traditionally made by roasting metallic lead or one of its compounds (generally lead monoxide or basic lead carbonate) in air.[85] Red lead refers to lead tetroxide, which appears red-orange tone. It was first produced in China around the Han dynasty, and has been frequently identified on wall paintings and sculpture, especially in the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang[86]. It is also widely suggested that the best red lead came from China.[87] In Japan, red lead was also frequently used on wall paintings, as well as many other painted objects. Winter suggested that the subsequent use of red lead in Japan appears to have been greater than in China, since it has been found on a variety of scroll and screen paintings murals, and sculptures.[88]

However, red lead tends to turn dark brown or dark on the painting surface, particularly leading to a colour change on wall paintings.

Red ochre (紅柄 or 弁柄, *beni-gara* or *bengara*) derives its colour from hematite, which itself has a clear transparent red.[89] Iron oxide-based pigments vary over the red-yellow-brown-purple-black range. The use of red ochre is proven to exist in China as early as the fourth century, in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang. In Japan, it is identified

---

[85] John Winter, East Asian Paintings: Material, Structures and Deterioration Mechanisms, Archetype Publications Ltd, 2008, p.20.

[86] John Winter, East Asian Paintings: Material, Structures and Deterioration Mechanisms, Archetype Publications Ltd, 2008, p.21.

[87] Elisabeth West FitzHugh, John Witer, and Marco Leona, *Studies Using Scientific Methods, Pigments in Later Japanese Paintings.* Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers, 2003, p.8-12.

[88] John Winter, East Asian Paintings: Material, Structures and Deterioration Mechanisms, Archetype Publications Ltd, 2008, p.21.

[89] Elisabeth West Fitzhugh, *A Pigment Census of Ukiyo-E Paintings in the Freer Gallery of Art*.

Ars Orientals. Vol.11. Freer Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institution and Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan, 1979, p.29-34.

from tomb paintings of the Kofun period, as mentioned earlier. In Japanese, *bengara* refers to a brownish red.[90]

Natural cinnabar is found since the early times. It is a finely ground mineral. China has rich deposits of natural cinnabar, especially in Guizhou and Hunnan province. In Japan, however, it is only found in Nara Prefecture.[91] In the later period, artificial cinnabar—vermilion also came to use.[92] Vermilion is red mercuric sulfide, with a clear cherry red. Two different approaches can be used to make artificial cinnabar: dry process and wet process. "Wet process vermilion is usually very uniform and finely divided. Ground cinnabar and dry process vermilion are both ore uneven in particle size and difficult to differentiate from each other," writes Winter.[93] There is no evidence that the wet process has been used in Japan or China. Dry process vermilion was developed in China by the 17th century. It was imported into Japan and has been widely used in the Edo period.[94] Both cinnabar and vermilion are world-widely important because they are long-standing pigments.

There are also arguments about organic dyes being used in paintings. However, which products were involved is still uncertain. According to Yamazaki and Emoto's

---

[90] John Winter, East Asian Paintings: Material, Structures and Deterioration Mechanisms, Archetype Publications Ltd, 2008, p.22.

[91] Elisabeth West FitzHugh, John Witer, and Marco Leona, *Studies Using Scientific Methods, Pigments in Later Japanese Paintings.* Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers, 2003, p.9.

[92] Kazuo Yamasaki and Yoshimichi Emoto, *Pigments Used on Japanese Paintings from the Protohistoric Period through the 17th Century,* Ars Orientals, Vol.11, 1979, p.13.

[93] Elisabeth West Fitzhugh, *A Pigment Census of Ukiyo-E Paintings in the Freer Gallery of Art*.

Ars Orientals. Vol.11. Freer Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institution and Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan, 1979, p.29.

[94] Hachirō Oguchi, *Scientific Investigation on Colour Materials in Japanese Painting*. Bulletin of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Tokyo University of Arts, no.5, 1979, p.27-81.

studies, unidentified organic colourants were examined on two handscroll paintings (*E-Ingakyō* "Illustrated Sutra of Causes and Effects" of the middle eighth century, and *Genji Monogatari Emaki* "Scroll of the *Tale of Genji*" of the twelfth century), using X-radiography, ultraviolet illumination and infrared photography. The unidentified organic colouring materials are presumed to come from plant origin.[95] John Winter suggests that few results are available due to technical difficulties attending identifications of organic colourants. Organic colours are applied rather thinly, which makes it difficult to sample and examine the pigments. Furthermore, organic colourants are more ore less prone to fading due to time and environmental changes.[96] An organic red being confused with a thin wash of iron oxide should also be considered as a possibility. Organic red is identified on a 17th century Kanō school hand scroll by Taguchi and Taguchi, who suggest that either lac dye or cochineal was used as pigments on that painting. Furthermore, Elisabeth FitzHugh also found organic red colourants on 118 ukiyoe paintings and more than one material may be involved. Her study shows that there are three types of red dye which may have been used on paintings. One is safflower red (紅花, *benibana*). It is derived from the petals of safflower, containing carthamic acid or carthamin. The second is adder (茜, *akane*). The red constituent is purpurin. The third dye is derived from insects, including cochineal, kermes or lac dye. Further work of John Winter suggests that several organic red colourants used on Edo paintings are insect dyes (presumably lac dy or cochineal).[97]

---

[95] Kazuo Yamasaki and Yoshimichi Emoto, *Pigments Used on Japanese Paintings from the Protohistoric Period through the 17th Century,* Ars Orientals, Vol.11, 1979, p.11.

[96] John Winter, East Asian Paintings: Material, Structures and Deterioration Mechanisms, Archetype Publications Ltd, 2008, p.19.

[97] John Winter, East Asian Paintings: Material, Structures and Deterioration Mechanisms, Archetype Publications Ltd, 2008, p.19.

After the study of red pigments of Japanese traditional art, I would like to particularly study the application of red colour on painting of the Kanō school. My study on gold colour was based on different artists, but for red colour, I prefer to study it in order of different painting contents.

Speaking of bright colours, the first kind of painting that came to my mind was flower and bird painting. In the Edo period, using red was a significant skill to brighten the whole artwork to increase its decorativeness. This skill can be seen in most of the bird and flower painting in the Kanō school. In the bird painting, red was always used on beaks, breasts and the end of feathers, which depends on different species of birds. Popular birds in Kanō painting included the phoenix, pheasant, and crane. For example, red was used on pheasants' faces, such as: Tan'yu's scroll painting *9. Pair of Silver Pheasants*, *Silver Pheasants*, and Kanō Tsunenobu's *10. Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons*.

81 | Kano Tan'yū
Pair of Silver Pheasants, c. 1661
Ink and color on silk, hanging scroll
21⅛ × 37⅛ inches (54.2 × 94.2 cm)
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, Shizuoka City

Figure 1-9. Pair of Silver Pheasants, Silver Pheasants.

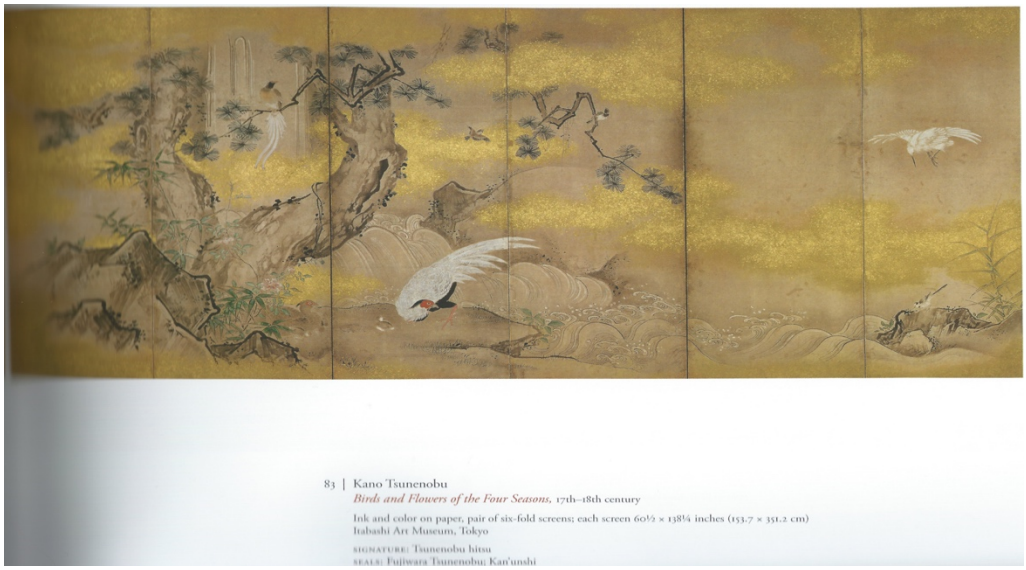


Figure 1-10. Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano.* Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

Red was used on the phoenix's beak and breast, such as Kanō Tsunenobu's *11. Paulownia and Pines with Phoenix* of Kanō Isen'in Naganobu. When painting cranes, red was

89 | Kano Isen'in Naganobu (1775–1828)
Paulownia and Pines with Phoenix, c. 1802–16

Ink, color, and gold leaf on paper, pair of six-fold screens; each screen 67 13/16 × 143 1/8 inches (172.2 × 363.6 cm)
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, Shizuoka City

SIGNATURES: Isen hōgen Naganobu hitsu [both screens]; Isen'in hōgen hitsu [verso, both screens]
SEALS: Isen hōgen [both screens]; Kano [verso, both screens]

Figure 1-11. Paulownia and Pines with Phoenix. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano.* Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

realistically used on the crown of the head, or around the eyes, such as Kanō Einō's *12. Cranes, Pine Trees and Flowers*. There is a special point that interests me, which is that

91 | Kano Einō
Cranes, Pine Trees, and Flowers, late 17th century

Ink, color, and gold leaf on paper, pair of six-fold screens; each screen 61 × 143⅛ inches (155 × 365 cm)
Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Tokyo

SIGNATURE: Kano Einō hitsu
SEALS: Sansei; Ekitei Einō

Figure 1-12. Cranes, Pine Trees and Flowers. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano.* Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

artists in the Kanō school during the 17th and 18th century usually used red for a very single point as highlight on a painting. For instance, if the artist used red on the bird's beak, then the other objects of this painting would be monochrome or in much simpler and more unobtrusive colours. Besides all the paintings I mentioned in this paragraph above, this rule can be also found in paintings in Tan'yu and Tsunenobu's *13.Studies of Ancient Masters (Gakko-jō)*. In the two similar paintings *The Emperor of Huizong (Huizong*

Figure 1-13. Studies of Ancient Masters (Gakko-jō). Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano.* Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

Huangdi, 徽宗皇帝*)*, artists did not use red colour on the eagle, instead they painted a blood moon to use red as a highlight point. Even when it came to the 19th century, red was

seldom used in a wide scale on a single artwork. For example in Kanō Sanraku's *14.White Phoenixes and White Pheasants*, Sanraku used dark red to paint the roses, while using a less brighter red on pheasants' faces and phoenixes' beaks.

90 | Kano Eigaku
White Phoenixes and White Pheasants, 1855

Ink, color, and gold leaf on paper, pair of six-fold screens
Each screen 64⅞ × 140⅝ inches (165 × 356.4 cm)
Kyōōgokoku-ji (Tō-ji), Kyoto

SIGNATURE: Kano Eigaku

Figure 1-14. White Phoenixes and White Pheasants. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto

Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano.* Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

As for the flowers and four seasons painting, red was always an indispensable colour. Artists tended to use red to imply the seasons: plum blossom in the spring, peony blossom in the summer, and maple trees in the autumn. Especially in the winter part, artists always used red as a highlight in the snowy scenery, for instance cranes with red crowns on the head. Plum blossoms, peony blossoms, maple trees and cherry blossoms were four of the most fashionable common typical natural objects during the Edo period, which made red one of the most indispensable colours in bird and flower paintings.

Secondly, during the Edo period, red was also widely used in figure painting, especially figures from Chinese history and literature. Pictures of historical figures were also known as *koji jinbutsuga* in Japanese. The figures included in a wide rage from mythological to living historical figures. This principal genre became popular among the Kanō school of painters, who often looked for models in Chinese art.[98] In the late 16th century, a screen painting attributed to Kanō Naganobu named *15.Emperor Ming Huang and Yang Guifei with Attendants* showed how Chinese nobility used red to represent different classes. In this painting, only Yang Guifei[99] and Ming Huang[100] were wearing bright red cloth; others were only decorated with red ribbons, which showed that red was stipulated to be a high-rank colour in China's rigid feudal hierarchy. This work was dated back to the late 16th century. Compared to those in the 17th century or later, the red colour

---

[98] Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano* Philadelphia Museum Of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014, p.31.

[99] Yang Guifei: original name Yang Yuhuan, known as the Four Beauties of Ancient China. She was the beloved consort of Emperor Xuanzong in the Tang dynasty. (Guifei was the highest rank of imperial consort in that period.)

[100] Ming Huang: the Emperor Xuanzong in the Tang dynasty.

was lighter and less permanent. The colour was closer to pepper red instead of rose red.

Figure 1-15. Emperor Ming Huang and Yang Guifei with Attendants. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano.* Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

Tan'yu's *16. Illustration of a Didactic Story of Two Emperors* (1661) was conducted in

Figure 1-16. Illustration of a Didactic Story of Two Emperors. Source: same as Figure 1-15.

two parts. On the one hand, light red was used on the right emperor. The colour was not only light, but also was used in limited places, including the top of the carriage, flag on the boat, decoration on the dragon boat, the decoration on the emperor's crown, the edge of the roof top, the desk in the palace and the hand rail in the corridor. On the other hand, red used on the left emperor was much brighter, and it expanded to the emperor's cloth, shoes, tiles and stairs of the palace and also books or plates which noble women were carrying.

28 | Kano Tan'yū
Illustration of a Didactic Story of Two Emperors, 1661
Ink, color, and gold leaf on paper, pair of six-fold screens
Each screen 62⅞ × 142⅛ inches (159.7 × 360.9 cm)
Nezu Museum, Tokyo
SIGNATURE: Gyōnen rokujūsai Tan'yū hōgen hitsu

The difference of usage of red on two different emperors implied that the emperor on the left held a higher position than the right one. Tan'yu's earlier work *17.Queen Mother of the West and Donfang Shuo; Group of Immortals* (1639-1662) was a painting about a Chinese legend. The Queen Mother of the West[101] was a mythological figure associated with Taoism. She was considered to be a royal member of the immortal goddesses in Taoist

[101] The Queen Mother of the West: the official Taoist title is "*Yaochi Jinmu*", and in modern Chinese, "*Wangmu Niangniang*".

mythology.

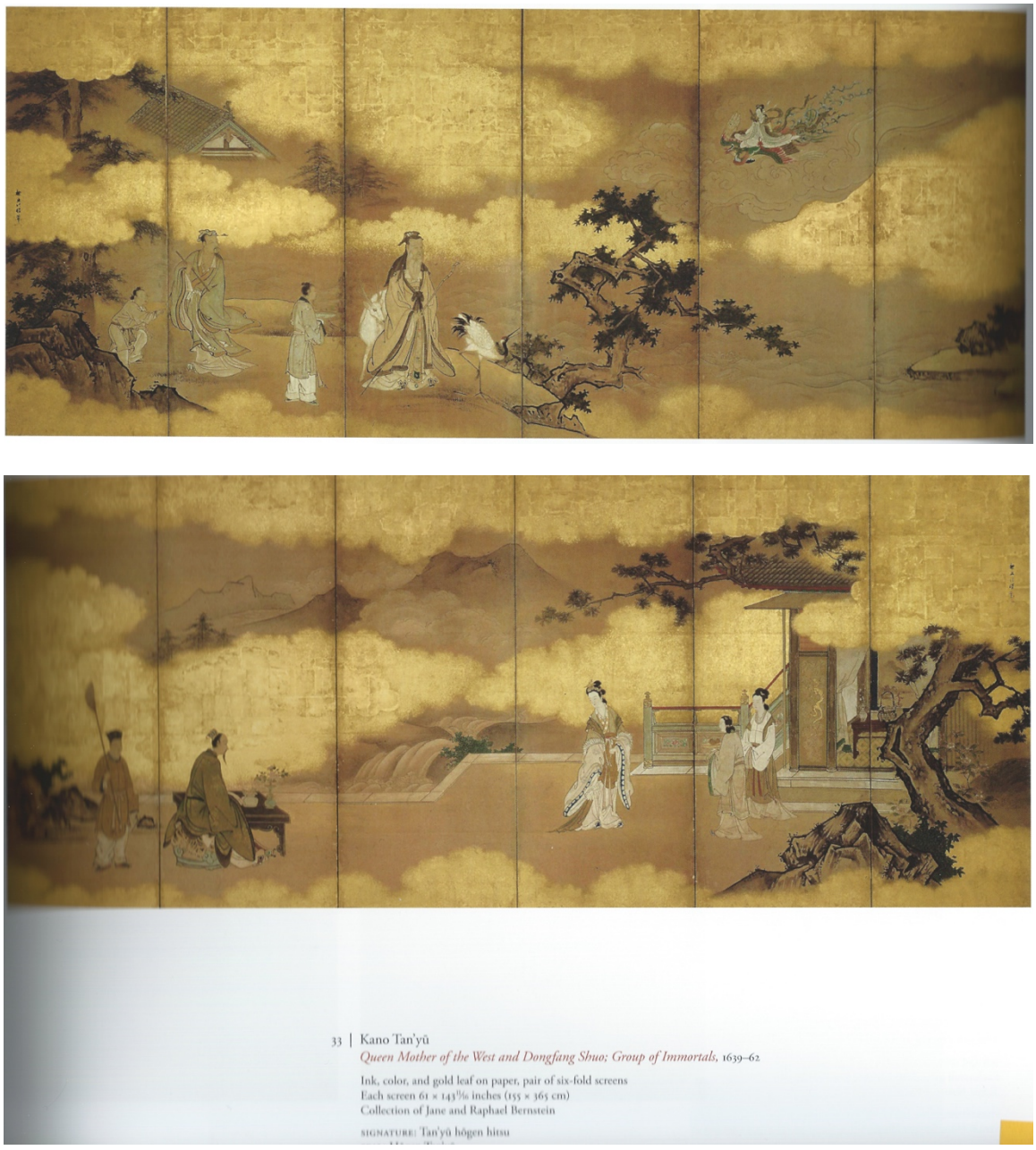


Figure 1-17. Queen Mother of the West and Donfang Shuo; Group of Immortals. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, Ink and Gold Art of the Kano. Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

The popularity of her portraits grew in the Tang dynasty and usually represented prosperity and longevity. Dong Fangshuo was a famous scholar in the Han dynasty, who was highly praised because of his nobility and wisdom, so that he was often deified in art or literature

work by the later generations. In this screen painting, Tan'yu chose to use monochrome painting to depict Dong Fangshuo, and bright colour to portray the Queen Mother of the West, so as to create a contrasting image of the mortal and the immortal, which, in other words, was also a symbol of class.

Compared to Tan'yu, Kanō Shigenobu use red more unselfconsciously in his screen painting, *18. Illustrated the Mirror of Emperors and Xianyang Palace*. In this painting, red did not represent class, but was a sign of thriving and prosperity. Xianyang Palace was known as one of the ancient capital cities in China, and it was also one of the most prosperous cities in ancient China. As introduced before, red dye was expensive and

rare. However, in this painting, people in the city, no matter what class, were dressed in

red clothing, or wearing red accessories. Architecture was built with red tiles and red roofs. Red colour was considered to be a symbol of prosperity in this painting.

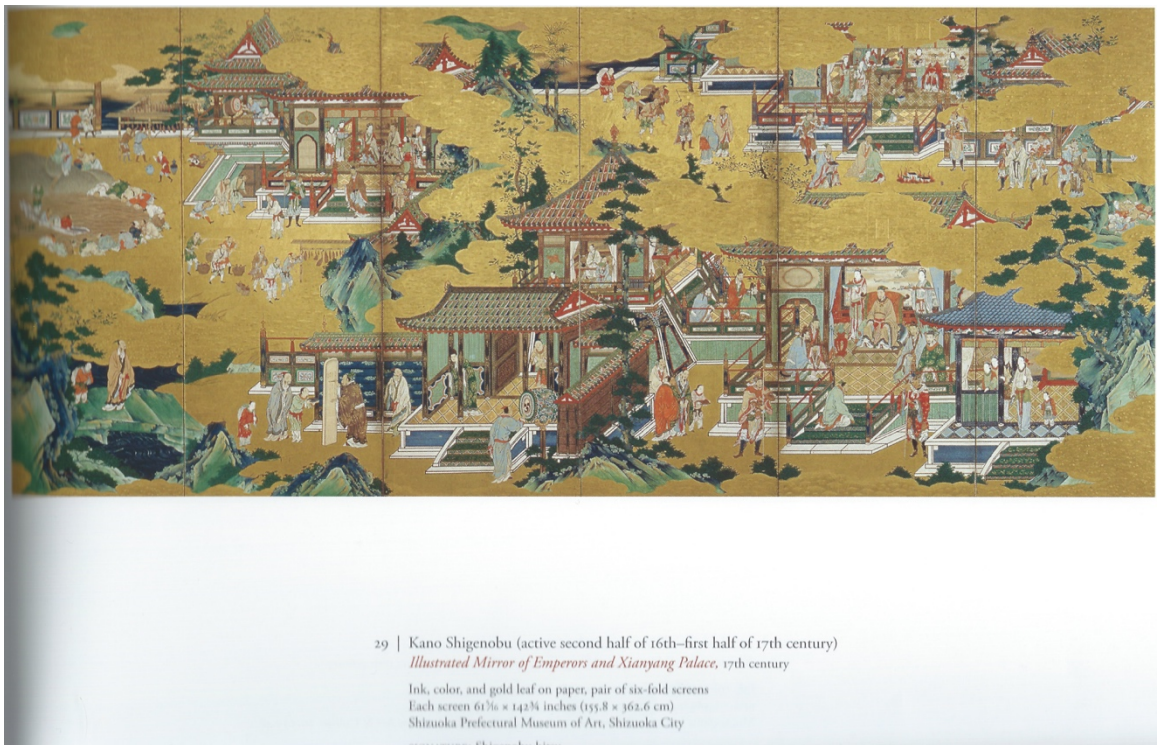


Figure 1-18. Illustrated the Mirror of Emperors and Xianyang Palace. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, Ink and Gold Art of the Kano. Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

A similar example is Kanō Einō's *19. One Hundred Boys* (17the century), in which red represented vigor and vitality. A hundred boys were drawn vividly, wearing red clothing or red accessories, and actively playing or studying.

Figure 1-19. One Hundred Boys. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, Ink and Gold Art of the Kano. Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

In addition to screen paintings, scroll paintings of the Kanō school also showed an appreciation for the colour red. In Tan'yu's *20.Emperor Wu of Han, Queen Mother of the West, and Lin Hejing* (1671), we can obviously see that red accessories were worn on

the emperor and the Queen Mother of the West, but nothing red on Lin Hejing[102].

Figure 1-20. Emperor Wu of Han, Queen Mother of the West, and Lin Hejing. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, Ink and Gold Art of the Kano. Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

Red on this scroll series was light and thin, it was also only used in a very small scale to decorate. However, in scroll painting in the 18th century, the colour red became much brighter and highly saturated, such as Kanō Tsunenobu's *21. Queen Mother of the West*

[102] Lin Hejing: Lin Bu (林逋), a Chinese poet in the Northern Song dynasty.

(before 1704) and *Queen Mother of the West* (1834-1846) of Kanō Seisen'in Osanobu.

Figure 1-21. Queen Mother of the West (before 1704) and Queen Mother of the West (1834-1846). Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, Ink and Gold Art of the Kano. Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

Compared to the pepper red in the 17th century, rose red became more fashionable. Judged by the glossiness and saturation level, permanency of the pigments had also improved during this period. Furthermore, in the 18th-19th century, red colour could even be seen on

wooden sliding doors. Compared to a paper ground, which is easily painted on because of its light colour, a wood ground needs pigments with a higher saturation and glossiness to allow the colour to show.

As introduced before, the symbolic meaning of red in Chinese culture has been always positive. Red always represents prosperity, fortune, or nobility. However, in Japan, the usage and meaning of red is rather more complex. A large amount of Japanese shines painted *torii*[103] with cinnabar to mark the transition from the profane to the sacred. Red is also used to exorcise and purify souls. Most of the figure paintings studied above were on the theme of Chinese historical figures or legends. Thus, it is implied that Japanese scholars were highly aware of the difference between red in Chinese culture and red in Japanese culture. For example, Sanraku did not use much red in his work *22. Rivalry of the Carriages*

[103] Torii (鳥居, literally bird abode) is a traditional Japanese gate, most commonly found at the entrance of or within a Shinto shrine, where it symbolically marks the transition from the profane to the sacred.

(scene from the *Aoi* chapter of *The Tale of Genji*).

Figure 1-22. Rivalry of the Carriages. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, Ink and Gold Art of the Kano. Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

80 | Kano Sanraku (1559–1635)
Rivalry of the Carriages (scene from the Aoi chapter of The Tale of Genji), 17th century
Ink and color on paper, four-fold screen (originally mounted as sliding doors); 69⅜ × 146 inches (175.7 × 370.
Tokyo National Museum

Red colour was used implicitly in the painting of Japanese royal scenery. On the other hand, white and black were obviously highly valued by Japanese nobility. However, in Kanō Eigaku's *24. Bugaku Dancers*, red was boldly used to create an atmosphere of *matsuri* (activities of offering sacrifices to gods or ancestors), and exorcism. *Bugaku*[104] dancers were wearing red cloth to act as monsters and sinister demons.

[104] *Bugaku*: Japanese traditional dance that has been performed mostly in Japanese imperial courts for over twelve hundred years. The dancers wear intricate traditional Buddhist costumes, which usually include equally beautiful masks.

Figure 1-23. Bugaku Dancers. Source: Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, Ink and Gold Art of the Kano. Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

2.4 Conclusion: The Kanō School and Japanese Aesthetics

As introduced in the introduction of my thesis, Japanese aesthetics incorporates concepts like *yūgen* (幽玄), *wabi-sabi* (侘び寂び), *shibui* (渋い), *iki* (粋), and so on.

Speaking from the tone and nature of gold and red, neither can be explained by Japanese traditional aesthetics. Gold and red are both showy colours, representing power, wealth, authority and nobility, but highly-appreciated in the Edo period, especially within the shogunate, royal family and wealthy merchants.

On the one hand, Japanese culture and art were deeply influenced by the Chinese Tang and Song culture and art. Japanese admiration of gold started since the Muromachi period. From the Heian period, under the influence of China, red started to become a symbol of power and nobility. Gold and red are more derived from Chinese art than original Japanese art.

On the other hand, the Kanō artists, especially Tan'yu's austere use of gold-leaf and monochrome in his paintings, represents a kind of synthesis between the showy opulence of gold and red and the monochrome aesthetics of Japanese medieval culture. As analyzed previously, although the tones of gold and red are bright and gorgeous, the way that the Kanō artists used these two colours maintained Japanese traditional aesthetic concepts. The beauty of *wabi-sabi* can be easily seen in monochrome paintings, which were well known for using simple colours and plenty of blank spaces to create an imperfect and incomplete aesthetic feeling, but it does not make gold-leaf painting an exception to Japanese traditional aesthetics. Tan'yu was a representative artist of *wabi-sabi*. In his gold-leaf screen paintings, he preferred not to fill the whole screen with natural objects. Instead, he left enough "white" space. Although he was also specialized in subtle flower painting, the monochrome style he studied from Chinese Song painting was deeply imbued in all of his

art works. Compared to the Muromachi and Kamakura periods, when monochrome painting took an absolute lead among all schools of arts, art in the Momoyama and Edo period was much more diverse. Monochrome painting on a gold-leaf ground was popular, while subtle and detailed bird-flower painting was also highly appreciated at the same time.

Among the four concepts analyzed, gold and red are closer to *shibui,* which is a value in both simple monochrome painting, but also subtle decorative gold-leaf painting. The two concepts of beauty, which seems totally contrary, merged harmoniously in screen painting and fan painting of the Kanō school. As Kawakita stated in his thesis *The World of Shibui*, "*shibui* gathers together the meaning of *wabi-sabi* in itself in a simplified and unified and at the same time more substantialized and popularized form."[105] Japanese aesthetics is not a simple concept, but a crossroads of conflicting and contesting senses of values. Marra indicates that Japanese aesthetics are self-contradictory modes of interpretation that privilege both the fluidity of becoming and the metaphysical presence of being.[106] The void, nothingness, simplicity, and subtlety that originated from medieval Japanese aesthetics can be considered as the "metaphysical presence of being". These concepts of aesthetics remain the dominant values that can be found in most of Japanese arts. On the other hand, the concept of showiness represents the "fluidity of becoming". It demonstrates a strong Chinese influence on Japanese traditional art, as well as a change of values within Japanese culture by different ages, tastes and classes.

Moreover, in *In Praise of Shadows*, novelist Tanizaki Jun'ichirō suggested that the best way to appreciate gold-leaf painting is to be in a dim room with limited light.

---

[105] Kawakita Michiaki, *The World of Shibui*
Japan QUarterly, Jan.1 1961, p.37.

[106] Marra, Michele. Japanese Aesthetics: The Construction of Meaning, *Philosophy East and West*, Jul.1 1995, p.367.

Chapter 3 Ukiyoe

This chapter will focus on one of the most significant artistic styles of the Edo period: Ukiyoe, which means "pictures of the floating world". I intend to choose "*murasaki"* (purple) and "*ao*" (blue) to analyze in this chapter. They were both symbolic colours in the Edo period, especially *murasaki*. In spite of the development of pigments, *murasaki* was still one of the most difficult colours to produce in the Edo period. Since the Heian period, *murasaki* had been a symbol of grace. On the other hand, blue was one of the most widely-used colours in *ukiyoe* art. It was also the most popular colour in the Edo period.

3.1 Introduction: Ukiyoe

To a large extent, the full development of *ukiyoe* was based on the national isolation policy of the Tokugawa regime (1615-1867). Although, contact with foreign civilization was restricted due to the isolation policy, it maintained Japanese internal peace for a long time, so that domestic industries could be given an opportunity to grow.[107]

Ukiyoe started around 1657 when the Great Fire of *Meireki*[108] happened. It is commonly recognized that *yamato-e*, secular painting in the Japanese style was the direct ancestor of *ukiyoe*. It was taken up by the Tosa school in the sixteenth century. Afterwards, the Kanō artists Yoshinobu (1552-1640), Naizen (1566-1608), and Naganobu (1577-1654)

---

[107] Seiichiro Takahashi (translated by Ryozo Matsumoto), *The Japanese Wood-block Prints through Two Hundred and Fifty Years*, published by Chuo-Koron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1964, p.1.

[108] The Great Fire of Meireki (明暦の大火 Meireki no taika), also known as the Furisode Fire, destroyed over sixty percent of the Japanese capital city of Edo (now Tokyo) on March 2, 1657. The fire, lasting for three days, and was estimated to have claimed over 100,000 lives.

developed it by building a bridge between secular painting and daily scenes of *ukiyoe*.[109] At first it was basically hand-painting on papers, silk or gold-leaf paper, along with a few black and white engravings as well. Since the Edo period, hand-painting ukiyoe was also called *Nikuhitsuga* (肉筆画). On the other hand, monochrome woodblock print ukiyoe were called *Sumizurie* (墨摺絵). The invention of *Sumizurie* was an innovation in Ukiyoe history, which marked the flourishing of woodblock print ukiyoe, and the popularity lasted for over two hundred and fifty years. Under the influence of Chinese Ming and Qing paintings, red started to be applied on monochrome ukiyoe. Torii Kiyonobu (鳥居清信 1664-1729) was considered to be the originator of *Tan'e* (丹絵)[110]. *Beauty looking back* (見返り美人図) painted by Hishikawa Moronobu (菱川師宣 1618-1649), was considered to be one of the earliest masterpieces of Ukiyoe. During the end of this period, hand-coloured painting was too slow to keep pace with outline painting, thus, rough prints, which were made with simple-designed coloured blocks eventually took the place of brush painting (but there were also some artists occasionally producing hand-painted ukiyoe), and wood-block prints attained great development afterwards. It is still necessary to insist that both paper and printing were invented in China. The world's oldest extant printed book is a Chinese version of *Diamond Sūtra* (金刚经, *jin'gangjing*) dated 868 A.D, which is a black and white wood-block printed roll with 17 feet long.[111]

---

[109] D.B Waterhouse. *Harunobu and His Age, the Development of Colour Printing in Japan*, The Trustees of the British Museum, 1964, p.12.

[110] *Tan'e* (丹絵): "*tan*" refers to "orange-red" in Japanese language, applied colours (not only red, but also light blue, yellow and grass green) on monochrome woodblock prints.

[111] D.B Waterhouse. *Harunobu and His Age, the Development of Colour Printing in Japan*, The Trustees of the British Museum, 1964, p.6.

Previously, most prints had been hand coloured, in monochrome woodblock, or coloured with the addition of one or two colour blocks. An innovative type of multi-coloured woodblock printing was created by carving a separate woodblock for every colour. Multi-coloured woodblock printing (錦絵 *nishikie*) was invented in the 1760s, which marked the start of the middle period of ukiyoe (1765-1806). *Nishikie* was also known as "*Tashoku-zuri-mokuhanga"* (多色摺木版画, multi-coloured woodblock prints). It is reported that Suzuki Harunobu (鈴木春信 1725?-1770) was the one who introduced *nishikie* to the world. Different from the rough prints, which were printed on poor paper and with inexpensive colours, *nishikie* was a rather luxury art format, with the best of paper and pigments at the request of the propertied class.[112] The original multi-coloured woodblock printing was rough, and after a long time of perfection, it finally reached its completed formation. The procedure of making a *nishikie* had been complex, which requires a team of artisans in various workshops (it was rare for designers to cut their own woodblocks[113]). I would like to explain the process as follows[114]:

(1), Design

The artists provided an ink drawing on thin paper (*hanshita-e*, 版下絵), which was then handed to the department of *Ezoshi-gakari* (絵草子掛り) of the Shogunate for reviewing and approval. It would not be able to be handed over to the wood carvers, unless it was approved.

---

[112] Seiichiro Takahashi (translated by Ryozo Matsumoto), *The Japanese Wood-block Prints through Two Hundred and Fifty Years*, published by Chuo-Koron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1964, pp.17-18.

[113] Penkoff, Ronald. *Roots of the Ukiyo-e; Early Woodcuts of the Floating World*. Ball State Teachers College, 1964, p.21.

[114] Salter, Rebecca. *Japanese Woodblock Printing*. University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

(2), Woodcarving,

Woodcarvers, who were called *horishi* (彫り師), pasted the designed image onto a block of cherry wood. The block-cutter cut away the non-black areas of the image, leaving an impression of the remaining inked image. The original drawing was destroyed in the process. The approach of *kentō* (見当)[115] was invented to mark the paper for multi-colouring.

(3), Printing

Printers (*suri-shi*, 摺師) used thicker paper to print several (the exact number depended on how many colours would be printed) base images (*kyōgō-zuri*, 校合摺り) and handed them to the artist, who would use red pen to mark specific colours on the image. Then the prints were made with blocks faced up so that the printer could vary pressure and skills for different effects.

(4), Publishing

The publisher (*ezōshi-ya* 絵草子屋) played an important role in the ukiyoe business. Since ukiyoe became a commercial art form, publishing became competitive. The number of publishers peaked at around 250 in the 1840s and 1850s.[116] This industry was appealing because it was highly profitable. The publisher was able to reuse the woodblocks without further payment to the artist or woodblock cutter.

---

[115] *Kentō* (見当): also called *tonbo (*トンボ*),* refers to marks on the woodblock's four corners or in the middle, in order to mark the colour or shape of this woodblock.

[116] Marks, Andreas. *Japanese Woodblock Prints: Artists, Publishers and Masterworks: 1680–1900.* Tuttle Publishing, 2012, p.180.

After the 1760s, portraits became extremely popular. Portraits of beauties (美人画, *bijin-ga*) especially stood out. A large number of artists gained their fame during the middle period of ukiyoe history. Suzuki Harunobu (鈴木春信, 1725?-1770), Utagawa Toyokuni (歌川豊国 1769-1825)[117] and Kitagawa Utamaro (喜多川歌麿 1753?-1806) were three of the most representative ones, and they will be studied specifically in the following part of this chapter.

During the third stage of ukiyoe history (1807-1858), more talented artists appeared, such as Keisai Eisen (渓斎 英泉, 1790 – 1848), Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾 北斎, 1760? – 1849), Utagawa Hiroshige (歌川 広重, 1797 – 1858) and Utagawa Kuniyoshi (歌川 国芳 1797? – 1861)[118]. *Yakusha-e*, which refers to woodblock printings of kabuki

---

[117] Utagawa Toyokuni was one of the most representative artists in the second period of Ukiyoe history. Toyokuni studied under the founder of the Utagawa school — Utagawa Toyoharu. He was famous for his achievement at expressing the very natural beauty on yakusha-e (役者絵) and beauty painting (美人画, bijin-ga). His first work came out on 1786. From 1790, Toyokuni tried to explore his own style, by absorbing from Kiyonaga school and Utamaro style. On 1749, his work "*Views of Actors on Stage (*役者舞台之姿絵*, yakusha-butainosugata-e)*" won critical acclaim due to its sensitivity towards preference of age. Toyokuni finally managed to create his own style of bijin-ga, which was concentrated on women's gorgeous and elegant posture. His achievement was not limited to single prints, but also included picture books, illustration painting, etc.

[118] Kuniyoshi was born in the city of Edo. He started to study ukiyoe by imitating Kitao Shigemasa (北尾重政, 1739-1820) since he was 7, 8 years old. He joined the *Utagawa* school to study from 歌川豊国 (Utagawa Toyokuni, 1769-1825). *Toyokuni*, the founder of the *Utagawa* school, was famous for his magnificent yakusha-e. Meanwhile, he was also influenced by Katsukawa Shuntei (勝川春亭, ?-1824) and Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾北斎, 1760?-1849). His work of "*The Tsūzoku Suikoden Goketsu Hyakuhachinin (*通俗水滸伝豪傑百八人*)*", which was based on Chinese novel "*Water Margin (C:* 水浒传*, Shuihu-zhuan, J:* 水滸伝*, Suiko-den)*", was highly appreciated. It was also said that *Kuniyoshi's* series of "Water Margin" story was inspired by Hokusai's similar series. Due to the *Tenpō* Reforms (天保の改革, *Tenpō no kaikaku*) in 1842, which advocated simplicity and restricted commercialization, ukiyoe (including the most popular *yakusha-e* and *bijin-ga*) was prohibited. However, indomitable *Kuniyoshi* used ukiyoe to express his sarcasm. and he was highly respected because of that. Under such a complicated social environment,

actors, became extremely popular during this period. Kuniyoshi was famous for his *musha-e* (武者絵), which refers to ukiyoe about hero figures from historical novels. It is also worth mentioning that Kuniyoshi's masterpieces of *musha-e*, based on Chinese famous novel Water Margin (水浒传, *shuihuzhuan*)[119], was highly valued after being published.

The end of the 19th century (1859-1912) is also considered to be the late period of ukiyoe. After the national isolation policy was put to an end, Japanese domestic culture was battered by western culture. *Yokohama-e*[120] was produced due to people's interest and curiosity towards the unknown western world.[121] During this time, landscape printing became a new trend, which was also an influence from western art. There is also argument suggesting that the flourishing of landscape printing could also be due to Hokusai's great success in *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* (富嶽三十六景, *Fugaku-sanjūrokkei*).[122] On the other hand, the internal peace was also threatened due to the constant conflicts during the end of the Edo period. Under such circumstances, *muzan-e*[123] produced by Ochiai

---

Kuniyoshi gained a huge success by his musha-e (warrior prints). His left to the world not only a large amount of masterpieces, but also many talented students, including Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (月岡芳年, 1839-1892) and Kawanabe Kyōsai (河鍋暁斎, 1831-1889).

[119] Water Margin tells a story that in the Song dynasty, a group of 108 outlaws gathered at Mount Liang to form an army and they are eventually granted amnesty by the government and sent on wars to resist foreign invaders and suppress rebel forces.

[120] "*Yokohama-e"* (Yokohama pictures) refers to ukiyo-e prints depicting foreigners and scenes of Yokohama. In 1859, the Yokohama port was opened to foreigners, and ukiyo-e artists (mainly of the Utagawa school) produced more than 800 different woodblock prints in response to a general curiosity about this brand new world. The production of Yokohama-e ended in the 1880s.

[121] *Foreigners in Japan, Yokohama and Related Woodcuts in the Philadelphia Museum of Art*, Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1972.

[122] J.Hillier, *The Japanese Print: A New Approach*. Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1975, p.148.

[123] The Muzan-e, also known as the "Bloody Prints", refers to Japanese woodcut prints of a violent nature published in the late Edo period and Meiji Period. One of the earliest and most well-known examples is the collection Twenty-Eight Famous Murders with Verse (英名二十八衆句, *eimei nijūhasshūku*) by the artists Yoshitoshi and Yoshiiku from

Yoshiiku (落合芳幾 1833-1904), Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (月岡芳年 1839-1892)[124] and Kobayashi Kiyochika (小林清親, 1847-1915)[125] were highly appreciated.

There had been a huge number of excellent ukiyoe artists over the course of 250 years of history. I would like to study some of the most representative artists in each era in the following.

Hishikawa Moronobu (菱川師宣, 1618-1694)

Hishikawa was called the first ukiyoe artist, which means that he was considered the father of this art format. Hishigawa did not produce wood-block paintings (*mokuhanga*, 木版画)[126] before 1662. However, Iwasa Matabei, who died in 1650, claimed to be the originator of ukiyoe. Ficke argues that they were both founders of ukiyoe. Iwasa was an expert on hand painting, while Hishigawa extended his work to picture books and single-sheets of woodblock prints.[127] Based on this theory, I tend to agree that Hishikawa was the originator of ukiyoe in the beginning of its early period. Hishikawa was

---

the 1860s, which depicted several gruesome acts of murder or torture based on historical events or scenes in *Kabuki* plays.

[124] Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (月岡芳年, 1839-1892): Yoshitoshi was born in the end of the Edo period, and he was well-known as the last ukiyoe artist as most of his disciples were famous for nihon-ga or western painting but not ukiyoe. He was good at multiple genres of ukiyoe, including history prints, beauty picture, *yakusha-e*, erotic painting, classic painting, etc. He had his own special style in each of the genres, especially in bloody prints (無惨絵 *muzan-e*). Yoshitoshi's *muzan-e* was especially popular with the Shōwa period (1926-1989) due to the age of turbulence.

[125] Kobayashi Kiyochika (小林清親, 1847-1915): Kiyochika was also said to be the last ukiyoe artist, which I agree in the aspect of age, as he was obviously younger that Yoshitoshi. He was also born in the late Edo period and raised in the Meiji era. He was called the Hiroshige in the Meiji period, due to his achievement in landscape prints. He managed to produce 95 different landscape prints series, and absorbed western artistic style of perspective. It is worth mentioning that in the meiji period, due to the recession of *nijiki-e* (multi-coloured woodblock prints), hand painting started to thrive again.

[126] *Mokuhanga* (木版画)refers to wood-block prints, while *nikuhitsuga* (肉筆画)refers to hand paintings.

[127] D. Ficke, *Chats on Japanese Prints,* London and New York, 1966, pp. 69–79.

son of a highly-appreciated dyer in gold and silver-thread brocade. He moved to Edo before he was 20 years old to study under the Kanō and Tosa schools. Hishikawa started his art career with hand painting. However, his first signed and dated illustration picture book did not come out until 1672. Most of his works were found unsigned or undated. "Beauty looking back (見返り美人図)" was his most representative hand painting ukiyoe. He was deeply inspired by Chinese wood-block paintings of the late Ming dynasty, when Chinese popular fiction was introduced to Japan, along with black and white illustrations for this genre.[128] His production of print designs was primarily in black and white (墨摺 *sumizuri*). The production of *sumizuri* was revolutionary as it could be mass produced and the price was acceptable even for normal citizens. In 1670, by working with another artist named Ochikochi Dōin (遠近道印), Hishikawa produced the famous *sumizuri, Pictorial Map of the Tōkaidō Highroad (Tōkaidō-bunken-ezu*, 東海道分間絵図), which is now in the collection of the Kanazawa History Museum).

Torii Kiyonobu (鳥居清信, 1664-1729)

Torii Kiyonobu was born in Osaka in 1664 and moved to Edo in 1687. At the age of 24, he found a job related to kabuki, which was considered the reason why his art career had such a deep relation with kabuki. Torii started his art life with *kanban'e* (看板絵), which was a format of hand-painting art that appealed for kabuki recently performed. It was close to the advertisement of opera in the modern world. Contents included legends,

[128] 王莉 (Wang Li), 『中国明清版画对日本浮世绘艺术的影响』 *("Influence of Chinese Ming and Qing Wood-block Painting to Japanese Ukiyoe Art"),* 美与时代 下 (Mei yu Shidai, xia), 2012,7, pp.77-78.

monsters, and heroes. His way of highlighting the details of kabuki actors' action, costumes and hairstyle was popular. After 1618, Torii also showed his talent in beauty paintings (*bijinga*, 美人画), which was also influenced by Hishikawa Moronobu.

Suzuki Harunobu (鈴木春信, 1725?-1770)

Harunobu was born in Kyoto and then moved to Edo. He became well-known for his *yakusha-e* (役者絵) and *benisuri-e* (紅摺絵)[129]. Afterwards, his works of *bijin-ga* (美人画) with lovable and delicate expressions won him an even higher reputation. However, his biggest achievement was considered to be the comprehensive work that introduced *nishiki-e* (錦絵) to the world. *Nishiki-e* (錦絵) refers to a complete technique of multi-coloured woodblock painting of ukiyoe. As introduced above, compared to the former technique of ukiyoe, such as *nikuhitsu-ga* (肉筆画), *benisuri-e* (紅摺絵), and *sumizuri-e* (墨摺絵), *nishiki-e* appeared to be more decorative, using thicker, harder-surfaced paper of higher quality, cherry woodblocks, and brighter pigments with longer permanency.

Kitagawa Utamaro (喜多川歌麿, 1753?-1806)

Kitagawa Utamaro was as famous internationally as Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾北斎, 1760-1849). He was known for his splendid skill in catching women's various

[129] benisuri-e (紅摺絵): literally means "crimson printed painting". It is a type of ukiyoe, printed in dark pink ("*beni*") and green, occasionally in the addition of another colour. The colour can be both printed or hand painted.

postures and facial expressions. His design was distinguished by the detailed and elegant lines and strokes. He was the originator of *Ōkubi-e* (大首絵), which was a portrait in ukiyoe genre that only showed the head or the head and upper torso.

Utamaro's life is barely known; not even his birth date and place are certain. He had studied successively from Katsukawa Shunshō's *yakusha-e* (勝川春章, 1726?-1793), Kitao Shigemasa's *bijin-ga* (北尾重政, 1739-1820), and Torii Kiyonaga's *bijin-ga* (鳥居清長, 1752-1815). His first famous work was a *kyōka-ehon* (狂歌絵本)[130] "*Ehon-mushiwerami (*画本虫撰*)*", absorbing Tsutaya Jūzaburō *(*蔦屋重三郎*, 1750-1797)*'s original wood block. This series of picture book showed Utamaro's talent with his splendid and detailed description of nature, including plants, insects, birds, etc. After that, he acquired Tsutaya's support and was able to develop his talent. Utamaro acquired his independent style thanks to Tsutaya's help. He finally transcended Shigemasa and Kiyonaga's influence and produced his own-style of *bijin-ga* portraits. Starting from 1970 and 1971, Utamaro's *bijin-ōkubi-e* flourished. He was able to catch women's beauty in the very ordinary moments in their daily life, which was one of the reasons why his portraits were fashionable among the common townspeople. The beauty of his work was never as same as that expressed by official royal artists. It was unique because Utamaro was an artist who survived the real, cruel, and dirty world as other normal people. The majority of his *bijin-ga* was based on prostitutes, waitresses in the teahouses or other unknown women. Utamaro finally died due to overwork when he was only 54 years old.

---

[130] kyōka (狂歌): Kyōka was a popular tanka form of Japanese poetry, which literally means wild poem.

Keisai Eisen (渓斎英泉, 1790-1848)

Eisen had studied under the Kanō school, specifically from Kanō Hakkeisai (狩野白桂斎) since he was 12 years old. Until he was 20 years old, when his father and step-mother died, he lived with ukiyoe artist Kikukawa Eiji (Kikukawa Eiji), as a disciple of Kikukawa Eizan (菊川英山, 1787-1867). He also got access into the famous Katsushika Hokusai's home. Eisen was fascinated by Chinese painting of the Song and Ming dynasty. He was also the first one who started to produce *aizuri-e* (藍摺絵)[131] using Prussian blue (ベロ藍, *bero-ai*)[132]. Eisen was famous for his beauty portrait painting (*bijin-ga*), as well as erotic art (春画, *shun-ga*). On the other hand, he was also well-known for his landscape painting (名所絵, *meisho-e*). He cooperated with Hiroshige on the famous scenery painting *Sixty-nine Stations of the Kisokaidō Road* (*Kisokaidō-rokujūkyū-ji,* 木曽街道六十九次). J. Hiller speaks very high of Eisen's landscape painting: "Eisen looks on the world through the eyes of the plebeian scenic splendors, and giving just as much attention to the lively activity going on around."[133] In this sense, Eisen's greatness in landscape printing was how sensitively he observed the nature, which was the spirit of "the floating world (ukiyoe)"

---

[131] *Aizuri-e* (藍摺絵): woodblock prints using mainly blue colour, along with one or two other colours as red and green.

[132] Prussian blue is a dark blue pigment with the ideal chemical formula $Fe_7(CN)_{18}$. Another name for the colour is Berlin blue or, in painting, Parisian or Paris blue. This pigment will be studied specifically in the section.

[133] J.Hillier, *The Japanese Print: A New Approach*
Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1975, p.151.

Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾北斎, 1760?-1849)

Hokusai is arguably the most internationally famous ukiyoe artist. Even though he was born in an era when woodblock prints flourished, he received a high reputation for hand-painted ukiyoe as well. His leader status on landscape prints remained certain after the famous "*Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* (富嶽三十六景, *fugaku-sanjūrokkei*) was published between 1831 and 1835. His picture book *Hokusai's Sketches (*北斎漫画*, Hokusai Manga)* was another masterpiece of Hokusai. This book not only won great achievement within Japan, but also influenced many European artists, including Vincent van Gogh, after being introduced to Europe along with chinaware and earthenware after 1830. In his later career, Hokusai also tried western styles of oil painting, copperplate print and glass painting.

Hokusai was born into a normal family in Edo in 1760. In 1778, he started to study painting from the ukiyoe artist, Katsukawa Shunshō (勝川春章, 1726?-1793). He learned skills from the Kanō school, Chinese painting and western art, and applied them into ukiyoe landscape painting and *yakusha-e*. (Although both Hokusai and Eisen had experience learning from the Kanō school, they did not show their brilliant talent until they developed a career in ukiyoe.) He used as many as thirty art names during his career; he used the name "Katsushika Hokusai" from 1805. In 1812 and 1817, he traveled to multiple cities in west Japan, an inspiration for his landscape prints. The first edition of his picture book *Hokusai's Sketches (*北斎漫画*, Hokusai Manga)* was published in 1814. Using the art name of Iitsu, (為一), he started to produce the first edition of "*Thirty-six Views of*

Mount Fuji (富嶽三十六景, *fugaku-sanjūrokkei*)" in 1820; it was finally finished in 1833. Hokusai travelled and moved a lot during his life, which gave him an opportunity to observe and appreciate diverse scenery in Japan. His unstable lifestyle was considered as an asset to his art production. He died in the city of Edo in 1849 when he was 90.

Utagawa Hiroshige (歌川広重, 1797-1858)

Hiroshige was one of the most successful landscape ukiyoe artists in the Edo period. He was born to a common samurai family and his father was a firefighter. His original family name was 安藤 (Andō). Both of his parents passed away when he was 13 and he became a firefighter in place of his father. Because of his love of art, Hiroshige started to study ukiyoe painting from Utagawa Toyohiro (歌川豊広, 1774-1830) when he was 15 years old. When he first stepped into the "floating world", he focused on *bijin-ga*, *musha-e* and *yakusha-e*, which were the most popular ukiyoe genres at the moment. In the age of 27, he finally quit the firefighter job and concentrated on ukiyoe. In 1831, Hiroshige started his career as an artist of landscape prints with the print set *Famous Views of the Eastern Capital (*東都名所*, Tōto-meisho)* published. His sensitive and emotional style was impressive from the start. The next year he travelled to Kyoto under the order of the shogunate and he recorded the scenery along the road by a series of fifty-five prints, which was named *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō (*東海道五十三次*, Tōkaidō Gojūsan-tsugi)*.[134] This series made him leap into favor overnight. More masterpieces kept coming

[134] 李春蕾 (Li Chunlei), *Wuai and Kongji— Utagawa Hiroshige and His Art World*. Meishu yu Shidai: Xueshu (xia) Issue:10 p.88-90.

out after this. According to Japanese scholar Uchida Amami, so far, there are over 4300 prints that can be confirmed to have been produced by Hiroshige.[135] Most of his works were landscape prints.

3.2 Blue (青, *ao*)

In Japanese ukiyoe painting, *ao* (blue) was favored by a large number of artists. *Ao* is right now sometimes understood as blue. However, in Japanese language, *ao* has a wider meaning. For instance, *ao* can be used to describe a pale face, or pale moonlight. Dark blue represented the coolness of Japanese *bushidō*[136]. It was used to describe the sharp blades of Japanese warriors (武士, *bushi*), despite the fact that the common sense is that a sword or blade should be silver in colour. Zhang Yue argues that this is because Japanese aesthetics has different feeling with respect to colours.[137] It is also common in ukiyoe to use dark blue to emphasize the sharpness and coolness of metal, especially blades. Sky blue was popular in the Edo period. *Ao* can be not only used to describe the clear sky, but

---

[135] 高云龙 [here and below missing kanji] (Gao Yunlong), *Study of the Origin of Ukiyoe Art and Ming Qing Woodblock Prints.*
Renming-jiaoyu Press, 2011, p.154.

[136] Bushidō, the code of warriors that values rectitude, courage, benevolence, politeness, sincerity, honor, loyalty and self-control, etc.

[137] 张 悦 (Zhang Yue), 『*"青" 在日本文化中体现的色彩心理感觉 —— 以其包含的色彩范畴及文化内涵为中心*』 *(Colour Psychology of "Ao" in Japanese Culture—— including the Colour system and social meaning)*
常州大学学报 (Changzhou University Xuebao) p. 93.

also cloudy, or dark sky, which is different from the origin of this colour in Chinese. Furthermore, *ao* can also be used on the surface of oceans and lakes, as well as description of translucent objects such as ice and glass. In some circumstances, *ao* can also refer to green (緑, *midori*). For example, the traffic light, or the water of a lake as mentioned above, and most importantly, almost all green plants can be described as "*ao*" instead of "*midori*".

According to Zhang Yue, the Japanese admiration for *ao* demonstrates their special aesthetics and culture. Blue is considered to be a cool and even cold colour. Japanese have an extremely sensitive feeling for colour due to their complicated climate and various natural scenery. Japanese artists managed to integrate their ideas of aesthetics into their love of the nature, then created the very characteristic art format of ukiyoe.[138]

The blue colour used on clothing in Japan was also quite different from in China. Chinese considered blue as a lower-status colour for clothing in the Song dynasty. Shen Kuo wrote in his famous book *Brush Talks about Dream Brook (*梦溪笔谈 *Mengxi Bitan)*[139] that 「巾帽用青，屠沽何异.」 (Dressing in blue makes you no different from a butcher) , from which we can see how Chinese ancient scholars despised clothing in dark blue colour. In the Yuan dynasty, it was stipulated in *Yuan Dianzhang* (元典章)[140] that 「娼妓家长并亲属男子，裹青头巾」 (parents and relatives of prostitutes should wear

---

[138] 张 悦 (Zhang Yue), 『*"青"* 在日本文化中体现的色彩心理感觉 —— 以其包含的色彩范畴及文化内涵为中心』 *(Colour Psychology of "Ao" in Japanese Culture—— including the Colour system and social meaning)* 常州大学学报 (Changzhou University Xuebao) p. 96-97.

[139] Dream Pool Essays: an extensive book with contents of astronomy, math, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, medical, literature, history, and music, written by Chinese polymath and scientist Shen Kuo during the Song dynasty.

[140] Yuan Dianzhang: the official code of the Yuan dynasty, completed when Gegeen Khan was in power. (between 1322 and 1323)

an dark blue headscarf). Chinese had treated dark blue as a colour that was far away from power, the contrary of red and gold. The Chinese attitude to dark blue colour had an impact on Japanese, when these two countries had the most frequent contact during the Tang dynasty (618-907). In 647, the year of the Japanese Emperor Kōtoku, it was stipulated that purple navy, which was a blue colour with agrey tone, was a lower-level colour. The same situation was found in *Ifuku-ryō* (衣服令).[141] However, in the Edo period, blue was ranked as the second noble colour (following purple). It represented the soul of the Japanese samurai, so that it was selected to be the colour of the *Shinsen-gumi*'s uniform. The *Shinsengumi* (新選組 or 新撰組, meaning "the new squad") was a special police force organized by the *Bakufu* (military government) from 1864 to 1869. Their job was to protect the Shogunate representatives in Kyoto. The members were selected from the sword schools of Edo.[142]

Pigments

Blue pigment of azurite (群青, *gunjō,* or *iwa*-gunjō to differentiate it from ultramarine) was found on slide wall paintings in the Takamatsuzuka Tomb of the early eighth century. The same material was found on Hōryūji Paintings, which belongs to one of the oldest temples survives to the present day (7th Century).[143] Azurite (紺青石, *konjō*-

---

[141] *Ifuku-ryō* (衣服令): Under Chinese influence during the Tang dynasty, Japanese also enacted laws to stipulate colour classes for official uniform (*seifuku*, 制服), formal dress (*raifuku*, 礼服), and court dress (chōfuku, 朝服).

[142] Hurst G. and Hurst I, *Armed martial arts of Japan: swordsmanship and archery*. Yale University Press, 1998, p.95.

[143] Kazuo Yamasaki and Yoshimichi Emoto, *Pigments Used on Japanese Paintings from the Protohistoric Period through the 17th Century,* Ars Orientals, Vol.11, 1979, p.4-6.

ishi) is a natural copper mineral. The colour creates a deep blue with greenish undertone.[144] Later in from the 10th Century, malachite and substitute for azurite were also examined in the wall paintings and the sliding doors of the Daigoji Pagoda, and Hō-ōdō. The use of a substitute for azurite was first found in the wall painting in the ninth century. The substitute was made by dyeing yellow ochre with indigo.[145] Yamazaki and Emoto also suggested that the reason for using substitute for azurite may be due to its scarcity, high price and the difficulty of importing azurite in the late ninth through eleventh centuries. Azurite was again used in paintings after twelfth century.[146] Azurite was also found on early scroll paintings. The procedure was to grind azurite into a powder and gradually mix it with water in a mortar. According to the minuteness of the flour, colours were subdivided into different levels: first blue (頭青 *touqing*), second blue (二青 *erqing*), and third blue (三青 *sanqing*). (The category of three blue colours were introduced from China, thus the Romanization written here is in Chinese.) After they were introduced into Japan, these three colours were named *byaku-gunjō* (白群青), *gunjō* (群青), and *kon-jō* (紺青) respectively.[147]

---

[144] Elisabeth West Fitzhugh, *A Pigment Census of Ukiyo-E Paintings in the Freer Gallery of Art*.

Ars Orientals. Vol.11. Freer Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institution and Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan, 1979, p.35.

[145] Kazuo Yamasaki, *Kondō Itae oyobi Kondō Shobutsu no Itakohai no Saishiki no Ganryō (Colouration of the Wall Painting of the Golden Hall, and of the Wooden Halos of Buddhist Figures in the Golden Hall)*. Yamato Koji Taikan (General Survey of the Old Temples in the Yamato Province), vol.6 Murōji, 1976, p.49-52.

[146] Kazuo Yamasaki and Yoshimichi Emoto, *Pigments Used on Japanese Paintings from the Protohistoric Period through the 17th Century.* Ars Orientals, Vol.11, 1979, p.9.

[147] Nagasaki Seiki, *The traditional Colours of Japan,* SEIGENSHA, 2013.2, p.233.

Indigo (藍 *ai*) is extracted from various plant species. The indigo plant of East Alsia is *Polygonum tinctorium* (Polygonaceae). It gives a very dark blue tone, and was sufficiently applied by Edo artists. It was also widely used in not only Japanese pictorial arts, but also textile dyeing. The colour constituent comes from indigotin.[148] In Japan, indigo was used on paintings and handicrafts as early as the eighth century. In the ukiyo-e school, it was not widely used in the earliest paintings, but was common from the mid-seventh century to the nineteenth century. Moreover, compared to Prussian blue, indigo was more often in mixtures with yellow or red colourants to give green or purple colours.[149]

Another organic blue colourants is derived from the petals of dayflower (露草 *tsuyukusa*), and stored in the form of dyed paper, known as *aigami* (藍紙). However, it can only produce a light tone of blue but not any deeper or brighter colour, and it is sensitive to light, especially to humidity.[150]

Prussian blue, also called Berlin blue, was invented accidentally by Heinrich Diesbach in Berlin in 1704. It is unknown when Prussian blue had first arrived in Japan, but according to Timon Screech, it was imported to China by 1782.[151] It was named *bero-*

---

[148] Elisabeth West Fitzhugh, *A Pigment Census of Ukiyo-E Paintings in the Freer Gallery of Art*. Ars Orientals. Vol.11. Freer Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institution and Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan, 1979, p.36.

[149] John Winter, East Asian Paintings: Material, Structures and Deterioration Mechanisms, Archetype Publications Ltd, 2008, p.30.

[150] Henry D.Smith II, *Hokusai and Blue Revolution in Edo Prints*, Retreived from: http://www.columbia.edu/~hds2/pdf/2005_Hokusai_and_the_Blue_Revolution.pdf (2016.12.29), p.237-238.

[151] Elisabeth West FitzHugh, John Witer, and Marco Leona, *Studies Using Scientific Methods, Pigments in Later Japanese Paintings.* Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers, 2003, p.58.

ai in Japanese because in the Edo period, Berlin was called "*Berorin* (ベロリン)". Prussian blue was the first modern synthetic pigment. It was not soluble in water and was a rather permanent colour, due to its complex formula.[152] This revolutionary pigment managed to share the same thickness as the pigment produced by azurite, while maintaining an affordable price. It is said that Prussian blue supplanted indigo in Japan during the 18th century.[153] From the late 1820s, dark blue being used in ukiyoe prints strikingly increased, especially by Hokusai and Hiroshige. The pigment has been assumed to be Prussian blue, due to its prevalence and declined price. Prussian blue is usually considered to produce a brighter colour than indigo, which can vary in purity depending on the plant source. However, Prussian blue can also differ depending on the method of manufacture.[154] Prussian blue is well studied in Henry Smith's *Hokusai and Blue Revolution in Edo Prints,* where he suggests that the imports of Prussian blue was the key factor in the "Blue Revolution".[155]

Natural ultramarine is the powdered mineral lapis lazuli. Synthetic ultramarine was first made in France in 1828. Yamasaki and Emoto argued that natural ultramarine blue has never been found in paintings in Japan because it is not produced in Japan. However, according to studies at the Freer Gallery of Art, ultramarine was examined on

---

[152] Dunbar, K. R. and Heintz, R. A. "*Chemistry of Transition Metal Cyanide Compounds: Modern Perspectives*". Progress in Inorganic Chemistry, 1997, No.45, pp.283–391.

[153] C.Schraubstadter, Care and Repair of Japanese Prints, New York: Raiko Art Corp. and Asian Conservation Laboratory, 1978, p.5.

[154] Elisabeth West FitzHugh, John Witer, and Marco Leona, *Studies Using Scientific Methods, Pigments in Later Japanese Paintings.* Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers, 2003, p.61.

[155] Henry D.Smith II, *Hokusai and Blue Revolution in Edo Prints*, Retreived from: http://www.columbia.edu/~hds2/pdf/2005_Hokusai_and_the_Blue_Revolution.pdf (2016.12.29), p.235.

some of prints in the 19th century, after the synthetic ultramarine was made and imported to Japan. The same statement has been found in John Winter's work. He suggests that identifications of natural ultramarine on paintings are all from northern and northwestern China, including the Mogao Cave and Yungang Caves. However, there is no evidence that natural ultramarine was ever used in Japan.[156]

Smalt (花群青, *hana-gunjō*) is an artificial pigment, which has been found in limited ukiyo-e prints since 17th century. [157] It is made by incorporating cobalt oxide into a suitable glass to colour it deep blue and then pulverizing the product.[158] It has been used in China since the Tang dynasty, and was introduced into Japan in the Kyōhō period (1716-1735). Smalt shows a rich blue with a purple tone. It is fairly transparent, therefore, in East Asian paintings, an animal glue medium was used to offer a better binder.[159]

After the study of blue pigments of Japanese traditional art, I would like to particularly study the application of blue colour on ukiyoe prints and paintings. Before I start my study on individual paintings, using the following chart, I would like to organize the main genres of ukiyoe, that I mentioned before and I would like to study later.

---

[156] John Winter, East Asian Paintings: Material, Structures and Deterioration Mechanisms, Archetype Publications Ltd, 2008, p.31.

[157] Elisabeth West Fitzhugh, *A Pigment Census of Ukiyo-E Paintings in the Freer Gallery of Art*. Ars Orientals. Vol.11. Freer Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institution and Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan, 1979, p.35.

[158] John Winter, East Asian Paintings: Material, Structures and Deterioration Mechanisms, Archetype Publications Ltd, 2008, p.31.

[159] John Winter, East Asian Paintings: Material, Structures and Deterioration Mechanisms, Archetype Publications Ltd, 2008, p.32.

genre	kanji	content
bijin-ga	美人画	beautiful women pictures
yakusha-e	役者絵	actor pictures of kabuki
shibai-e	芝居絵	kabuki episode pictures
kachō-ga	花鳥画	flowers and birds pictures
Toba-e	鳥羽絵	caricatures
shōzō-ga	肖像画	portraits
meisho-e	名所絵	landscape prints or paintings
shun-ga	春画	erotic art
musha-e	武者絵	warrior prints

Blue was a popular colour in the Edo period and it could be found in a lot of *bijin-ga* and *yakusha-e*. Before *nishiki-e* were popularized, blue colour was hardly found in monochrome or two-colour prints, which was because of the high cost of blue pigments, as studied above. However, in hand-painted ukiyoe, blue was used decoratively. There was an anonymous six-panel screen, produced around 1624-1644. Some meaningful details can be found in this one panel. The most significant one was that all of samurai's knife handles were painted in blue, which proved the irreplaceable position of blue in the Japanese warriors' world. Furthermore, the figures of the Shogunate were also painted in blue, which could be seen on the man in green, sitting in the bottom right corner.

On the other hand, green was a common colour being used on prints. For example, in Torii Kiyonobu's *yakusha-e, The Actor Shinomiya Heihachi in a Samurai Role*, the whole picture was mainly printed in green and black. The other example was Harunobu's *benizuri-e 24. The Evening Bell of the Clock (1766)*, in which the girl in the front, who

obviously was as high class as the master, was wearing a *kimono* in green colour. The wall and *fusuma* were also in light green. However, it was interesting that the bamboos outside their window and plants in the left corner, which were both supposed to be green plants, were not printed in green but black and red instead. It showed the artist's special preference towards a blue-green colour system.

Figure 2-24. Suzuki Harunobu, *The Evening Bell of the Clock.*
[Available from: http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/56792. Accessed on 2016.11.01]

Later on, Suzuki Harunobu took more effort to use blue colour in his two-colour prints. For instance, in the *yakusha-e Girl Performing the Lion Dance (1769-70)*, he used an extremely light blue on the girl's kimono as decoration, and on the whole obi. It was hard

to notice, but half of the background was the same light sky blue. After multi-coloured woodblock prints had been popularized, blue became more popular in ukiyoe world. In Kitao Masanobu's *nishike-e 25. The Courtesans Hitomoto and Tagosode (1783)*, the two young maids hidden behind their master were wearing dark green and blue kimono. The courtesans, however, were wearing black, purple or red. From this painting, it could be implied that during that period, blue-green colours were popular, but they were not as noble as black and purple. The same situation could be found in Kunisada's *Genji-e: Akashiburo*, produced in 1847-50.

Figure 2-25. Kitao Masanobu, *The Courtesans Hitomoto and Tagosode.* [Available from: marlamallett.com. accessed on 2016.11.1]

When it came to the third period of ukiyoe, as the technique improved, colours on woodblock prints became brighter, clearer and more lasting. It was also easier to tell what colours the artists used, which was a benefit for scholars to study colours. In Utagawa

Kunisada's *yakusha-e* *26. The Actor Seki Sanjūrō lll (1805-70) as the Villainous Fencing Master Kyōgoku Takumi*, which was also an *ōkubi-e*[160], blue colour was used as the shade of the actor, to emphasize the villainy of a character.

Figure 2-26. Kunisada, *The Actor Seki Sanjūrō lll (1805-70) as the Villainous Fencing Master Kyōgoku Takumi*. [Available from: http://www.roningallery.com/kabuki-actor-seki-sanjuro-4026. Accessed on 2016.11.1]

It was a brilliant way to emphasize the shape of the actor's face and his evil temperament. Also, the decoration on the knife handle was printed in the dark blue. In Utagawa Kuniyoshi's *nishikie The Ninth Act*, blue colour seemed to be used in a larger

[160] Ōkubi-e (大首絵) is a Japanese portrait print or painting in the ukiyo-e genre, showing only the head or the head and upper torso.

scale, as a generally used colour to depict common people's daily life, which proved how popular blue was in the Edo period. The same situation could be seen in Kunisada's *27. Autumn Moon of the Third Storey [Dressing Room]*. The way that he used the bright and lively red to emphasize the simplicity and decency of blue was brilliant.

Figure 2-27. Kunisada, *Autumn Moon of the Third Storey (Dressing Room)*. [Available from: https://ukiyo-e.org/image/mfa/sc178027. Accessed on 2016.11.1]

As I just mentioned, the uniquely Japanese sense of colour on cold metal or weapons in *musha-e* (warrior painting) is definitely worth noting. Kuniyoshi used a lot

of indigo blue to show the cruelty and coolness of warriors in his work *28. Yamamoto Kansuke Nyūdō Dokisai*, from which it could be seen that all the sharp parts of weapons are printed in blue; so was one of the knife handles. The cold weapon and red blood caused a strong visual impact. The same could be seen in his other work, *The Night Attack of the Loyal Retainers*. It could not be proved that the artist did this on purpose, but I noticed that lighter blue was used on the team being attacked (left), while darker blue was used on the team attacking (middle and right). Thickness of colour was not only applied to the weapon, but also on warrior's clothing and even the sky above them. If Yoshitoshi did it on purpose, then it may mean that the darker blue being used might be a way to imply that the warrior was stronger. This will be another interesting topic in this field. In Tsukioka Yoshitoshi's work *29. Mirror of Famous Commanders of Great Japan (Abe no Kaifu fighting a bear)*, Yoshitoshi not only used blue colour on the warrior's blade, but also on the bears claws to highlight that sharpness and build a dangerous atmosphere. Blue was a magical colour to create a tense atmosphere, such as in Yoshitoshi's other work *Fujiwara no Yasumasa Plays the Flute by Moonlight*, and Kuniyoshi's *Tameijirō dan Shōgo, one of the 108 Heroes of the Suikoden, Grappling with an Adversary under Water* (1827-30).

Figure 2-28. Kuniyoshi, *Yamamoto Kansuke Nyūdō Dokisai.* [Available from: https://ukiyo-e.org/image/mfa/sc147593. Accessed on 2016.11.1]

Figure 2-29. Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, ***Mirror of Famous Commanders of Great Japan (Abe no Kaifu fighting a bear).*** **[Available from: http://www.yoshitoshi.net/series/generals.html. Accessed on 2016.11.1]**

Blue was widely applied in landscape prints. The prime colour of Eisen's *30. Kegon Falls (Kegon no taki)* was blue. He used different gradations of blue colours to demonstrate the gradation of the waterfall. He even used the same colour on visitors' clothing (right left corner). It was risky to do that considering the colour balance of the picture. I assume that Eisen was fascinated with the blue colour. Furthermore, there was also a very significant idea in Japanese art that that man was an integral part of nature. I suggest that Eisen's artistic method could be explained by this theory.

Figure 30. Eisen, *Kegon Falls (Kegon no taki).* [Available from: https://ukiyo-e.org/image/mfa/sc222831. Accessed on 2016.11.1]

Hiroshige was one of the most talented landscape artists in the Edo period. Blue can be seen in a majority of his works. For instance, in *31. The Ryōgoku Bridge (Ryōgoku-bashi)* from the set *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo (Meisho Edo Hyakkei)*. Hiroshige used dark and light blue to emphasize the fireworks. That day would be the busiest and most crowded day in Edo. There actually was a large number of boats on the river and a crowd of people on the bridge. However, Hiroshige tended to use the cold, cool and quiet blue to ease the tension and managed to make it a peaceful and smooth atmosphere.

Figure 31. Hiroshige, The Ryōgoku Bridge (Ryōgoku-bashi). [Available from: https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/121712, accessed on 2016.11.1]

The similar application of blue was in *Sudden Shower over Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (1857)*, in which blue helped to create a gloomy mood. In *Meguro Drum Bridge and Sunset Hill*, the silence and calm built by the contrast of white snow and blue river is impressive. Hiroshige's waterfall varied from Eisen's. In his *Fudō Fall, Ōji* from *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo (Meisho Edo Hyakkei),* Hiroshige also liked to use blue colour to highlight moonlight, as he did in *Moonlight, Nagakubo (1840)*, and *The Bow Moon (1830-35)*. Hiroshige printed an unnatural shape of a waterfall with blue. The waterfall always has some symbolic meanings of Zen. For instance, Buddhists often practice austerities under the flow of a waterfall. Using blue to paint or print the waterfall shows the deep connection between blue and Zen Buddhism. In other words, when painting the waterfall, Hiroshige believed that the colour blue was a more important element than the shape.

Another artist who was extraordinary in landscape prints was Katsushika Hokusai, who painted waterfalls in another different way. (As a significant image of landscape prints in ukiyoe, I believe it is necessary to compare these three different styles.) There were more than four different colours (not mention different thickness in one colour) in Hokusai's work *32. Tour of the Waterfalls of Various Provinces* : *Rōben Waterfall at Ōyama in Sagami Province (1831-1832)*. However, my attention surprisingly was never distracted from the waterfall. One reason was definitely the composition, which put the waterfall in the very front. However, there was a trick by means of which he shaped everything in blue other than black, not only the outline of landscapes, houses, and people, but also shadows. In this way, although the whole picture seemed diversely-coloured, the prime colour was still blue. The same skill can be found in his other works such as *The Waterfall of Yoshino (1830)*.

Figure 32. Hokusai, *Tour of the Waterfalls of Various Provinces : Rōben Waterfall at Ōyama in Sagami Province*.

[Available from: http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/36484, accessed on 2016.11.1]

Speaking of Hokusai, it is necessary to study his works of Mount Fuji. Mount Fuji was almost an obsession for Japanese artists, an ever-recurrent theme in poetry and art. Hokusai led to a strong national trend by depicting the volcanic cone of Mount Fuji.[161] First, he did not always use blue on Mount Fuji, such as *33. Fuji in Clear Weather (1823-1829)* of *One Hundred Views of Fuji*. A fascinating harmony of nature was created by the contrast of Mount Fuji's vitality, which was expressed by bright red and green, and the sky, which was in elegant indigo blue.

Figure 33. Hokusai, *Fuji in Clear Weather*. [Available from: https://www.wikiart.org/en/katsushika-hokusai/fuji-mountains-in-clear-weather-1831, accessed on 2016.11.1]

[161] J.Hiller, *Japanese Colour Prints*. Phaidon Press, 1994, p.116.

And in *Fine Wind, Clear Morning*, the contrast was between blue and red, the symbol of gloom and the symbol of enthusiasm. Together, they produced a brilliant chemical reaction, which I believe was the reason why Hokusai's prints of Mount Fuji have been so popular for so long. Finally, I would like to study the most representative work of Hokusai: *34. The Great Wave off Kanagawa (神奈川沖浪裏 Kanagawa-oki nami ura)*, published between 1820 and 1833. It was first printed in Hokusai's series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (富嶽三十六景 Fugaku sanjūrokkei)*.

Figure 34. Hokusai, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*.
[Available from: http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/45434, accessed on 2016.11.1]

Hokusai also used the skill of contrast in this work, except it was not a contrast of colours, but a contrast between the huge waves in the foreground and the small Mount Fuji in the background. There was also a contrast between the boats being violently shaken by

strong waves and people being stiff and unable to move in the boats.[162] Blue was the prime colour in this whole picture, to indicate the strength of nature and showed people's respect and fear of nature.

The next genre I would like to study is *kachō-ga* (flower and bird prints). Artists preferred to use dark blue on leaves, limbs, stones, mountains to harmonize the bright colour of flowers, which I believe was also a skill of contrast to highlight the flowers and birds. For instance, in Hokusai's "*Convolvulus and Tree Frog*" (1832), the main leaves were printed in dark blue, demonstrating a decorous feeling. A little yellow was added into blue to produce the dark green of other leaves and limbs, to avoid it being too dull. In Hiroshige's *Two mandarin ducks*, blue was used to indicate water, and also used on flowers in the background. Compared to this, Chinese artists preferred to use light ink to smooth the distance. Hiroshige also used blue in *kachō-ga* to emphasize the prime objects, as in *Quails and Poppy (1835).*

3.3 Purple (紫, *murasaki*)

Japanese admiration towards *murasaki* started over a thousand years ago. In the Heian period, there was a famous Japanese classic book named *The Pillow Book (*枕草子*,*

---

[162] *Katsushika Hokusai, Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji, The Great Wave off Kanagawa* Chiba City Museum of Art. [Available from: http://www.ccma-net.jp/collection_img/collection_02-06_hokusai.html, accessed on 2016.03.23]

Makura-no-sōshi), which describes a large amount of colours. Japanese colour aesthetics was suggested in this book, especially in the aspect of aristocratic women. *The Pillow Book* shared the same status as "*The Tale of Genji (Genji-monogatari,*源氏物語*)*" in the same era. The author 清少納言 (Sei Shōnagon) was a talented woman, who created a realistic, sensitive and peaceful world in *The Pillow Book*. According to Fang Ying, there were over 460 descriptions of colours in this work, including over 70 different colours, 20 of which were about "*murasaki* (purple)". All the descriptions about purple were positive and commendatory, and no narrative of *murasaki* could be found in all the passages written about despicable or disgustful stories.[163] In Sei Shōnagon's mind, purple was a representative of nobility and elegance. A flower could be beautiful if only its colour is purple, and humble people could be noble if they dress in purple. Purple was a key point of beauty, and if an object was in purple, then nothing else mattered. She used words with highest complimentary meaning to describe this colour. The same situation can be found in *The Tale of Genji* (Genji-monogatari, 源氏物語). The heroine of this novel was called Murasaki, after which the author was nicknamed Murasaki Shikibu. It was obvious that purple had an irreplaceable leading status in Japanese aesthetics. In ancient Japan, purple was the most difficult colour to dye, so that clothing in purple was unaffordable for common people. Therefore, it became the official colour of the royal family and government.

---

[163] 房颖 (Fang Ying), *Studies of Purple Colour in Japanese female literature during the Heian Period— Based on "*枕草集*"*
Writer Magazine, 2012 No.9, p.112.

It is worth mentioning that purple was a colour of nobility in China as well. The famous Forbidden City was named after this colour. (In Chinese, "*Forbidden City*" is "紫禁城 *Zijincheng*", the character "紫 *zi*" means purple.) It was introduced in the former chapter that red was a colour of fortune. However, purple was also a colour of luck in China. In Chinese, a "purple cloud" (紫云, *ziyun*) was an auspicious sign. Purple was even called the "colour of the Emperor" in Japan, and common people had no right or qualification to use this colour.[164] However, there is also argument that some Chinese despised purple for having a higher rank than red. For instance, in *The Analects of Confucius*, "恶紫之夺朱也 *(Despise purple for taking the position of red)*" was used to mean that "*Evil can never prevail over good*". Jiang Jianqiang believed that it was because in the Chinese colour system, colours were categorized according to the five elements (metal, wood, water, fire and earth), which corresponded to yellow, blue, white, red and black; purple did not belong to any of them.[165] I agree with this statement. I also suggest that the other reason that it may also because purple represented the supreme power of the government (which can be seen in the case of Forbidden City that I mentioned above), so red surpassed purple in the common people's mind. On the contrary, there was no conflict in Japan. Purple was officially ranked the first colour and the position never changed.

---

[164] 房颖 (Fang Ying), Studies of Purple Colour in Japanese female literature during the Heian Period— Based on "枕草集" Writer Magazine, 2012 No.9, p.113.

[165] Jiang Jianqiang, *Purple Fluttered without Wind— Japanese ideas of colours.* Book Town, 2016.01, p.67.

In 603, Japanese published an official ranking of colours, in which purple was ranked in first place, as "virtue" (徳, *toku*). The meaning of purple was complicated. It could be noble and elegant in general, but also could mean loneliness and mystery.[166] As introduced in the introduction chapter, Japanese appreciate the beauty of complexity and mystery. It is similar to the Japanese aesthetic concept *Yūgen* (幽玄).

The name of *Edo-murasaki* was related to *Kyō-murasaki* ("Kyoto murasaki"). There was also an argument that *Edo-murasaki* referred to a new purple colour, relative to the traditional *murasaki*. Ise Sadatake suggested that *Kyō-murasaki* was the purple colour closer to blue, while *Edo-murasaki* was closer to red.[167] These two theories were both made in the middle of the Edo period. However, it was argued in *Colour Name Dictionary* (*Shokumei-daijiten* 色名大辞典)"[168] that *Edo-murasaki* was a colour with deeper blue than *kikyō-iro* (桔梗色, blue violet), and it was named after Edo because it was first produced in the city of Edo. It seems contradictory, but I agree with Nagasaki Seiki's idea that the original *edo-murasaki* was closer to red, while it tended to be produced with more blue, due to the trend of blue colour in the Edo period, which was influenced deeply by the Japanese aesthetics of *iki* (粋).[169]

As introduced in the introductory chapter, *iki* is considered to be a concept of Japanese aesthetics with unique national characteristics. According to the subtractive

---

[166] Jiang Jianqiang, *Purple Fluttered without Wind— Japanese ideas of colours.* Book Town, 2016.01, p.68.

[167] Ise Sadatake (伊勢貞丈) wrote in "Sadadake-zakki (貞丈雑記)": 按紫色ハ今世京紫（青みの紫）ト云色也、葡萄ハ今世江戸紫（赤みの紫）ト云色也.

[168] *Shokumei-daijiten* (色名大辞典)：Colour Complete systemized by Japanese Colour Research Institute, Sōgen-sha (創元社), December 1954.

[169] Nagasaki Seiki, *The traditional Colours of Japan,* SEIGENSHA, 2013.2, p.252.

colour model, purple was mixed by red and blue, which can be considered as a dark hue of red. Based on Goethe's theory, dark red represents gravity and dignity, which were the same qualities that the Japanese upper class appreciated. On the other hand, blue represents darkness and it is an impression of coldness. The two colours physiologically match with the Japanese aesthetics (especially *iki*) of resignation, which suggests a generous, chic and elegant attitude towards life, even after all the misery and pain that life puts one through.

The first time that royal purple was officially elected to be the top colour among all was in the era of Emperor Kōtoku (*Kōtoku tennō*, 孝徳天皇), to be specific in 647. However, it was speculated that royal purple had already been the top colour since 603, as royal purple was referred to as the representative of virtue (*toku*, 徳). From then on, the status of colours was changed from time to time, while royal purple remained the top. Nagasaki Seiki argued that, compared to the top Chinese colour red, which was regarded as a colour of severe power, the Japanese royal purple was more friendly, peaceful, accessible and human-interactive. I disagree with him on this idea of 「なつかしき色」 *(natsukashiki-iro*; a nostalgic colour*)*.[170] I assume that this conclusion was based on his incomplete understanding of Chinese red. As introduced in the former chapter, red was not only a colour of power in China, but also a colour of fortune, luck, enthusiasm and so on. It was an irreplaceable colour to not only the royal family but also to the normal citizen, which I think is exactly the same status as royal purple in Japan.

---

[170] Nagasaki Seiki, *The traditional Colours of Japan.* SEIGENSHA, 2013.2, p.248.

Pigments

Purple is the only hue that is not present in the spectrum. Single, pure purple pigments are very rare, especially among inorganic colourants. Red ochre (iron oxide) can produce a dark red colour with a purple tone. Organic colourant, such as cochineal kermes or lac dye, sometimes gives a purple tone. Purple pigment of crystalline barium copper, which was named as Han purple, has been found on Chinese objects of the Han dynasty. There are few literary references discussing this pigment. However, John Winter mentioned an interesting fact that Han purple was identified in the decoration of the terracotta army in the tomb of the first Chinese emperor, Qin Shi Huang.[171] The samples found in China are mixtures of blue, purple, and whitish material in different proportions. In Japan, Han blue is also called *shido* (紫土, purple earth).

According to Newton's colour theory, it takes blue and red to produce a purple colour. In Japan, mixture of vermilion and indigo plant seems to have been a popular combination. Red ocher plus indigo can also be found on wall paintings of the eighth century. Ukiyo-e artists also occasionally mixed red ochre or organic red with smalt or indigo to create varying shades of purple. However, Prussian blue was seldom used for purple mixture, but for green mixture.[172] The frequent use of indigo, which often faded, caused a situation in which purple on the earliest paintings or woodblock prints shows a rather light tone. Artists sometimes used lac, safflower, or madder, which were all dyestuff,

---

[171] John Winter, *East Asian Paintings: Material, Structures and Deterioration Mechanisms*, Archetype Publications Ltd, 2008, p.33.

[172] Elisabeth West FitzHugh, John Witer, and Marco Leona, *Studies Using Scientific Methods, Pigments in Later Japanese Paintings.* Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers, 2003, p.18-22.

to produce a purple tone.[173] However, using dyestuff would lead to colour fading after years of exposure. According to Yu Feian, rouge colour produced by lac dyes from Gansu and Xinjiang province are particularly bright[174]

After the study of *murasaki* (purple) pigments and dyeing of Japanese traditional art, I would like to particularly study the application of blue colour on ukiyoe prints or paintings. Compared to blue colour being widely used in ukiyoe, *murasaki* colour seemed not so common in ukiyoe art works as blue. Considering the high cost and the complex technique to produce purple pigments, it was not difficult to understand. Furthermore, purple had been expressly stipulated to be the colour of elegance, therefore common people more or less held it in awe and veneration.

In Torii Kiyonaga's *35. Kameido Tenjin Shrine (Kameido Tenjin)* (1785-1790). light purple was used on women's kimono and wisteria, which is one of Japan's favorite flowers. The colour was so light as to be barely recognized, while it indeed expressed elegance. Judged by the hair decoration of these women, the one in the middle could be the most subordinate of all. Thus, her cloth was the similar purple colour as the wisteria in the background.

---

[173] John Winter, *East Asian Paintings: Material, Structures and Deterioration Mechanisms*, Archetype Publications Ltd, 2008, p.34.

[174] Yu Feian (Translated by Jerome Silbergeld and Amy McNair), *Chinese Painting Colours, Studies of Their Preparation and Application in Traditional and Modern Times,* Hong Kong University Press, University of Washington Press, 1988, p.24.

Figure 35. Torii Kiyonaga, *Kameido Tenjin Shrine (Kameido Tenjin).* [Available from: https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/43920/, accessed on 2016.11.1]

In Utagawa Toyohiro's *36. Contemporary Beauty with Heian-period Courtier* (1795), the woman standing next to the courtier was also dressed in purple. Compared to the light purple of wisteria, this one was closer to the real *murasaki*, which suggested the high class of this woman. As techniques improved, purple colour was more frequently used in the following years. *Murasaki* had always been a popular colour for the Japanese courtesan, whose status in Japan had always been a complicated subject. This is not the prime topic of my thesis so I would like to briefly introduce the background. Courtesans in the Edo period differed significantly in many ways, compared to other general prostitutes. Courtesans were elected strictly by extraordinary beauty and talent. Guests who were able to enter the first class brothel were also wealthy background. It was difficult for guests to

successfully have a rendezvous with the courtesans, unless they had enough money and also sincerity.

Figure 36. Utagawa Toyohiro, *Contemporary Beauty with Heian-period Courtier*. [Available form: http://weatherspoon.uncg.edu/collections/show?id=4856, accessed on 2016.11.1]

Back to painting analysis. It was hard to ignore the courtesans' preference for the colour purple. A combination of red and purple was fully expressed in Chōbunsai Eishi's (1756-1829) work *37. Courtesan and Attendants Viewing the Embankment Leading to the Yoshiwara from the illustrated book Otoko dōka*. I noticed that not only the courtesans' clothing was in *murasaki*, but the blanket in her room was also in *murasaki*. Eisen and Utagawa Toyokuni also produced *bijin-ga* of beautiful women wearing purple, such as *The Courtesan Shirakawa of the Tamaya* from the set *Eight Views of the Pleasure Quarters*, and *A Beauty Fixing Her Hair* respectively.

Figure 37. Chōbunsai Eishi, *Courtesan and Attendants Viewing the Embankment Leading to the Yoshiwara from the illustrated book Otoko dōka*.
[Available from: http://weatherspoon.uncg.edu/collections/show?id=5094, accessed on 2016.11.1]

Besides courtesans, *murasaki* was also one of the kabuki actor's favorite colours. In Utagawa Toyokuni's *The Actor Iwai Hanshirō and his Companions Paying a Visit to a Rich Patron at New Year* (1801), the actor Iwai was dressed in a *murasaki* kimono. Also, it was not hard to notice that the rich patron was also dressed in a subtly embroidered *murasaki kimono*. Furthermore, girls behind the *fusuma*, who were assumed to be the family members of this rich patron, were also wearing purple. Kabuki actors not only wore purple in their daily life, but also frequently dressed in purple on kabuki stage. The actor in Kunisada's *yakusha-e The Actor Ishikawa Danjūrō VII in Character* was also wearing purple. Purple has a strength of mystery, which made it a characteristic colour on kabuki stage. Another example was Katsukawa Shun'ei's *The Actor Nakayama Tomisaburō as the Courtesan Okaru in a Play Performed in 1795*. The light *murasaki* obi was very impressive

on the kabuki actor. As introduced before, the Japanese preference for *murasaki* was deeply related to the influence of "*The Pillow Book*" and "*The Tale of Genji*", which were also popular themes in Japanese art. For instance, Utagawa Kunisaada's *38. Genji-e Akashiburo* was a print based on *The Tale of Genji*.

Figure 38. Utagawa Kunisaada, *Genji-e Akashiburo.* [Available from: https://ukiyo-e.org/image/mfa/sc176956, accessed on 2016.11.1]

It was an interesting composition in which the characters in the middle (on both ground floor and the second floor) were wearing purple kimono. Using the colour of clothing was a brilliant demonstration of the artist's skill in suggesting the status of characters in narrative art. I also noticed that matching the purple clothing with red decoration or the other way around were both trends in the Edo period. For instance, Kitagawa Utamaro's "The Passionate Type" tended to use the combination of red and purple to show the

activeness of spring. With the cherry blossom in the background, the passion of spring could be richly felt.

Purple was mostly used in *bijin-ga* and *yakusha-e* to emphasize a charactor's elegance and wealth. Other than that, it was rarely seen in other genres. However, the exception was art works of wistaria，as introduced in the paragraph above.

3.4 Conclusion: Ukiyoe and Japanese Aesthetics

Blue reminds people of shade, and aesthetically, it is similar with black, which appears gloomy and melancholy.[175] This quality of blue fitted Japanese traditional aesthetics, particularly *shibui* (渋い). As suggested earlier, *shibui* values subtle, unobtrusive and simple beauty. Blue is not a showy colour, but simple and gloomy. It also suited to the concept of *iki* (粋), which appreciates the beauty that survives tribulation and suffering, yet remains elegant, unrestrained and unconventional. Goethe describes blue as "a kind of contradiction between excitement and repose".[176] The core of the contradiction can also be understood as the beauty of *iki* (粋). Blue is gloomy and simple, but elegant at the same time.

On the other hand, according to the subtractive colour model, purple was mixed by red and blue, which can be considered as a dark hue of red. Based on Goethe's theory, dark red represents gravity and dignity, which were the same qualities that Japanese

---

[175] Goethe (translated by Charles Lock Eastlake), *Goethe's Theory of Colours*. Frank Cass & Co.LTD, 1967, pp.310-311.

[176] Goethe (translated by Charles Lock Eastlake), *Goethe's Theory of Colours*. Frank Cass & Co.LTD, 1967, p.311.

upper class appreciated. Japanese admiration towards purple can be psychologically explained in this way.

However, the colour purple had a deeper connection with Japanese aesthetics. This connection can be seen in the most famous Japanese novel *The Tale of Genji* (源氏物語), the author of which was later named *Murasaki* (purple). Murasaki Shikibu also named the three heroines with colours related to purple: Murasakinoue or Wakamurasaki (紫上 or 若紫), Kiritsubo (桐壺), and Fujitsubo (藤壺).[177] There is a poem saying in *The Tale of Genji*, chapter 5 *Wakamurasaki*: "I don't know about you. But whenever Musashino is mentioned, I can't help longing for the *murasaki."* (知らぬども武蔵野といへばかこたれぬよしやさこそ紫のゆゑ). The colour purple is tied up with Genji's love and admiration to his mother Kiritsubo with Fujitsubo and Murasaki-hime. Whatsmore, here the Musahino was dated back to a later Edo era, hence the purple refers to *Edo-murasaki*.

Purple is so called the colour of Nidana (縁, *en*)[178], which means karmic connection (*murasaki-no-yukari*, 紫のゆかり). This phrase first appeared in *The Tale of Genji*. However, the concept had already been used in *Kokin-wakashū* (古今和歌集): "Love the one lithospermum on this land, hence all the plants on this land are being loved. 紫の一本ゆゑに武蔵野の草はみながらあはれとぞ見る。(in modern Japanese: 紫草が一本生えているために、この野の草は全部が懐かしく思われる)" It can be understood as: Because there is one person that I love, I feel like that everyone around me is worth loving. It was the

[177] Murasakinoue or Wakamurasaki (紫上 or 若紫) refers to lithospermum, Kiritsubo (桐壺) refers to paulownia, and Fujitsubo (藤壺) refers to wisteria.
[178] Nidana is a Sanskrit word that refers to "cause, motivation or occasion".

origin of the connection between purple and the idea of Nidana. Moreover, purple were mostly dyed from lithospermum or alkanet, the colour of which was easily transferred to other objects. Allegorically, the colour purple was transferred as is the admiration to someone was also transferable.[179]

Yang Qiaocun also mentioned that the character 紫 (murasaki) is constituted by two parts: 此 (this, この) and 系 (tie, 系), which means "this relation".[180] This proved that when this this character was created in Chinese, it already had the symbolism of Nidana.

Genji's nostalgia towards his mother, as well as his love to Fujitsubo and Murasakihime were unobtainable. It was within touch, but forbidden. This sort of here and faraway relations was also appreciated by Japanese aesthetics. In Japanese aesthetics, compared to a complete, perfect love story, the unobtainable, transient, incomplete and imperfect subjects are more valued, which was the same reason why Japanese appreciated cherry blossoms so much.[181]

Japanese poets loved to use *murasaki* to represent strong emotions such as love, admiration, and nostalgia. There are multiple examples in the *Man'yōshū*, *Gosen-wakashū* (後撰和歌集), *Shūi-wakashū* (拾遺和歌集), and *Komachishū* (小町集), etc. Purple is a romantic colour and it can represent permanence. I believe it was also one of the reasons why Murasaki Shikibu used such many subjects related to the colour purple to describe this epic love story.

---

[179] Yang Qiaocun, *Studies on the Symbolism of Purple in The Tale of Genji.* Forward Position, No.22, 2013, p.147.
[180] Yang Qiaocun, *Studies on the Symbolism of Purple in The Tale of Genji.* Forward Position, No.22, 2013, pp.147-148.
[181] Wang Qing, *Analysis of Love View in the Tale of Genji—— Based on the Study of "yuan".* Mangzhong Literature, No. 435, p.89.

As mentioned in the introduction, purple ranked in the first place in the Japanese colour system, which was created by Prince Shōtoku in 603. It was prohibited for common use for civilians, but was the special colour for the royal family. Also, since the cost of purple dying was extremely high, normal people could not afford to wear it anyway.

As a conclusion, the colour purple evokes ideas of nobility, karmic connection, nostalgia, love, emotion, and mystery. As a colour of multiple symbolic meanings, it is not hard to see why it was so significant in Japanese aesthetics.

Conclusion

This thesis is constituted in four chapters: An Introduction, Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Conclusion.

The introduction indicates the research purpose, theory, and research method. The historical background of the Edo period is introduced in this section, which is helpful for readers to gain a better understanding of the study on colours in the following chapters. An analysis of Japanese aesthetics is also examined in the Introduction. "*Yūgen* (幽玄)", "*wabi-sabi* (侘び寂び)", "*shibui* (渋い)" and "*iki* (粋)" are four significant concepts of Japanese aesthetics and "*iki* (粋)" is the one that is mostly related to the genres of art that are primarily studied in this thesis. *Yūgen* means dim, deep and mysterious. Japanese value this subtle profundity in literature, especially poetry. *Wabi-sabi* indicates beauty of things that are imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. *Shibui* values subjects that are simple, subtle, but elegant. *Iki* appreciates the beauty that survives tribulation and suffering, yet remains elegant, unrestrained and unconventional. It is an attitude of appreciating life, valuing urbane simplicity.

Moreover, colour theories that I use to approach my study are also explained in the same chapter. I introduced the earliest Asian colour theory, which is the Chinese Five-Elements theory, which Confucius refined. The Chinese deemed the five fundamental colours to be white, blue, black, red, and yellow; these were related to the Five Elements: metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. In order to maintain social etiquette and demonstrate power, the Chinese ruling class started to rank colours based on the Five-Elements theory. Confucius's colour theory supported this scheme by recording different colours that should be used in different formal situations, as well as what colour to wear according to various

official positions in the *Book of Rites*[182]. Confucianism valued colour's role in protecting social proprieties and rules, particularly. Moreover, it endowed colours with other symbolic meanings to re-define them as important parts of social symbolism, and not only for artistic purposes. These colour theories deeply influenced the Japanese traditional colour system. Furthermore, James Stanlaw's colour theory of Japanese traditional colour is studied to analyze the difference between the western colour system and the Japanese traditional colour system.

In chapter 2, the colours gold (金色, *kin-iro*) and red (赤, *aka*) are individually examined in respect to the Kanō school teachings. This chapter begins with a brief introduction of the history of the Kanō school, so that readers can understand the inseparable connection between these two colours (gold and red) with regards to the social environment in the Edo period. This is followed by a study of these two colours, including their social meanings, pigments and how each colour was applied in particular paintings. The pigment for gold is gold-leaf. Three different techniques were studied. Gold foil (金箔 *kinpaku*) refers to a process grinding gold leaf into powder, then modulating it with lacquer, and finally painting on paper. Gold-dusted paper, which shares similar techniques, is also richly coloured, but the colour is less uniform. Gold-powder, however, is to powder the paper with gold leaf or coarse gold. The prime paper is easy to be seen. Pigments for red colour are categorized into two different sorts: mineral colourants and organic colourants. Mineral pigments include red ochre, red lead, and cinnabar. Synthetic cinnabar,

[182] The Book of Rites (礼记，*Liji*): a collection of texts describing the social forms, administration, and ceremonial rites of the Zhou dynasty as they were understood in the Warring States and the early Han periods.

which is called vermillion was invented later, and also used on paintings. Organic colourants are argued to include: safflower, madder, and insects colourants (including cochineal, kermes, and lac dye).

Japanese culture was deeply influenced by Chinese Tang and Song culture and art. From the Heian period, under the influence of China, red started to represent power and nobility. The application of gold in a large number of art works started since the Muromachi period.

The way we appreciate gold-leaf painting also affects its true beauty. Tanizaki Jun'ichirō suggested in his book *In Praise of Shadows* (In'ei Raisan, 1934) that:

Lacquerware decorated in gold is not something to be seen in a brilliant light, to be taken in at a single glance; it should be left in the dark, a part here and a part there picked up by a faint light. Its florid patterns recede into the darkness, conjuring in their stead an inexpressible aura of depth and mystery, of overtones but partly suggested. The sheen of the lacquer, set out in the night, reflects the wavering candlelight, announcing the drafts that find their way from time to time into the quiet room, luring one into a state of reverie. If the lacquer is taken away, much of the spell disappears from the dream world built by that strange light of candle and lamp, that wavering light beating the pulse of the night.[183]

As repeatedly said, Japanese aesthetics appreciate dark, gloomy, and mysterious subjects. However, only the contrast can emphasize the darkness. Hence, in order to appreciate the beauty of gold-leaf painting, it is better to stand in a room with faint

---

[183] Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *In Praise of Shadows.* Leete's Island Books, 1977. [available from: http://dcrit.sva.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/In-Praise-of-Shadows-Junichiro-Tanizaki.pdf accessed on 2016.11.1]

light rather than brilliant light. In this way, the sheen of gold-leaf painting can be highlighted. Tanizaki also mentioned that the feature of Japanese architecture is "the massive roof of tile or thatch and the heavy darkness that hangs beneath the eaves"[184]. He suggested that the origin of this type of architecture was due to the climate of Japan. Japanese then discovered beauty hidden in the shadows, hence they intended to utilize the darkness in order to evoke the beauty. In my opinion, not only the faint light, but also the simple design of Japanese rooms emphasized the beauty of gold-leaf paintings. Walls and decorations are mostly in soft colours.

Tanizaki Jun'ichirō also suggested in his book *In Praise of Shadows* that:

Sometimes a superb piece of black lacquerware, decorated perhaps with flecks of silver and gold—a box or a desk or a set of shelves—will seem to me unsettingly garish and altogether vulgar. But render pitch black the void in which they stand, and light them not with the rays of the sun or electricity but rather a single lantern or candle: suddenly those garish objects turn somber, refined, dignified. Artisans of old, when they finished their works in lacquer and decorated them in sparkling patterns, must surely have had in mind dark rooms and sought to turn to good effect what feeble light there was. Their extravagant use of gold, too, I should imagine, came of understanding how it gleams forth from out of the darkness and reflects the lamplight. [185]

Based on my study on how artists used gold and red colours in particular paintings, it can be perceived that these two colours represent a sort of synthesis between the showy opulence and the monochrome aesthetics of Japanese medieval culture. Gold was generally

---

184 Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *In Praise of Shadows.* Ibid.
185 Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *In Praise of Shadows.* Ibid.

used as the ground of a painting. Simple colours, or even monochrome paintings were painted on the gold-leaf base. Much space (but not white space) was always left in a gold-leaf decorative painting, which demonstrated the concept of *wabi-sabi*. Tan'yu was a representative artist of leaving enough "white" space in his gold-leaf screen paintings instead of filling the whole screen with natural objects. As analyzed, among the four concepts ("*Yūgen* 幽玄", "*wabi-sabi* 侘び寂び", "*shibui* 渋い" and "*iki* 粋") analyzed, gold and red are closer to *shibui,* which is a value in both simple monochrome painting, but also subtle decorative gold-leaf painting.

Both gold and red are bright and showy colours when they are analyzed by modern western colour theory. They represented power and wealth. Moreover, as bright colours, they are able to reflect more lights. During the Edo period, they were both highly appreciated colours.

In chapter 3, the colours blue (藍, *ai*) and purple (紫, *murasaki*) are particularly studied, in respect to ukiyoe. A similar structure is chosen for this chapter, starting with an introduction of historical and social background of ukiyoe, including its foundation, development, production, and so on. Several representative artists of ukiyoe style are also introduced, along with their statuses in the history of this genre of art. I follow with a study of blue and purple, including their social meanings, pigments, and how each colour was applied in particular paintings. The most common material of blue pigments was the indigo plant. Azurite, smalt, Prussian blue (ベロ藍, *bero-ai*), and ultramarine blue are other pigments that were commonly used in the Edo period. Single, pure purple pigments are very rare, especially among inorganic colourants. Red ochre (iron oxide) can produce a dark red tone shows a purple colour. Organic colourants, such as cochineal kermes or lac

dye, sometimes give a purple tone. Han purple was another purple colourant introduced from China. According to Newton's colour theory, it takes blue and red to produce a purple colour. In Japan, a mixture of vermilion and indigo seems to have been a favourite. Red ocher plus indigo can also be found on wall paintings of the eighth century. Ukiyo-e artists also occasionally mix red ochre or organic red with smalt or indigo to create varying shades of purple.

Based on my studies on how these two colours (blue and purple) were applied in particular works, I arrived at the following conclusion. These two colours directly represented the concepts of Japanese aesthetics, especially *iki* (粋). Japanese appreciated the beauty of subjects with urbane simplicity, but also significant elegance. In Japanese colour culture during the Edo era, blue and purple were both colours of elegance. Purple represented the nobility, and blue was the representative of Japanese popular culture. This quality of blue matches Japanese traditional aesthetics, such as *shibui* (渋い), which refers to an appreciation of simplicity and refinement. Blue also fits the concept of *iki* (粋), which appreciates the beauty of contradiction of simplicity and elegance.

On the other hand, according to the subtractive colour model, purple was mixed by red and blue, which can be considered as a dark hue of red. As analyzed in Chapter 3, in Japanese culture and literature, purple represented nobility, karmic connection, nostalgia, love, emotion, and mystery. It not only showed the nobility of the royal family and upper class, but also emotionally related to Japanese popular culture.

According to my studies, here comes an important conclusion. Japanese aesthetics is not a simple concept, but an aggregation of conflicting and contesting senses of values, especially under the strong Chinese influence on Japanese traditional art, as well

as a change of values within Japanese culture by different ages, tastes and classes. Japanese value not only showy and bright colours, such as red and gold, but also subtle and cold colours, such as blue and purple. This topic has a remarkable potential in the future, because the approach of using both western colour theory and Chinese traditional colour theory to explain Japanese traditional colours is rare in this field. This thesis can help not only scholars who are keen to gain knowledge of Japanese traditional art and art history, but also readers who are doing research on Japanese contemporary design and modern art.

Bibliography

Adrienne L. Zihlman. *The Human Evolution Colouring Book.* Harper Collins. 2001.

Allan Casebier, *Japanese Aesthetics.* Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics. Annual 2000, 23.1-2.

Babette Babich, *Heidegger on technology and Gelassenheit: wabi-sabi and the artof Verfallenheit.* Original Article AI & Soc DOI 10.1007/s00146-015-0605-8.

Charles A.Riley II, *Colour Codes: Modern Theories of Colour in Philosophy, Painting and Architecture, Literature, Music and Psychology*. University Press of New England, 1994.

Chiba City Museum of Art. Available from: http://www.ccma-net.jp/collection_img/collection_02-06_hokusai.html [Accessed in 2016.03.23].

Chris Grimley and Mimi Love, *Colour, Space, and Style: All the Details Interior Designers Need to Know but Can Never Find.* Rockport Publishers. 2007.

D. Ficke, *Chats on Japanese Prints.* London and New York, 1966.

D.B Waterhouse. *Harunobu and His Age, the Development of Colour Printing in Japan*. The Trustees of the British Museum, 1964.

Department of Asian Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002. Citing from online source. Available from: https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/momo/hd_momo.htm [Accessed 2015.10.15].

Doi Tsugiyoshi (translated by Zhu Chongshou), *Study of Shōhekiga in the Momoyama Period* (桃山障壁画鉴赏). Baoyun Press, 1943.

Donald Keene, Japanese Aesthetics. *Philosophy East and West*, Vol.19, No.3, Symposium on Aesthetics East and West, 1969.

Dunbar, K. R. and Heintz R. A, *Chemistry of Transition Metal Cyanide Compounds: Modern Perspectives*. Progress in Inorganic Chemistry, 1997, No.45.

Elisabeth West FitzHugh, John Witer, and Marco Leona, *Studies Using Scientific Methods, Pigments in Later Japanese Paintings*, Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers, 2003.

Elisabeth West Fitzhugh, A Pigment Census of Ukiyo-E Paintings in the Freer Gallery of Art. Ars Orientals. Vol.11. Freer Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institution and Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan, 1979.

Fang Ying (房颖), Studies of Purple Colour in Japanese female literature during the Heian Period— Based on "The Pillow Book*". Writer Magazine*, 2012 No.9.

Felice Fischer and Kyoto Kinoshita, *Ink and Gold Art of the Kano*. Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2014.

Gao Yunlong (高云龙), *Study of the Origin of Ukiyoe Art and Ming Qing Woodblock Prints.* Renming-jiaoyu Press, 2011.

Goethe [translated by Charles Lock Eastlake], *Goethe's Theory of Colours*. Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1967.

Gregory P. Levine, Zen Landscape. *Journal of Asian Stu*dies, Vol.58, No.4 1999.

Henry D.Smith II, *Hokusai and Blue Revolution in Edo Prints*, Available from: http://www.columbia.edu/~hds2/pdf/2005_Hokusai_and_the_Blue_Revolution.pdf [Accessed 2016.12.29]

Huang Hui, *Comparative Studies on Japanese and Chinese Colour Culture* (文化视野下中日色彩崇拜比较研究). Zhejiang Academic Journal, 2010.06.

Hurst G. and Hurst I, *Armed martial arts of Japan: swordsmanship and archery*. Yale University Press, 1998.

Ichirō Ishida and Delmer M. Brown, Zen Buddhism and Muromachi Art. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.22, No.4, 1963, pp. 417-432.

"Japanese Aesthetics." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Available from: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/japanese-aesthetics/ [Accessed 2016.05.10.]

J.Hiller, *Japanese Colour Prints*. Phaidon Press, 1994.

J.Hillier, *The Japanese Print: A New Approach*. Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1975.

James Gurney , *Colour and Light: A Guide for the Realist Painter.* Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2010.

James Stanlaw , *Language, Contact, and Vantages: Fifteen Hundred Years of Japanese Colour Terms.* Language Sciences 2010, Vol.30.

Jiang Jianqiang, *Purple Fluttered without Wind— Japanese ideas of colours.* Book Town, 2016.01.

John Winter, *East Asian Paintings: Materials, Structure and Deterioration Mechanisms*. Archetype Books, 2008.7.

Juniper Andrew, *Wabi Sabi: The Japanese Art of Impermanence*. Tuttle Publishing, 2003.

Kaula David, On Noh Drama. *Tulane Drama Review*, 1960.9.

Kawakita Michiaki, The World of Shibui *Japan Quarterly*, 1961.1.1.

Kazuo Yamasaki amd Yoshimichi Emoto, Pigments Used on Japanese Paintings from the Protohistoric Period through the 17th Century*, Ars Orientalis*, Vol.11, 1979.

Kimi Coaldrake, Nishiki-e and Kumi-uta: Innovations in Edo Popular Prints and Music in Suzuki Harunobu's Descending Geese of the Koto Bridges (Kotoji no rakugan). *Japanese Studies,* Vol.32, No.1, 2012.5.

Koren, Leonard, *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets and Philosophers.* Stone Bridge Press, 1994.

Lei Yang, Ding Miyun, Zheng Yun, Integration and Creativity —— Study of Japanese Yamato-e Screens (融合与创新——日本大和绘屏风美学探幽). ART EDUCATION, 2011, Vol.10.

Li Chunlei (李春蕾), *W*uai and Kongji— Utagawa Hiroshige and His Art World. *Meishu yu Shidai: Xueshu (xia)* Issue:10.

Liu Li, Art in the Japanese Gold Era. *Art Time*, 2007.

Liu Minghui, *Across the Gold Sky——Exhibition of Japanese Screens in St.Louis Art Museum* （越过金色云天——美国圣路易斯美术馆《五百年来的日本屏风珍藏》展）. Artist Foreign Scenery (艺术家 境外胜景).

Marks, Andreas. *Japanese Woodblock Prints: Artists, Publishers and Masterworks: 1680–1900.* Tuttle Publishing, 2012.

Marra, *Japanese Aesthetics: The Construction of Meaning*. Michele Philosophy East and West, Jul.1 1995.

Michael Clarke and Deborah Clarke, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms (2 ed.)*. Oxford University Press Print Publication, 2010.

Miura Sukeyuki, *Japanese Mythology and Colour.* Available from: http://miuras-tiger.la.coocan.jp/jiten-shikisai.html [accessed 2016.9.1]

Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Foreigners in Japan, Yokohama and Related Woodcuts in the Philadelphia Museum of Art*. Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1972.

Qi Huijun, Comparison of Chinese and Japanese Colour Culture——Focusing on Red and White (中日色彩文化比较——以“红”和“白”为中心). *Yuwen Weekly*, 2013.6.

Quillon Arkenstone, Late Muromachi and Furyū Nō: Two Plays by Kanze Nagatoshi. *Asian Theatre Journal*, Volume 30, Number 2, Fall 2013.

Salter Rebecca. *Japanese Woodblock Printing*. University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

Sasaki Jōhē, *Bunkazai Kōza- Japanese Art 3 - Painting (Momoyama, Edo)*. Daiichi-hōki Press, 1977.11.

Seiichiro Takahashi (translated by Ryozo Matsumoto), *The Japanese Wood-block Prints through Two Hundred and Fifty Years*. Chūō-Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1964.

Steven K. Shevell, *The Science of Colour.* Optical Society of America, 2003.

Tokyo national Museum and Kyoto National Musem, *Sesshū: Botsugo 500-nen tokubetsuten*. Mainichi Shinbunsha, 2002.

Translated by John Clark, *Reflections on Japanese Taste the Structure of Iki*. Power Publications Sydney, 1997.

Tsugiyoshi Doi (translated by Edna B. Crawford), *Momoyama Decorative Painting.* The Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art Volume 14, 1977.

Tsuneo Takeda (translated and adapted by H. Mack Horton and Catherine Kaputa), *Kanō Eitoku*. Kodansha International Ltd, 1977.

Wang Li (王莉), 『中国明清版画对日本浮世绘艺术的影响 *(“*The Influence of Chinese Ming and Qing Wood-block Painting to Japanese Ukiyoe Art*”).* 美与时代 下 (*Mei yu Shidai*, xia) 2012,7.

Wang Qing, *Analysis of Love View in the Tale of Genji—— Based on the Study of “yuan”.* Mangzhong Literature, No. 435.

Wenjiang Zhao, *Studies on the Structure of Chinese and Japanese Landscape Painting*. Beijing Rongbaozhai Press，2011.

Wu Mingyan, Comparison of Chinese and Japanese Fan Painting—— during the Ming and Qing Dynasty (中日扇面画之比较——明清时期之折扇扇面画). *Arts Life* (艺术生活)， 2011-08.

Yamane Yūzō and Kō Motoaki, *Bunkazai Kōza- Japanese Art 3 - Painting (Momoyama, Edo)*. Daiichi-hōki Press, 1977.11.

Yang Qiaocun, Studies on the Symbolism of Purple in The Tale of Genji. *Forward Position*, No.22, 2013.

Yizhou Zhang, Hu Liu (张一舟 刘虎), Study of Metal Materials in Japanese Heavy Multi-chrome Painting (金属材料　在日本重彩画中的地位研究). *Hubei Art Academic Journal* (湖北美术学院学报)，2014. 02.

Yizhou Zhang, Hu Liu,　Study of Metal Materials in Japanese Heavy Metals Painting (金属材料在日本重彩画中的地位研究). *Hubei Art Academy Periodical* (湖北美术学院学报)，2014. 02.

Yoshizawa Tadashi, *Bunkazai Kōza - Japanese Art 3 - Painting (Momoyama, Edo)*. Daiichi-hōki Press, 1977.11.

Yu Feian (Translated by Jerome Silbergeld and Amy McNair), *Chinese Painting Colours, Studies of Their Preparation and Application in Traditional and Modern Times,* Hong Kong University Press, University of Washington Press, 1988.

Zhang Yue (张 悦), 『"青" 在日本文化中体现的色彩心理感觉 —— 以其包含的色彩范畴及文化内涵为中心』 (Colour Psychology of "Ao" in Japanese Culture——including the Colour system and social meaning) . 常州大学学报 (*Changzhou University Xuebao*).

Zhao Pingjia,　Studies of Gold-leaf Fan Art in the Ming Dynasty (谈明代的金笺扇面艺术). *Zhejiang Art Academic Journal* 05，2005.9.

Zheng Juxin, Lu Yue, Ancient Tyrian Purple Dyeing History. *Scholars Inquiry*, 2011.4, Vol.216.

Zhu Zhu (朱珠), Study on the Origin of Japanese Aesthetics——Based on Japanese Garden in Ryōan-ji. *Writer Magazine,* 2012 No.8.