



The Asiatic Society of Japan

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Associate Society of the Science Council of Japan

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May 2011

May Meeting: Monday, May 16th, at 6.30 p.m.
Speaker: Prof. Matthew P. McKelway
Subject: "Ink on Gold: The Meanings of Medium in Edo-period Screens"
Place: Tokyo University Youth Buddhist Association, Hongo Bldg., 2F,
Hongo 3-33-5, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0033 (see map attached)

Matthew P. McKelway is Atsumi Associate Professor of Japanese Art in the Department of Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University, and currently Japan Foundation Research Fellow at Gakushuin University and Waseda University (2010-2011). Professor McKelway specializes in the history of Japanese painting, concentrating on Kyoto from the 16th-18th centuries. His research has focused on the relationship of urban representation and politics in late medieval Kyoto, and the development of genre painting in early modern Japan. More recently he has expanded his interest in the early Kano workshop into two current book projects: a study of Sinological visuality in the work of the 17th-century painter Kano Sansetsu, and an investigation of fan paintings as a medium for social intercourse and pictorial experimentation. His publications include articles on Japanese painting in English and Japanese as well as *Traditions Unbound: Groundbreaking Painters of Eighteenth-Century Kyoto* (Asian Art Museum, 2005), and *Capitalscapes: Folding Screens and Political Imagination in Late Medieval Kyoto* (Hawaii, 2006).

The preponderance of screen paintings, executed in ink applied directly to a gilded surface, among works by painters active in Kyoto in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries raises the question of what this technically demanding choice of medium meant to painters and their patrons. Through an examination of works by several painters, including Watanabe Shikō, Yosa Buson, and Nagasawa Rosetsu, this paper will argue for the performative value that these artists invested in their works.

The focus of the lecture will be a work by the late-eighteenth century painter Nagasawa Rosetsu, "Landscapes with Chinese Figures" (also titled "Kaihin kisho zu" in Japanese), in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This work, a masterpiece from the last years of Rosetsu's career, can be considered as a synthesis of both the ink-on-gold medium as well as of Rosetsu's own artistic enterprise. (There is an exhibition of works by Rosetsu currently showing at the Miho Museum, Shiga, until June 5th, see <<http://www.miho.or.jp/english>>.)

Coming Meeting

In September, Mr. Jason James (Director of the British Council) will speak on "Benjamin Britten and *Sumidagawa*".

Toho Gakkai Conference

The Toho Gakkai is holding its 56th International Conference of Eastern Studies on May 20th in Tokyo and May 28th in Kyoto. For more information please contact <iec@tohogakkai.com>.

Discussions on Buddhism

Mrs. Peggy Kanada is holding a series of informal meetings at her home near Iidabashi station to discuss basic Buddhism topics in English, the first being on May 16th. For further information please contact her at <pegkanada@gmail.com>.

Exhibitions

Complimentary and discount tickets to, and leaflets of, the following exhibitions were made available at the April meeting, and we would like to express our appreciation to the donors:

Complimentary tickets & leaflets:

- 1) "Takahashi Yoshihiko Goes to the Glass", at the Crafts Gallery, the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, March 1st - May 8th
- 2) "Okamoto Taro", at the Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, March 8th - May 8th
- 3) "Shirasu Masako; Prayers to Nature, Leading to Shintoism and Buddhism", at Setagaya Art Museum, March 19th - May 8th
- 4) "Paintings of Ushijima Noriyuki", at Shibuya Shoto Museum, April 3rd - May 29th
- 5) "Sharaku", at Tokyo National Museum, May 1st - June 12th

Discount tickets & Leaflets:

- 6) "French Window", at Mori Art Museum, March 26th - August 28th
- 7) "Fragrance, the aroma of masterpieces", at Tokyo University of Fine Arts Museum, April 7th - May 29th

Leaflets:

- 8) "Surréalisme", at the National Art Center, Tokyo, February 9th - May 9th
- 9) "Vigée le Brun", at Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum, March 1st - May 8th
- 10) "Vermeer - Geographer", at the Bunkamura Museum of Art, March 3rd - May 22nd
- 11) "Rembrandt: The Quest for Chiaroscuro", at the National Museum of Western Art, March 12th - June 12th
- 12) "The Body-Beautiful in Ancient Greece from the British Museum", at Kobe City Museum, March 12th - June 12th; at the National Museum of Western Art, July 5th - September 25th
- 13) "Bernard Buffet's Vision in France and Japan", at New Otani Art Museum, March 19th - May 29th
- 14) "Foujita: mon Paris, mon atelier", at Pola Museum of Art, March 19th - September 4th
- 15) "In Pursuit of a Dream: The Collection Today", at Suntory Museum of Art, March 19th - May 22nd
- 16) "Kikuchi Biennale IV", at Tomo Museum, April 2nd - June 26th
- 17) "Celadon and White Ware", at Toguri Museum of Art, April 2nd - June 26th
- 18) "Masterpieces of Japanese Ceramics", at Seikado Bunko Museum, April 9th - June 12th
- 19) "Splendid Venetian Glass", at Hakone Venetian Glass Museum, April 23rd - November 3rd
- 20) "The Beauty of Birds and Flowers in Art", at Idemitsu Museum of Art, April 23rd - June 19th
- 21) "Buddha - The Story in Manga and Art", at Tokyo National Museum, April 26th - June 26th
- 22) "Five Hundred Rakans", at Edo Tokyo Museum, April 29th - July 3rd

- 23) "Pierre-Joseph Redoute", at the Bunkamura Museum of Art, May 29th - July 3rd
- 24) "Impressionist and Post-Impressionist", at the National Art Center, Tokyo,
June 8th - September 5th
- 25) "Karel Zeman", at Shibuya Shoto Museum, June 14th - July 24th
- 26) "Tea Party à la Japonaise from the Davey Collection", at Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum,
June 14th - August 21st
- 27) "Kukai's World: The Art of Esoteric Buddhism", at Tokyo National Museum, July 20th -
September 25th
- 28) "Honen and Shinran", at Tokyo National Museum, October 25th - December 4th
- 29) "Communication: Visualizing the Human Connection in the Age of Vermeer", at the Bunkamura
Museum of Art, December 23rd - March 14th
- 30) News from EurAsia No.14, Yokohama Museum of EurAsian Cultures
- 31) "British Woodblock Prints", at Daikanyama Hillside Terrace, E Bldg. lobby, May 5th - 10th.

Owing to the earthquakes, the dates of the opening and closing of exhibitions are likely to be changed.

We have also received the following complimentary tickets and leaflets:

"Tamakusu no ki ga mita Yokoyama no 157 nen", at Yokohama Archives of History, Yokohama,
April 27th - July 24th

New Members

Mr. Armando Arriaga	Mexico	Embassy of Mexico
Prof. Dr. Pino Marras	Italy	Meiji Gakuin University
Dr. Jun Abe	Japan	Taisho University
Ms. Mami Ichikawa	Japan	Student, Meiji Gakuin University
University of Sydney	Australia	

April Meeting

We were happy to resume our activities with a goodly attendance at the April meeting held in Shibuya Kyoiku Gakuen, where we heard a lecture on an unusual subject not directly connected with Japan; our speaker, Mr. John Bray, gave a presentation, illustrated by use of PowerPoint, under the title of "Christian Missionaries and Tibet: Sacred Words and Earthly Powers".

Mr. Bray said he would look at the activities of Christian missionaries in Tibet from the 18th to the 20th centuries, concentrating on certain specific individuals; to give his lecture a clearer focus, he had selected two themes, firstly the "sacred words" of both Christian and Buddhist scriptures, and secondly the "earthly powers", the political context in which the spiritual encounters took place. After graduating from Cambridge University he had spent two years in India, the second one in Leh, Ladakh, near the Tibetan border, and the region had caught his imagination; it might seem that by living now in Japan he might be somewhat off course, but he was coming to be aware of the parallels between Japan and Tibet.

In the Bible, St. John's Gospel begins by speaking of the Word, in Greek "Logos", which straightaway points to the centrality of translation in Christian history. Jesus spoke Aramaic, but the New Testament is written in Greek, and Logos is a philosophical term adapted for theological purposes. But for hundreds of years it was not in Greek but in Latin that the Bible was available to Western Europeans. And then in the 16th century the first English translation appeared, that made by William

Tyndale, who was motivated by the desire that everybody should be able to read the Bible for himself; he was later martyred, reminding us of the uneasy relationship with earthly powers.

We tend to think of Tibet as cut off from the rest of the world by the Himalayas, but historically it has always been connected by the trade routes from India to Central Asia. Its language is part of the Tibeto-Burman group, but the script, as also the majority religion, Buddhism, comes from India, developed from the Sanskrit Devanagari, introducing us once more to the importance of translation. The written word is especially important in Tibetan Buddhism, but so also is the spoken word; the Tibetan word *Bka* means not only 'word' but also 'speech', as in the case of the spoken words of the Buddha. One of the most popular figures connected with *Bka* is Milarepa, because of his status as a repentant sinner who then led an ascetic life as a yogi. Another is the fifth Dalai Lama (1619-1682), who represents an "earthly power", being the initiator of the building of the Potala palace, which forms a striking contrast with Milarepa's cave. Tibet did not have the Western distinction between "church" and "state"; the country was a "joint spiritual and temporal realm". A painting from the Potala shows the Dalai Lama meeting the Emperor of China, of which the official Chinese view is that he is paying a kind of homage, but for Tibetans temporal rulers have a role in providing support and protection to spiritual authorities; the relationship between the two men shown here is a personal one.

Into this situation came the missionaries. As in Japan, the first were the Jesuits, a scholarly order known for their policy of engaging with the local rulers and with the indigenous modes of thought. Led by Ippolito Desideri, they arrived in Tibet in 1715, by way of the Zoji pass between Kashmir and Ladakh. (As another linguistic point of interest, Desideri had a Kashmiri guide who spoke Persian.) As soon as he got to Lhasa he embarked on a study of Tibetan, and learnt enough to be able to write five books in the language. He writes very positively of his counterparts' approach to religion, especially their practice of disciplined religious debate. But he was destined to stay there only four or five years, partly because of wars, but especially because the Vatican decided that Tibet was not Jesuit territory - it belonged to the Capuchins, a strict branch of the Franciscans. The leading figure in the Capuchin mission which now took over was Orazio della Penna, who had studied with Desideri; he again was a translator, and compiled the first Tibetan-Italian dictionary. The Capuchins did make a handful of converts, but this proved a source of conflict, and the mission was abruptly expelled in 1745.

At this point Tibet came under the control of the Manchus, who had seized power in China a century earlier, and it became a "closed land" in a way it had not been before, and there was no direct missionary contact for another century until two French priests, Huc and Gabet, visited Lhasa in 1846, hoping to set up a Lazarist mission. What in fact happened was that the Vatican assigned Tibet to the Missions Étrangères de Paris. These missionary bodies were founded in the 1650s, and they specialized in Asia, and provided the first Roman Catholic missionaries to re-enter Japan in the mid-19th century. The main emphasis of the work of their mission in Tibet was in the area known in Tibetan as "Kham", on the eastern frontier with China, much of which is now part of Sichuan and Yunnan; it made sense to move into Tibet from this direction, as there had already been a mission in Sichuan since the 18th century. A picture of their Bishop, Félix Biet, and his disciples shows them in Chinese dress. As a young missionary, Biet had started a Catholic parish in the village of Yerkalo, near the Tibetan/Yunnan border, and as Bishop he ordained the first Tibetan priest in 1892. Among the missionaries' linguistic achievements was the preparation of a three-way Tibetan/Latin/French dictionary; the inclusion of Latin was important because this was the only language common to the missionaries and their local catechists. The members of these Missions were always prepared for martyrdom, and several died during the ensuing century, the last being a Swiss missionary, Maurice Tornay, who was murdered in 1949.

Around the same time as the Missions Étrangères, the Protestants also appeared on the scene, the first being the Moravians. But they were unable to cross the Tibetan frontier, so they decided to settle in places like Ladakh to the southwest on the Indian side, and conduct Tibetan missionary work from there. The third Moravian missionary was Heinrich August Jäschke, who arrived in 1857 under instructions to study Tibetan with a view to translating the Bible, and he compiled a dictionary published in 1881, which drew on both the spoken and the written language, including the works of Milarepa. In his translation he sought to find indigenous words which would be suitable for conveying Christian concepts; thus, besides using *Bka* for the 'Word', for 'God' he took the word for 'precious gem', which was used to represent the most perfect thing in Buddhist doctrine, the three precious gems of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, hoping that the word would gradually come to be understood in its Christian sense [this strikes me as being rather like the use of the Buddhist *sanmi ittai* in Japanese to express the Christian Trinity - HW]. For Jesus' cross he had recourse to the word for an instrument of torture in which the arms are stretched out and lashed to a wooden bar.

After Jäschke came August Hermann Francke, who, as well as being a Bible translator, in 1904 started a newspaper written in the script used in printed books, which basically meant religious books; his idea was that if people got used to reading other kinds of material they might become open to reading Christian literature. A local man who worked closely with Francke was Joseph Gergan, who is noted for having written a poem in praise of Jesus in the form of an acrostic in which the letter that ends one line is the first letter in the next line; the letters occur in the Sanskrit alphabetical order [that imitated in the Japanese *gojūon* - HW].

The next Protestant missionaries came from the American Assemblies of God, the largest Pentecostal denomination, and they worked in the northeastern region known to Tibetans as Amdo (the birthplace of the present Dalai Lama), which overlaps with the contemporary Chinese province of Qinghai. The picture showed Victor Plymire in the 1930s, with a Mongol chieftain whose permission he had needed to travel in his territory. Plymire's approach had been to hand out tracts and Bible excerpts. A more recent missionary from the Christian & Missionary Alliance was Robert Ekvall, who was born of missionary parents in Kansu and grew up speaking Chinese. He saw himself as a lifelong interpreter, and once commented on the problem of reformulating Christian truths in Asian languages. In this connection he tells a story of visiting the Queen of Ngaba, a small principality in Amdo, and handing her a New Testament; when she read the first chapter of St. John's gospel and saw "*Bka*" and then "the Precious One", her comment was, "Ah, now that makes sense. "

The communist takeover of China made it impossible for missionaries to work there, and the last one left in 1956. Ladakh was caught up in the traumatic partition of India in 1947, and, while missionaries were still allowed to work there, they were fewer in numbers. The Moravian believers in Leh, Ladakh, now number in the hundreds rather than the thousands, but some of the people are sixth-generation Christians, so the tradition seems fairly secure. The Roman Catholic community in Yerkalo, now the only one left in Tibet, equally numbers in the hundreds. And the congregation established by Plymire is still active.

As an epilogue Mr. Bray introduced some bells, as he was brought up within the sound of church bells, which gave him his love of history, including religious history. The first one he showed bore the monogram of the Hosokawa family, as it was made for Gracia, the wife of a senior member of the family, who became a Christian. After Christianity was suppressed by the Tokugawas the bell was hidden for centuries. The second bell was a similar one from Tibet, left behind by the Capuchins in Lhasa, and it hung for years in the main temple there. The third was one of those Mr. Bray used to hear in his home town of Crediton in Devon, which was recently recast at the Whitechapel bell

foundry in London in memory of his parents. And the last one, also cast at Whitechapel, hangs outside the Nihon Seikokai church in Kumamoto. Mr. Bray said he offered these bells as a symbol of the connections that unite us all.

There followed the customary question and answer session.

Q: How did the missionaries find the time to write dictionaries and translate the gospels?

A: It took a very long time -- over 100 years. There was a problem of what language to use. The Moravians are people of the vernacular but, paradoxically, in Tibet, they translated into the written and not the spoken language. They did this in order that it would be acceptable and understood in all parts of Tibet, since the spoken dialects vary so widely. Joseph Gergen's great-grandson in Ladakh is currently working on a translation of the New Testament into the modern language.

Q: These days quite a lot of Westerners are Buddhists. Did any missionaries convert to Buddhism?

A: There are three answers. First, there is a Norwegian missionary who did do so in a manner of speaking and about whom there is a website which also details all the links between Tibet and Norway. Second, yes it is possible to say that some may have converted via Tibetan Buddhists in India in more recent times. Third, I would hope that there is certainly a cultural exchange that takes place and that the missionaries are themselves challenged as well as challenging others. If I had had longer to speak this evening, I would have talked more about the (Roman Catholic) Society of the Divine Word because there is a lot that is not known about them.

Q: What does it say on the Tibetan bell shown in the slide?

A: Te Deum Laudamus Domine.

Q: It has been fascinating. Thank you for your lecture. Do the Tibetans enjoy wordplay?

A: I'm pretty sure that the answer is "Yes". The written word is sacred and books are kept in high places in the home. You get a blessing just by touching a book. The spoken word is also very important. Folk stories, heroic epics mean that the spoken word also has power. Tibetan is a syllabic language and you can do interesting things with it in the way of wordplay.

Q: I ask this because the New Testament was written in Greek for Jewish people. In the genealogy of Jesus at the beginning of Matthew's gospel, there are three sets of 14 generations, and the Hebrew letters used to write "14" also spell out the name "David". This is an example of the sort of wordplay that is seen in early Christian religious texts written in Greek. Do the Tibetans enjoy wordplay in a similar manner?

A: I don't know for sure.

Q: Was the August Hermann Francke you mentioned a descendant of the 18th-century Lutheran Pietist who founded the Francke Foundation at Halle? And is that why he was influenced by Tibetan culture?

A: He would have liked to have been his descendant, and he researched his family tree, hoping to find a connection. However, although it is likely that they both belonged to the same wider family, he could find no evidence of a direct line of descent. From the Tibetan culture he learned the importance of lineage, and so he started looking at his own lineage."

The vote of thanks was given by Mr. Julian Culliford. He thanked Mr. Bray for his most informative lecture casting light upon the connections between the West and Tibet. He mentioned how the area in southwest England from which Mr. Bray originates, Devon, is a very gentle sort of place with rolling hills and country lanes; a land of cream teas. A far cry from the stark landscapes of Tibet of which we

had had a glimpse this evening. There must, however, be something in the air in that part of Devon because our illustrious former President Sir Ernest Satow had spent his final years just up the road in Ottery St. Mary. Thinking of Western connections with Tibet before this evening's lecture, Mr. Culliford said that his own ignorance was very deep. He could only picture Rudyard Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King" and "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" - neither of which took place in Tibet and both of which showed Westerners behaving in a rather negative light. It was quite refreshing to be shown this evening that some truly devoted and pious Western men had behaved in a very different manner from the negative stereotypes. Mr. Culliford concluded by saying that Mr. Bray had freed him from his ignorance of the Western connections with Tibet.

The meeting concluded with the customary mini-reception.

Library

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News Notes

¶ Our Webmaster for the past several years, Mr. Joan M. Vigo of Barcelona, originally discovered the ASJ through his interest in the *guqin*, an ancient Chinese stringed instrument. He has now completed his translation of the article "On Three Antique Lutes" by R.H. van Gulik that appeared in the *Transactions*, Series 2, Vol. XVII, 1938. For more information, please see <<http://www.citarachina.org>>. [Robert van Gulik, a Dutch diplomat and scholar, is probably better known to the more low-browed among us for his "Judge Dee" detective stories set in ancient China. - DS]

¶ A member of the ASJ Advisory Board, Dr. Peter MacMillan, gave a poetry reading in Kyoto at Jojakoji on April 2nd in the cherry blossom season. Jojakoji is the temple where Fujiwara is said to have edited the *Hyakunin Isshu*, which Dr. MacMillan translated some years ago. He read some poems from his upcoming collection of poems in English, but most of the readings focused on his new poems in Japanese. The readings were accompanied by gagaku music played by the Togi family, who have been playing this music of the court in Japan since the 6th century. According to Masami Togi it was the first time in history for poetry read in English to be accompanied by gagaku. Over 70 guests attended, including the Ambassador of Ireland, Mr. John Neary, and the chief monks of Jojakoji and Zuihoin in Daitokuji. A reception was held afterwards in the nearby home of Mrs. Masako Watanabe of Watabun, the famous obi maker in Kyoto.

Peter MacMillan is also currently writing a blog for Toyoko Inn on tourist spots in Japan. But he has changed the focus following the earthquake to "Recover Japan", a series of entries that are positive and balanced and that give encouragement to those working for the recovery of Japan. He welcomes stories or information towards that end and is happy to publicize worthwhile projects on the blog: <http://toyoko-inn.dcnblog.jp/eng_blog/>.

¶ The indefatigable Sir Hugh Cortazzi is now embarking on the compilation of an eighth volume of the *Britain and Japan Biographical Portraits* series for the Japan Society in London, to be published by the end of 2012. The aim is to collect up to 5,000 items on Japanese or British personalities who have contributed in one way or another to relations between the two countries (in principle excluding living persons). He would be grateful for any suggestions about potential subjects for biographical portraits, and the names and e-mail addresses of possible contributors. His own e-mail address is <hugh.cortazzi@btinternet.com>.

¶ Dr. Naotaka Kimizuka contributed an article about the British royal wedding on April 29th to the Yomiuri Shinbun of April 18th.

¶ Mrs. Doreen Simmons will be the speaker at a meeting of the Unitarian Fellowship on May 8th. She will speak about her own experiences of Japanese religion, and also reminisce about the early days of the Fellowship.