A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture

WILEY-BLACKWELL COMPANIONS TO ART HISTORY

These invigorating reference volumes chart the influence of key ideas, discourses, and theories on art, and the way that it is taught, thought of, and talked about throughout the English-speaking world. Each volume brings together a team of respected international scholars to debate the state of research within traditional subfields of art history as well as in more innovative, thematic configurations. Representing the best of the scholarship governing the field and pointing toward future trends and across disciplines, the *Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Art History* series provides a magisterial, state-of-the-art synthesis of art history.

1 *A Companion to Contemporary Art since 1945* edited by Amelia Jones
2 *A Companion to Medieval Art* edited by Conrad Rudolph
3 *A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture* edited by Rebecca M. Brown and Deborah S. Hutton

A Companion to
Asian Art and Architecture

Edited by

Rebecca M. Brown and
Deborah S. Hutton

WILEY-BLACKWELL
A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication

This edition first published 2011

Blackwell Publishing was acquired by John Wiley & Sons in February 2007.
Blackwell's publishing program has been merged with Wiley's global Scientific,
Technical, and Medical business to form Wiley-Blackwell.

Registered Office
John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex,
PO19 8SQ, United Kingdom

Editorial Offices
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148–5020, USA
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK
The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information
about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see
our website at www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A companion to Asian art and architecture / edited by Rebecca M. Brown
and Deborah S. Hutton.
p. cm. — (Blackwell companions to art history ; 4)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-4051-8537-0 (hardback)
1. Art, Asian. 2. Architecture—Asia. I. Brown, Rebecca M. II. Hutton, Deborah S.

N7340.C63 2011
709.5—dc22
2010051048

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

This book is published in the following electronic formats: ePDFs 9781444396324;
Wiley Online Library 9781444396355; ePub 9781444396348

Set in 10.5/13pt Galliard by Graphicraft Ltd, Hong Kong

1 2011

Contents

Illustrations

Notes on Contributors

Molly Emma Aitken is a scholar of South Asian art and architecture. Her specialty is Mughal and Rajput painting (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries). Aitken has published a number of articles on this subject and is most recently the author of *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting* (Yale University Press, 2010). Her curatorial experience includes an exhibition of South Asian jewelry, organized by the Asia Society, entitled *When Gold Blossoms: Indian Jewelry from the Susan L. Beningson Collection*. The exhibition has travelled widely. Aitken is currently Assistant Professor of Asian Art at The City College of New York.

Frederick Asher is Professor of Art History at the University of Minnesota. His research interests extend across the history of South Asian art, from issues related to contested space to the visual culture of the Indian Ocean as well as the historiography of the field. Among his books are ones on the art of eastern India and the site of Bodhgaya. He has held offices in the American Institute of Indian Studies, the College Art Association, and the National Committee for the History of Art. He is currently writing a book on the sites associated with the life of the Buddha and co-authoring a book on Indian history.

Susan S. Bean PhD is the Curator of South Asian and Korean Art at the Peabody Essex Museum, home of the Herwitz Collection of contemporary Indian art and the first American museum with a gallery dedicated to the display of modern and contemporary art from India. Most recently she curated the exhibitions *ReVisions: Indian Artists Engaging Traditions* (collaboratively with Kimberly Masteller, Harvard Art Museum); *Gateway Bombay, Epic India: M. F. Husain's Mahabharata Project*, and *Exposing the Source: The Paintings of Nalini Malani*. Her book, *Yankee India: American Commercial and Cultural Encounters with India in the Age of Sail, 1784–1860* (Mapin Publications and the Peabody Essex Museum, 2001) explores the beginnings of American interest in the art and culture of the subcontinent.

Rebecca M. Brown is a visiting associate professor in the History of Art and Political Science at Johns Hopkins University and researches colonial and post-independence South Asian visual culture and politics. Her publications include *Gandhi's Spinning Wheel and the Making of India* (Routledge, 2010), *Art for a Modern India, 1947–1980* (Duke University Press, 2009), *Asian Art* (co-edited with Deborah S. Hutton,

Blackwell, 2006), and articles in *Res*, *Interventions*, *Comparative Studies in South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, *Archives of Asian Art*, *Journal of Urban History*, *Screen*, and *Journal of Asian Studies*.

Kevin Gray Carr is an assistant professor of Japanese Art History at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He has written on relic cults, religious epistemology, and the foundations of regional identity in medieval landscape art. *Plotting the Prince: Shôtoku Cults and the Mapping of Japanese Buddhism in Early Medieval Japan*, his study of the visual culture of Shôtoku veneration, will be published by the University of Hawai'i Press in 2011.

Bonnie Cheng is Associate Professor of Art and East Asian Studies at Oberlin College. She received her PhD in Art History from the University of Chicago, and her research explores innovative technologies, cultural exchange, and the construction of identity in early medieval funerary art. She has published several articles on tomb murals, figurines, and architecture in *Archives of Asian Art*, *Ars Orientalis*, and elsewhere. Her work has been supported by grants from the Fulbright DDRA, the Committee for Scholarly Communication with China, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Council of Learned Societies.

Shanane Davis is the author of *The Bikaner School Usta Artisans and Their Heritage* (RMG Exports, 2008). She descends from generations of art collectors. Davis has a background in diverse arts and sciences, ranging from the study of gemology at the Gemmological Association of Great Britain and platinumsmith processes at the Bauer Institute in Munich to more than ten years of apprenticeships with master artisans on location in South Asia, China, and Japan. These apprenticeships taught her traditional gold- and silversmith techniques (engraving, soldering, filigree), stone-carving methods, decorative art processes, and traditional dyeing methods. She is a co-founder of the Jalore Wildlife Sanctuary and presently lives in India where she continues to study and protect endangered art and art processes.

Finbarr Barry Flood is William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Humanities at the Institute of Fine Arts and Department of Art History, New York University. His research interests include Islamic art and architecture, cross-cultural dimensions of Islamic material culture, theories and practices of image-making, technologies of representation, and art historical historiography, methodology, and theory. His articles have been published in academic journals and edited books in Europe, the US, India, and Australasia. In addition, he is the author of *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Making of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (Brill, 2001), *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu–Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton University Press, 2009), and the editor of *Piety and Politics in the Early Indian Mosque* (Oxford University Press, India, Debates in Indian History and Culture series, 2008). He is currently completing a book tentatively entitled *Beyond Representation: Islam and the Visual Economy of Alterity*, which will be published by Reaktion Books, London.

Sherry Fowler is a specialist in Japanese Buddhist art history and Associate Professor of Japanese Art History at University of Kansas. Recently she has been writing a book on the images of the Six Kannon cult in Japan. Among her publications are *Muroji: Rearranging Art and History at a Japanese Buddhist Temple* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), "Views of Japanese Temples and Shrines from Near and Far: Precinct Prints of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Artibus Asiae* 68 no. 2 (2008) and "Travels of the Daihoonji Six Kannon Sculptures" *Ars Orientalis* 36 (2006). She has a PhD in Art History from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Deborah S. Hutton is an associate professor at The College of New Jersey where she teaches courses on Asian and Islamic Art History. A specialist in early modern and modern Indo-Islamic art from the Deccan region of South Asia, her research investigates the intersection between cultural exchange, courtly identity, and visual culture. She is the author of *Art of the Court of Bijapur* (Indiana University Press, 2006), which received the American Institute of Indian Studies Edward Cameron Dimock Jr. Prize in the Indian Humanities. Deborah co-edited, with Rebecca Brown, *Asian Art: An Anthology* (Blackwell, 2006), and co-authored, with Deepali Dewan, the forthcoming book, *Deen Dayal: Vision, Modernity, and Photographic Culture in Late Nineteenth-Century India* (The Alkazi Collection and Mapin, 2011). Her work also has appeared in journals such as *Archives of Asian Art* and *History of Photography.*

Padma Kaimal is Director of Asian Studies and Associate Professor of Art History, Colgate University, Hamilton, New York. Kaimal's research questions comfortable assumptions about art from India, and the early stone carvings of the Tamil region in particular. Did kings build the best or most temples? Do sculptures tell only one story at a time? Did people in the tenth century have no concept of individualism? Was goddess worship only a rural, minor affair in the eighth century? Are museums the problem, the solution, or both to debates on cultural property? Is collecting art the opposite of scattering it? Her essays have appeared in *The Art Bulletin*, the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *Artibus Asiae*, *Archives of Asian Art*, and *Ars Orientalis.*

Ikumi Kaminishi is Associate Professor of Asian Art History at Tufts University, and teaches courses in Buddhist art, Japanese architecture, narrative art, and popular culture. She received her PhD from the University of Chicago. Her research interests include the pedagogical roles of Buddhist paintings, pictorial metaphors, and visual culture in medieval and premodern Japan. She is the author of *Explaining Pictures: Buddhist Propaganda and Etoki Storytelling in Japan* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

Kumja Paik Kim received her doctorate in Asian Art History from Stanford University in 1982. While teaching at San Jose State University, she was appointed in 1989 to the position of the first curator of Korean art at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. On June 30, 2006 she retired from the Asian Art Museum. During her tenure at the Asian Art Museum she curated eight Korean art exhibitions including *Profusion of Color: Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths*, *Hopes and Aspirations: Decorative Painting of Korea*, and *Goryeo Dynasty: Korea's Age of Enlightenment (918–1392)*. Besides her exhibition catalogues, her articles have appeared in *Artibus Asiae*, *Oriental Art*, *Orientations*, *Korean Culture*, and *Korea Journal*. Her most recent publication is *The Art of Korea: Highlights from the Collection of San Francisco's Asian Art Museum* (2006). In 2007 she served as special consultant to the new Arts of Korea Gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Kim Youngna is a Professor of Art History at Seoul National University. She received her BA from Muhlenberg College and her MA and PhD from Ohio State University in Western Art History. Author of many books and articles on twentieth-century Korean and Western art, she recently published *20th Century Korean Art* (Lawrence King, 2005, in English), *Tradition, Modernity and Identity: Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea* (Hollym, 2005, in English) and *20th Century Korean Art, A Century of Change and Challenge* (Yekyong, 2010, in Korean).

De-nin Deanna Lee is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Art and the Asian Studies Program at Bowdoin College. Her research in Chinese painting and visual

culture is animated by questions such as, "What do viewers do with art?" and "What role does art play in perpetuating ideas and attitudes, especially during times of instability and transition?" Most recently, she has been working on images of and by women during the Five Dynasties–Ten Kingdoms period. She has published articles in *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* and *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, and a monograph entitled *The Night Banquet: A Chinese Scroll through Time* (University of Washington Press, 2010).

Leedom Lefferts is Professor of Anthropology, Emeritus, Drew University and Research Associate, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution. After 27 years of undergraduate teaching and 40 years of research in Southeast Asia, Leedom Lefferts is involved full time in research and writing. Topics include cultural ecology (household social organization and access to and allocation and utilization of resources by households and villages), material culture, women's work, symbolic structures (household textiles and pottery production), and rituals and meanings in Theravada Buddhism. Lefferts' major regions of research are northeast Thailand, lowland Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam (work in the latter two regions focuses on pottery production and is done in collaboration with Louise A. Cort, Curator, Ceramics, Freer and Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian Institution). Currently, Lefferts is collaborating with Sandra Cate to a conduct multi-year research project on the long painted scrolls used in the northeast Thai-Lao Bun Phra Wet and on the festival itself.

Gregory P. A. Levine is an Associate Professor of the Art and Architecture of Japan in the Department of History of Art, University of California, Berkeley. His research focuses on Buddhist visual cultures in Asia and globally, histories of display, and historiography and methodology in the art history of Japan. Following his publications, *Daitokuji: The Visual Cultures of a Zen Monastery* (University of Washington Press, 2005) and *Awakenings: Zen Figure Paintings from Medieval Japan* (co-edited with Yukio Lippit, Japan Society, 2007), he is at work on a book-length project on Buddhist sculptural fragments.

Margo Machida, born and raised in Hawai'i, is an Americanist scholar, independent curator, and activist cultural critic specializing in Asian American art and visual culture. She currently is an Associate Professor of Art History and Asian American Studies in the Department of Art and Art History, University of Connecticut. Her most recent book is *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary* (Duke University Press, 2009). She is co-editor of the volume *Fresh Talk/Daring Gazes: Conversations on Asian American Art* (University of California Press, 2003), which received the 2005 Cultural Studies Book Award from the Association for Asian American Studies. She is co-founder of the US-based Diasporic Asian Art Network (DAAN) and an Executive Committee member of the International Network for Diasporic Asian Art Research (INDAAR).

Saloni Mathur received her PhD in Cultural Anthropology from the New School for Social Research in 1998, and is currently an Associate Professor of Art History at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is author of *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (University of California Press, 2007), editor of *The Migrant's Time: Art, Dispersal, and Difference* (Yale University Press/Clark Art Institute, 2010), and co-editor (with Kavita Singh) of *No Touching, Spitting, Praying: Modalities of the Museum in South Asia* (Routledge India, 2011). Her areas of interest include the visual cultures of modern South Asia and the South Asian diaspora, colonial studies and postcolonial criticism, the history of

anthropological ideas, museum studies in a global frame, and modern and contemporary South Asian art.

Kaja M. McGowan is an Associate Professor in the Department of the History of Art, Archaeology, and Visual Studies at Cornell University. She is the author of *Ida Bagus Made: Art of Devotion*, a volume honoring the fiftieth anniversary of the Puri Lukisan Museum in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia, soon to be redistributed by University of Hawai'i Press. Her articles include "Chasing Sita on a Global/Local Interface," in *Ramayana Revisited* ed. M. Bose (Oxford University Press, 2004), "Raw Ingredients and Deposit Boxes in Balinese Sanctuaries: A Congruence of Obsessions," in *What's the Use of Art?* ed. M. Pitelka and J. Mrázek (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), and "Love, Death, and Shifting Patronage in Bali During the 1930s: Two Spatial Models Meet 'Face to Face' on Sacred Threads of Sound," in *Asian Art in the Twenty-First Century (Clark Studies in the Visual Arts)* ed. V. Desai (Yale University Press, 2007).

Elizabeth Howard Moore is Reader in the Art and Archaeology of Southeast Asia at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London. Many of her publications have focused on landscape alteration and perceptions of place. Recent works include *Early Landscapes of Myanmar* (River Books, Bangkok, 2007), "Place and Space in Early Burma: A New Look at 'Pyu Culture'," *Journal of the Siam Society* 97 (2008): 1–27 and "Archaeology of the Shan Plateau: The Bronze to Buddhist Transition," *Contemporary Buddhism* 10 no. 10 May (2009): 83–102.

Jan Mrázek is an Associate Professor at the National University of Singapore, teaching Southeast Asian visual and performing arts. He is the author of *Phenomenology of a Puppet Theatre: Contemplations on the Art of Javanese Wayang Kulit* (KITLV Press, 2005), editor *of Puppet Theater in Contemporary Indonesia* (University of Michigan Center for South East Asian Studies, 2002), and, with Morgan Pitelka, co-editor of *What's the Use of Art? Asian Visual and Material Culture in Context* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007). His current research project concerns Java in Czech imagination.

Morgan Pitelka received his PhD from Princeton University in 2001. After holding a Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, he taught at Occidental College. He is now Associate Professor of Asian Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is the editor of *Japanese Tea Culture: Art, History, and Practice* (Routledge, 2003), author of *Handmade Culture: Raku Potters, Patrons, and Tea Practitioners in Japan* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), and co-editor with Jan Mrázek of *What's the Use of Art? Asian Visual and Material Culture in Context* (University of Hawaii Press, 2007). A specialist in the history of Japan's long sixteenth century, he is currently finishing a biography of Tokugawa Ieyasu, founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate, and researching the material culture and daily life of Ichijodani, a castle town destroyed in the civil wars of 1573.

Jennifer Purtle teaches the history of Chinese and East Asian art in the Graduate Program in the History of Art at the University of Toronto; she is also Research Associate in the Textiles and Costumes Department at the Royal Ontario Museum. Her recently published and forthcoming work includes: *Peripheral Vision: Fujian Paintings in Chinese Empires, 909–1646* (University of Hawai'i and Hong Kong University Presses, forthcoming 2011) and *Looking Modern: East Asian Visual Culture from Treaty Ports to World War II*, co-edited with Hans Thomsen, University of Zürich (Art Media Resources for the

Center for the Arts of East Asia, University of Chicago, 2009), as well as an article in *Art History* (2010) and an introduction for James Elkins, *Why Chinese Landscape Painting is Western Art History* (Hong Kong University Press, 2010). She is currently at work on a book tentatively entitled *Forms of Cosmopolitanism in the Sino-Mongol City.*

Tamara I. Sears is an Assistant Professor in the Department of the History of Art at Yale University. A specialist on South Asia, she has particular interests in the relationships between politics, religion, and sacred architecture in north and central India. Her articles have appeared in *The Art Bulletin*, *South Asian Studies*, *Archives of Asian Art*, and various edited collections. She is currently completing a book on early medieval Hindu monasteries, and she has recently begun a new project which examines the transregional movement of temple types and the circulation of architectural knowledge around the turn of the first millennium CE. Before joining the faculty at Yale, she taught at NYU and Florida State University and held a J. Paul Getty Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship in the History of Art and the Humanities.

Ashley Thompson is Lecturer in the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies, University of Leeds. She is a specialist in Cambodian cultural history, with a focus on classical and premodern arts and literatures. The Cambodian case is informed by research on the larger Southeast and South Asian context, with a view to theorizing Asian politico-cultural formations. The bulk of her published work concerns artistic and literary constructions of the Cambodian Buddhist state after the fall of the Angkorian Empire. She is currently completing a monograph entitled *Engendering History: Cambodia and the Arts of Remembrance.* Future projects include sustained discussion of issues raised in the present essay, on relations between Buddhist art and death. She holds a BA in History and Literature from Harvard, an MA in Indian Studies from the University of Paris 3, and a PhD in Women's Studies from the University of Paris 8.

Yana van Dyke is an associate conservator in the Sherman Fairchild Center for Works of Art on Paper in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. She earned her MS from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation and is actively involved in the conservation community as instructor, mentor, and author. Her publications and workshops cover diverse areas such as the practical uses of enzymes in paper conservation, the conservation of Islamic manuscripts, Indian paintings, and early Buddhist manuscripts on palm leaves.

Cheng-hua Wang is an Associate Research Fellow at the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taiwan. She has published widely on various topics related to Chinese visual culture and material culture from the late sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries. She is currently working on two book projects, respectively on the images of cities in early modern China and heritage preservation and exhibition culture in early twentieth-century China.

James L. Wescoat, Jr. is an Aga Khan Professor in the Department of Architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He holds degrees in landscape architecture and geography and has previously taught at the universities of Chicago, Colorado, and Illinois. His research concentrates on water systems in South Asia and the US, from the site to river basin scales. He led the Smithsonian Institution's project titled, "Garden, City, and Empire: The Historical Geography of Mughal Lahore," in Lahore, Pakistan, and has conducted research on Mughal landscape sites in Agra, Delhi, Gujarat, and Rajasthan.

Acknowledgments

Our primary thanks goes to our colleagues who contributed their work to the volume over the course of the last several years. Their intellectual contributions go beyond the essays printed here to include many back-and-forth dialogues and fruitful conversations. We are privileged to work with such a professional and engaged group of scholars; the volume's impetus, final shape, and contribution indeed relies on their unflagging work.

In particular, De-nin Lee spent time with us at the very outset, strategizing the approach we might take to the volume. Ive Aaslid Covaci, who completed her PhD at Yale while we worked on this volume, helped us to identify potential contributors in Japanese art. Their words of advice truly shaped our thinking as we moved forward with the volume.

We would not have entered into such a major project were it not for the unflagging support of Jayne Fargnoli at Wiley. Jayne has been with us through both Blackwell volumes and remains our biggest cheerleader; Margot Morse, Annie Jackson, and Lisa Eaton joined us for this volume and have been incredible sources of support and energy. Our thanks to them for their patience and help at every stage.

Our respective partners have made us more cups of coffee and more martinis than we can count as we hunched over our keyboards. Without Google Docs and video iChat, this book would have been something very different, or at the very least, much slower to publication and much less enjoyable to work on.

We hope that the volume itself speaks to the generosity of spirit we have experienced in meeting and working with colleagues who study Asian visual culture in a wide range of fields. We are very grateful to be working in such a supportive and active community of scholars.

A final note: to make the volume widely accessible, transliterations and romanizations of the many languages used in this book are written without diacriticals.

Part I

Introduction

1

Revisiting "Asian Art"

Rebecca M. Brown and
Deborah S. Hutton

The Impossibility of Asian Art

In 399 CE, the Chinese Buddhist monk Faxian (*c.* 337–422) left the city of Chang'an (present-day Xian), to embark on an epic, 14-year pilgrimage. His travels took him first overland through Western China and Central Asia, across the northern portion of the Indian subcontinent to the Bay of Bengal, then by sea south to Sri Lanka, and eventually back to China via the islands of Indonesia.[1] Approximately two years after returning home Faxian published an account of his travels entitled *A Record of Buddhist Countries.* This text, one of the first such Buddhist travelers' accounts and replete with careful descriptions of what Faxian saw, was influential at the time and remains important today to scholars and students of Asian studies. Art historians find in Faxian's text rich descriptions of the centrality and power of objects within Buddhist rituals in all the locations he visited. He describes an image procession he witnessed in the Central Asian oasis city of Khotan (today in China) for which monks constructed a cart "more than thirty cubits high, which looked like the great hall (of a monastery) moving along." At Khotan's royal palace, the king

> put off his crown of state, changed his dress for a fresh suit, and with bare feet, carrying in his hands flowers and incense, and with two rows of attending followers, went out at the gate to meet the image; and, with his head and face (bowed to the ground), he did homage at its feet.[2]

In a similar manner, Faxian records the importance of a seated statue of the Buddha at a monastery (*vihara*) in Sri Lanka that "the monks and commonalty reverence and look up to without ever becoming wearied."[3]

Faxian's travels to Buddhist sites in southern Asia, his translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese, and his detailed descriptions of Buddhist practices place him at a particularly important historical moment for scholars of Asian art. As himself a scholar, not of art but of Buddhist culture, Faxian, like contemporary scholars, travels to important sites, gathers information about the visual images, the architecture, the local rituals, and reports on these things to his peers through explanation, presentation, and interpretation of texts and images. Because Faxian's reach was so great, and because Buddhism shapes many of the cultures and periods of Asian art, scholars of Asian art, regardless of their specialty, will at some point encounter Faxian's text in their research or teaching. And the ubiquity of image use across geographical areas of Asia evidenced in his writings – the fact that a fifth-century traveler from Xian was able to ascribe a similar import to images from the deserts of Central Asia and the island of Sri Lanka – suggests a shared visual culture that we today might study, following in Faxian's footsteps.

Yet if, on the surface, Faxian's travels and resulting textual observations suggest a unity – a shared experience – within Asian material culture, in that same text, he dispels any such idea. After describing the beauty and "solemn dignity" of a particular Sri Lankan jade statue of the Buddha, Faxian goes on to write (referring to himself in the third person):

> Several years had now elapsed since Fa-Hsien [Faxian] left the land of Han [China]; the men with whom he had been in intercourse had all been of regions strange to him; his eyes had not rested on an old and familiar hill or river, plant or tree; his fellow-travellers, moreover, had been separated from him, some by death, and others flowing off in different directions; no face or shadow was now with him but his own, and a constant sadness was in his heart. Suddenly (one day), when by the side of this image of jade, he saw a merchant presenting as his offering a fan of white silk; and the tears of sorrow involuntarily filled his eyes and fell down.[4]

The places and people that Faxian encountered during his many years of travel were foreign to him, strange, and it was the sight of an object (the silk fan) so unmistakably Chinese that finally brought the homesick traveler to tears. If Buddhism links aspects of Asian culture together, then, bringing "Asia" together through Buddhism simultaneously reveals and produces crucial differences across the region. Thus, while all students of Buddhist art – whether third-century BCE north India, eleventh-century Japan, or fourteenth-century Myanmar – have to know the shared tenets of Buddhism (and even have to know Faxian's text itself), they also must acknowledge the diversity of culture which Faxian experiences on his travels. And if that diversity is evident even against a backdrop of the so-called "internationalism" of Buddhist art,[5] then it is perhaps more emphatically so for the many other types of art – religious and secular – produced over millennia in the large and varied geographical zone classified as "Asia."

Indeed, the geographical and temporal scope of Asian art far outstrips that found in other traditional segments of art history, most of which have boundaries

spanning a handful of countries and a handful of centuries at most. Asian art, by contrast, covers 30 percent of the Earth's landmass and 60 percent of the world's population, and investigates the history of this vast region over the course of the past five millennia. Like African art or the art of the Americas, Asian art is an unwieldy, sprawling object.

The very idea of "Asia" as a unified land or singular culture arises not from any physical or material reality, but rather from political, cultural, and economic relations of power, in order to sustain an idea of a unified Europe.[6] As Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen explain, "of all the so-called continents, Asia is not only the largest but also the most fantastically diversified, a vast region whose only commonalities – whether human or physical – are so general as to be trivial."[7] Even when the definition is narrowed from the "continent" of Asia (the Mediterranean to the Pacific) to the Asia of popular imagination and practice (South, Southeast, and East Asia) this "vast and heterogeneous swath of terrain from Afghanistan to Japan . . . still lacks the unifying features that are expected to characterize a human-geographical region."[8] The scholars conclude that Asia is "little more than a flattering mirror to Europe, conceptualized more by its supposed lack of Europeanness than by any positive attributes of its own."[9] In their study of world geography, they go on to show how Asia and the correlate concepts of "the Orient" and "the East" shift over time, but always remain defined in relation to Europe, "the Occident," and "the West."[10]

The boundaries of Asia and Asian art have shifted over the past century, always in negotiation with prevailing power relations, and often with strong undercurrents of the Orientalist production of Asia just beneath the surface. During the early twentieth century, "Asian art" referred almost exclusively to pre-modern works from India, China, and Japan, but within that framework included a wide variety of media, from swords to textiles. These artworks were valued for their aesthetic beauty, expert craftsmanship, reverence for tradition, and spirituality – qualities seen as lost or lacking in contemporary industrialized Euro-America. Art historian Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908) extolled the beauty of Japanese art, while his colleague Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877–1947) highlighted the sophisticated spirituality of Indian art, even explicitly comparing it to medieval European art to demonstrate its legitimacy.[11] These combined efforts legitimized Asian art: artworks that decades earlier had been ignored, unknown, or, in the case of Hindu imagery, debased as "monstrous," within Europe and North America, now were seen as fine art worthy of study.[12]

In Asia, colonialism and rising nationalism in both India and Japan brought the art historian Okakura Tenshin (or Kakuzo, 1862–1913), and the artist-poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) together in Calcutta in 1902 to counter the primacy of the West with the idea of pan-Asianism.[13] While Tenshin was motivated by the nationalism of late Meiji period Japan, and Tagore by Bengal's *swadeshi* movement (an anti-colonial campaign to favor Indian-made goods), both men saw Asia's spirituality as a strength in contrast to the West's materialism.[14] Yet, this loose attempt to unify Asian art and politics ultimately participated in the

Orientalist production of "Asia," defining Asian art by what European art lacked, thus confirming Asia's difference from Europe and enabling it to serve merely as a reminder of Europe's superiority.

As a result of the early focus on the spiritual and the ancient in Asian art, temporal and geographic areas of study have long depended on what enabled a proper mirror for Europe or what supported a constructed vision of Asia. Some areas of study, like Chinese painting, fit nicely into a Hegelian understanding of progress and history, or easily fell into formalist analysis in parallel with European painting and connoisseurship studies. Others, like the sculptural program of the Hindu temple, compared nicely with Gothic cathedrals, and could fit into Coomaraswamy's rhetoric linking medieval spirituality across geographical and temporal boundaries. Buddhism, seen within textual studies as a legitimate, philosophical religious tradition with an easily identifiable singular figurehead, also drew the attentions of art historians and collectors, aided perhaps by the Gandharan region's aesthetic affinities with ancient Greek and Roman sculptural traditions.

After World War II, the collection and study of Asian art intensified, particularly in North America, but also within Europe and parts of Asia as well. "Asian art" gathered more objects, sites, and information under its broad umbrella, but at least initially the discipline remained fairly conservative, focusing on the ancient and the spiritual, and arguing for the legitimacy of the discipline by asserting that Asian art indeed had a history. Exemplifying this conservatism is Sherman E. Lee's (1918–2008) *A History of Far Eastern Art*, one of the major textbooks used in survey courses of Asian art history from the time of its original publication in 1964 through the release of its fifth edition in 1994.[15] The book's title pulls in several directions. First, it asserts that Asia has a history, a claim that mid-century art historians would wish to make against those who located history and development solely within Europe. Second, the title doubly distances the material in this book from that of the West: not just Eastern art, but Far Eastern, a term that echoes the romantic visions of the exotic East. In doing so, the title itself can be understood to reinforce the Orientalist underpinnings of Asian art, even as it argues for the existence of history outside of Europe. Finally, the book's presumptive comprehensiveness reinforces the unity of Asia and the possibility that it could be encapsulated in one text. (The current volume's title also falls into many of these problems. We discuss this directly below.)

The comprehensiveness and unity presumed in Lee's title could not, of course, be delivered in the book. Its lacunae provide a cross-section of Asian art's own gaps in the middle of the twentieth century, and demonstrate what needed to be left out in order for a coherent, singular narrative to emerge. Excluded from the book are any modern or contemporary works, any Korean art except gold-work and ceramics, and most Islamic, Jewish, and Christian art from the continent, despite long traditions of art production from these religious communities in Asia. Aside from a single example of Islamic art, the Southeast Asian material focuses almost entirely on medieval Buddhist and Hindu works.[16] Lee

includes five pages on Mughal painting, but no examples of Mughal architecture (not even the Taj Mahal). These exclusions present Asian art as a unified field, with a focus on traditional, carefully crafted, spiritually endowed objects (privileging "Eastern religions" such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, and Daoism), utterly distinct from Euro-American artistic traditions. These lacunae also enable a singular narrative as Asian art develops consistently from Stone and Bronze Age cultures of the region, through the spread and "international influence" of Buddhist art, to the rise of national styles in India, Indonesia, China, and Japan, each one peaking at various points in time (but all pre-1850) before finally slipping into "ossification."[17] The point is not that Lee's work deserves to be singled out for criticism – to the contrary, the longevity of the book's printing serves as a testament to the text's success as an important document for the study of Asian art – but rather that it exemplifies the Orientalist underpinnings of Asian art history into the late twentieth century.

While Lee's text itself might be said to represent an ossification of Asian art history, its publication coincided with new directions of study within the field, often in concert with the political exigencies of the post-war period. The 1950s and 1960s saw a growing popular and scholarly interest in more esoteric elements of "Eastern religions" such as Zen, Tantra, and goddess worship both within Asia and in the northern Atlantic,[18] continuing the trend of emphasizing the spiritual in Asian art but expanding the types of art investigated under that rubric. Funding for the study of Asian art came from multiple sources, whether collectors, diaspora communities, or governments seeking to understand a region of the world where they might have political or economic interests. As a result, wars, while certainly destroying much cultural heritage, have often spurred interest in regions of Asia: the Japanese occupation of Korea produced a number of archaeological and art historical experts in both Korea and Japan; the US occupation of Japan supported the early inquiries of Japanese and American art historians and collectors; more recent US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have given rise to government funding and a greater interest in the art and antiquities of these regions in university departments and among scholars of all disciplines.[19] The political impetus for the study of some areas of Asian art over others continues to shape the field, just as colonial concerns and anti-colonial activism earlier articulated the central questions and objects for Asian art.

In the past few decades, with so-called globalization and rising attention to multiculturalism, as well as the flourishing of contemporary art from Asia at auction houses and galleries, the definition of Asian art has vastly expanded to include the modern and contemporary periods and to encompass regions or types of art often overlooked in older approaches to the continent. Starting in the late 1980s, major scholarly publications began to address the art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Asia, moving away from earlier critiques that labeled this work as merely derivative and engaging instead in analyses that acknowledge the effects of the global colonial economic and cultural system during this period.[20] With several major exhibitions of contemporary Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian

art circulating in the 1990s and 2000s, the popularity of contemporary Asian art as well as the art of the Asian diaspora has spurred scholars to study the most recent centuries of Asian visual culture (see Machida and Mathur in this volume).[21] Gradually scholars are filling in the temporal gaps, but the wealth of material on earlier periods still dwarfs that on these more recent eras.

Despite this expansion, Southeast Asia, Korea, the Himalayan regions, Mongolia and Manchuria, Central Asia and the Afghan cultural region still receive less scholarly attention than the canonical regions of India, China, and Japan. Even within these "primary" countries, internal peripheries remain marginal: tribal and rural art forms, art produced by women, the visual culture of regional minorities, and those cultures for which materiality is less important. Segments of southern India, for example, remain largely excluded from the canonical narrative that is centered on the northern regions of the subcontinent. Tibet and Nepal remain caught between India and China; Myanmar, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia remain secondary, with their art often seen as derivative of China or India. Gradually these regions have gained more scholarly attention, and as they do, they reshape the fabric of Asian art in productive ways.

With the rise of interdisciplinary conversations within academia, historians of Asian art have adopted a broad range of methodologies, borrowing from the fields of anthropology, geography, literature, cultural studies, gender studies, and postcolonial studies, to explore an ever-increasing range of visual culture, whether south Indian textiles in Thailand, mosques in western China, Portuguese baroque churches in the Indian state of Goa, nineteenth-century photographs from Japan, or contemporary installation art by Vietnamese American artists. This methodological expansion drives the study of many geographical areas not traditionally included in Asian art's canon, but even more crucially promises to shift the underpinnings of Asian art in fundamental ways.

The growing scope of Asian art is invigorating for the field, producing rich scholarship, and giving voice to underrepresented cultures. It also aids us in negotiating Asian art's Orientalist foundations. Each new addition to the field undermines its unity. It is now abundantly clear that no central, coherent narrative can incorporate all of Asian art, nor can we maintain a crisp distinction between the mutually dependent and asymmetrically constructed categories of Asian art and Western art. We also recognize the ways in which new methodological approaches and new additions to the objects discussed within the rubric of Asian art necessitate fundamental changes in the way Asian art is pursued. We cannot merely add objects into the mix as if that would make it whole; we must accept the challenge to rethink the foundations of the discipline rather than presume we can just keep adding on.

Yet, if we recognize that Asian art developed as a particular construction within the history of art, that the immense regional scope rests upon long histories of othering, producing a region unified only in that it helps to shore up a similarly constructed, united "West," why, then, persist with Asian art? Why not replace

Asian art with multiple geographically based categories?[22] Or, why not break down Asian art even further into categories based on shared geography, time, and language, such as medieval north Indian art, Khmer art, or post-1945 Japanese art, which would be more equivalent to their European and North American counterparts and more in tune with how we as specialists are trained? Why, more to the immediate point, produce an edited volume such as this one that puts forth all of Asian art as a unified category alongside volumes on medieval art or contemporary art?

As the editors of this volume, grappling with these questions was more than just a rhetorical exercise. How could a volume entitled *A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture* not simply reify unities and reassert the Orientalist presumptions on which the very category "Asian art" cannot help but rest? In her introduction to *Asian Art History in the Twenty-First Century*, Vishakha Desai acknowledges that the decision to keep Asian art a unified category has to do in part with convenience and with political visibility rather than any coherence.

> [P]erhaps this was at least a convenient way to give weight to artistic expressions of 50 percent of the human inhabitants of our world that otherwise did not get enough attention. In other words, it was not an argument based on a philosophical justification but rather a marriage of convenience . . . There are enough common issues of traditional vs. modern, spiritual vs. political, collective vs. individual, authentic vs. hybrid, and other binaries for much of Asian art that it is worth while to see if we can come up with a better understanding of these issues together.[23]

By keeping Asian art as a single category, we work from an extant, recognized position within the art historical scholarly community; we seek to strengthen that position and draw it in from the margins, where Asian art's place in art history departments and many museums, particularly in the northern Atlantic, still hovers.[24] But we must recognize that this "marriage of convenience" reifies the difference between a unified West and a unified East. The common issues Desai lists above are issues for all of art history and could just as easily apply to African art, European art, or Australian art – they do not make Asia separate or distinct. The persistence of Asian art as a category relies instead on long-standing presumptions about cultural difference, presumptions that have started to collapse under the weight of persuasive critique from theorists, historians, and art historians. Despite this, Asia remains linked together in our disciplinary landscape, and the existence of this volume and Desai's volume is certainly evidence of the immense weight of the Orientalist legacy for art history training, hiring, and publication in academe and the museum world.

Desai's delineation of the relatively weak reasons why we maintain this category reveals the uneasy core that defines the discipline. Whether in the introductory survey course or in the permanent galleries, Asian art refuses any master narrative or unifying essence. It is messy and vast and varied and impossible – and has to be, for to create a unified idea of Asian art is to reify the Orientalist underpinnings

of the very category "Asia." Asian art, then, might be understood as a metonym for all of the history of art, and as an artificial space within which new questions and approaches to the discipline can be sought and explored. This volume cannot, could not, and perhaps should not encompass the landmass, population, diversity, and temporal scope of this nebulous object "Asian art," despite the title and despite its position within the Companion series. But there are possibilities in this awkward, uncomfortable space between the covers of this book, perhaps even lessons to be learned for the discipline itself. For within the messiness lie possibilities – possibilities that pertain not just to Asian art, but to the discipline of art history as a whole.

The Many Possibilities of Asian Art

As suggested above, despite our constant struggle against the hegemony of the categorization that "Asia" represents, this vast, unwieldy, and somewhat arbitrary grouping of cultures and periods has produced a great deal of innovative and inspiring scholarly inquiry. Scholars of Asian art often rely on colleagues and methods from other disciplines to understand the visual culture of the regions and periods found under this broad rubric. We therefore often look to anthropology, history, linguistic studies, geography, archaeology, cultural studies, literature, religious studies, and many other disciplines to understand the visual and material cultures we study. Reflecting this aspect of the field, the scholars in this volume come from geography, conservation studies, anthropology, history, and archaeology, in addition to art history. They work in university and museum settings in South, Southeast, and East Asia and in the northern Atlantic, and present a wide range of experience in the field, some enjoying retirement, others just starting their careers. As a result, the volume presents a cross-section of the state of the field today, in all its diversity and multifarious methodologies. These essays demonstrate that precisely because Asian art remains a peripheral part of the discipline of art history, and precisely because Asian art history presumes to encompass such a vast geographical and temporal scope, those concerned to understand the visual culture of these regions have turned to innovative methods that have a great deal to offer to our colleagues in other regional and temporal specialisms.

Some of the issues addressed in the volume present new ways of looking at old questions. Several essays include discussions of art patronage, for example, a long-standing topic for art historical study. However, each time these well-established questions arise, they take on new twists. When a patron is, in Susan Bean's essay, the organizer of a British colonial international exhibition, or a local neighborhood commissioning an ephemeral goddess image, how might that change the demands on a Bengali clay sculptor? When, as in De-nin Lee's chapter, the patron images himself looking at images of himself, with his calligraphy included on the painting, how do we read the relation of patron, viewer, artist, and object?

Many scholars included here ask after the portability, ephemerality, invisibility, and malleability of the object as it passes from hand to hand, even perhaps, as Morgan Pitelka argues, fundamentally shaping the course of history as a human actor might. Lee's analysis of Chinese painting also addresses the movement of objects among patrons, reading inscriptional evidence on Chinese paintings to reveal to us the malleability of these works. Alternatively, as we find in Gregory Levine's piece, objects become dismembered and distributed around the globe, with Buddhist heads traveling to Paris under questionable circumstances to partake in an aesthetic revaluing of Asian art among collectors and in museum displays. In the case of the Parisian Buddhist heads, aesthetics leads the way, but in some contexts, archaeological evidence overwhelms other ways of understanding the ancient world, as Bonnie Cheng discusses in relation to the material culture of ancient Chinese graves. Sometimes the objects remain in place and the entirety of the architectural and ritual framing around them changes, causing new problems for art historical inquiry, as Sherry Fowler relates in her discussion of Buddhist bronzes in Japan. Resituating the art object, therefore, takes many forms and many meanings across the volume.

Graves are important repositories of material culture, but often the very questions surrounding death and the body do not easily rise to the surface. As Ashley Thompson argues, for Buddhism, "death" itself becomes a problematic category, complicated by extinguishment, nirvana, the ritual distribution of the ashes of the historical Buddha, and his subsequent representation in sculptural form. Death and the decaying corpse, precisely because they are not pleasant to look at, serve as loci for meditative and performative practices within some Japanese Buddhist contexts as well. Ikumi Kaminishi argues that as these images depict the female corpse, sexuality and gender become important rubrics through which to understand these paintings, themes found also in several of the essays in the volume.

Jennifer Purtle, for example, discusses the art of Guan Daosheng, asking after the ways in which women viewed one another's art and situating her discussion in the powerful relationships among women in China during the Yuan dynasty. Gender also centers Kaja McGowan's investigation of the problematic intersection of art history and textual study. She rereads a Javanese text describing royal journeys and argues that a feminist reading of the text, Javanese geographies, Tantric symbolisms, and related relief sculpture opens the door to a deeper and more accurate understanding of Javanese art and its royal ritual culture. At times, gender and sexuality emerge as secondary elements in the discussion, supporting larger questions related to intercultural subjectivities. Asian American artists often engage with gender, feminism, and sexuality, and Margo Machida's essay carefully situates these artists and their work within the larger history of Asian American culture, demonstrating the complex transnational flows within which these artists work. The British Indian Singh Twins anchor Saloni Mathur's essay, where gender and the idea of the twin map onto dualities of identity and cultural history embedded in the Twins' work.

Those more familiar with European or American art histories will find a great deal of anthropologically informed art history in this volume, the result of collaborations across the porous boundaries of material culture studies, ritual and performance studies, and art history. Some chapters, like Leedom Lefferts' discussion of two different types of ritual textiles in Thailand, explore the ways these objects bind communities together and mark life transitions. Others, like Jan Mrázek's discussion of the ineffable qualities of ritual Javanese knives, explore elements of objects not often discussed by art historians, despite the fact that we often work with things imbued with magical and spiritual powers. Rituals usually require spaces, and, in that vein, Elizabeth Moore asks after the multifarious use of space in the Shwedagon pagoda in Myanmar, elucidating its overlapping religious, cultural, and political uses. Kim Youngna's analysis of Seoul's urban fabric includes discussions of the use of that space, exploring the rituals grounding modern life in Korea, examining heroic historical sculptures, café culture, television, and the role of women in the city. And in order to understand historical retellings of Prince Shotoku's life through performances and images, Kevin Carr combines the observation of contemporary Japanese performances with careful historical and art historical analysis, drawing on techniques often associated with anthropology.

Ritual also informs Tamara Sears' discussion of the way monastic spaces in central northern India help us to understand the practices and hierarchies of historical periods, now difficult to reconstruct in the face of years of focusing on more prominent temple structures. Her work elucidates an area of South Asian art history often overlooked, something that Finbarr Barry Flood also does, uncovering our scholarly blind-spot in relation to Indo-Islamic culture and the borderlands of northwestern India, Pakistan, and present-day Afghanistan. Many of the scholars in the volume reassess our canonical approach to major works, whether Mughal gardens (James Wescoat), Ashokan material culture (Frederick Asher), Korean courtly painting (Kumja Paik Kim), or the traditional interpretation of Shiva Nataraja (Padma Kaimal). Still others ask where our knowledge and canon come from, with Cheng-hua Wang investigating the modern construction of Song dynasty painting as the pinnacle of Chinese art and Molly Aitken, Shanane Davis, and Yana van Dyke elucidating the painstaking process of connoisseurship in its contemporary form.

Perhaps because Asian art remains on the periphery of art history as a discipline, scholars working within this field often step past issues that elsewhere have represented major hurdles for the discipline. For example, several essays in the volume work on material that would easily fall into a "folk" or "ethnographic" category, whether Susan Bean's clay sculptures, Jan Mrázek's ritual knives, or Leedom Lefferts' undecorated monastic textiles. Kumja Paik Kim addresses this type of division head on, revealing a fundamental bias that labeled colorful Korean painting "folk" despite many works' production within a courtly context. Issues of artistic hierarchy matter little when studying some regions and periods of Asian art history, particularly those in which the canon remains less concrete than in the northern Atlantic.

On the other hand, some aspects of the art object rise to the surface in Asian art that might otherwise go unnoticed in a European context. Acknowledging the continued ritual and spiritual power of many of the objects we study has started to change the discussion within Asian art scholarship, with the animation of the object and its ability to shape history and the lives around it taken seriously by several authors in the volume, including Ashley Thompson, Jan Mrázek, and Morgan Pitelka. Weaving together multiple ways of understanding these objects also proves challenging in this context. De-nin Lee's essay raises questions about how we might incorporate contemporaneous Chinese commentaries on paintings and painters, sometimes literally written on the painting itself, with a disciplinary understanding of the work of art as complete and whole rather than continually negotiated and reworked by many hands. How to speak to the discipline while honoring histories of engagement with the art that have little to do with the ways of viewing in the Euro-American context?[25] Part of the answer lies in challenging the discipline itself, and in seeking colleagues in other regional specialisms whose work engages similar questions. Demystifying and de-exoticizing Asian art history remain a challenge if we are to speak across geographical and methodological divides to incorporate the study of Asian art into the discipline, and the discipline into Asian art.

Indeed, these directions for the study of visual culture and art that arise within specific Asian art contexts do present real and potent possibilities for the discipline, opportunities to dialogue across regional and temporal boundaries, both within this huge category called Asia and across the globe. This volume presents some of those possibilities, but it does not seek to erase the awkward position, the discomfort embedded at the core of Asian art. The material in this constructed continent sometimes maps nicely onto parallel periods and types of art in Europe: for example, the long history of painters and criticism in Chinese painting. But we also study woven, undecorated textiles and sculptures meant to exist for a brief festival, only to be ritually immersed in the river at the festival's conclusion. Some of this work parallels colleagues' work in the Pacific or sub-Saharan Africa. Other work directly engages with the histories of the Mediterranean region, going back to trade between Mesopotamia and the Indus, the long history of cultural exchange across Central Asia, and long-standing sea travel throughout the Indian Ocean. We are anthropology and connoisseurship, chatting with one another. On one level, we are comfortable with our discomfort, open to anything, as the diversity of scholarship in this volume demonstrates. But Asian art isn't static, easy to encompass, or comfortable. It is, perhaps, an unruly companion.

Asian Art as a Traveling Companion

Like Faxian setting off on his travels, we didn't know what we would find when we invited colleagues to contribute to this volume. Faxian had some ideas about the Buddhists and Buddhisms he might find in Central and South Asia, but as

he traveled through the region, he remarked on many things ostensibly new to him and his audience: how the local kings and their subjects worshipped, what they built and sculpted, the way they understood the texts they ostensibly shared, and how they lived despite the shared experience of Buddhism in some form. Likewise, when sending out invitations to a range of colleagues, across regional and temporal specialisms, and in different institutional contexts around the world, we didn't know what we would receive in return. We had some ideas, we even proposed some themes at the outset, but we certainly didn't anticipate everything.

Now that we have returned home, so to speak, we recognize the white silk fan and the comfort it suggests, but we also recognize, as Faxian must have, the way in which our understanding of the field we participate in, and help to shape, has changed. Likewise, we offer these essays as an intervention and engagement with the field, not as a static reflection, and not as a "state of the field." As the title of the series suggests, it is a companion to Asian art, a traveling companion perhaps, but not always a calm, quiet, easy-going companion: less a faithful dog seated at your feet, ready to fetch the paper, and more a risk-taking friend, one whom you thought you knew quite well before setting out but who, in the end, turned out to be a little more radical than you thought, pushing you into situations and places you weren't quite prepared for when starting out the journey. Sometimes this companion proves quite charming, but at other times it produces a level of discomfort not uncommon on long treks across new terrain, even terrain that you may have covered before. This companion presents challenges both for scholars of Asian art and for those outside that wide field.

To navigate this terrain, and perhaps to offer a sort of guidebook, we have organized the volume into six thematic categories: "Objects in Use," "Space," "Artists," "Challenging the Canon," "Shifting Meanings," and "Elusive, Mobile Objects." Most of the essays would fit into several of these themes, and still other themes emerge as one reads, much as a traveler will return to similar experiences in utterly different times and places. We offer the set of themes, then, as just one option for approaching these chapters. The themes, in turn, fall into two broad sections. The first three – "Objects in Use," "Space," and "Artists" – operate on the surface as building blocks for the history of art anywhere: sculptures and paintings, architecture, and the people who created them. But as one reads the essays in these three sections, these ostensibly canonical and staid categories take on new life, encounter new challenges, and in the end emerge in different form. They are building blocks, perhaps, but they do not constitute a solid foundation. A better metaphor might be the flexible, malleable frame of a raft: a mobile, traveling, unstable support, one that can go anywhere, be repaired and reworked, and potentially transform the way we see the world around us.

The book begins (and ends) with the object, something that in many methodological approaches grounds the study of art history, but the book insists on an important caveat: that objects are never static, or singular, or whole, but are themselves active elements producing shifting histories. We begin with "Objects in Use," in part to challenge the presumption that art is often without function.

The four essays in that section not only address the ways objects are used but also incorporate that use into their analysis, reshaping the way we think about the object, about context, about performance, and about the production of the object. Sometimes objects aren't used at all, and indeed that is what they are made for. From the object as the starting point, we move outward to "Space": spaces for the utilization of objects, spaces that produce specific behaviors, spaces that change the way we see the art around us, spaces that constantly and unabashedly change. These are not analyses of spaces as housing for rituals or frames for art: space here takes on a dynamic, living quality, both lived in and itself animated, often across major temporal boundaries. The third theme in this first half, "Artists," again asserts a canonical category, but one not often associated with Asian art: in some regions and periods, artists' names are lost, or more often the very idea of "artist" or "architect" does not fit and only misleads our study of the material culture in question. But in some periods and regions, artists do exist, often quite assertively, and this section explores different types of artists' interventions, the ways in which we as art historians seek out and identify artists, and how gender shapes artists' and viewers' practices.

The second grouping of themes – "Challenging the Canon," "Shifting Meanings," and "Elusive, Mobile Objects" – takes us from the raft's structural elements to some larger interpretive frameworks. Arising from our experience putting together *Asian Art* (Blackwell Anthologies in Art History, 2006), we wanted a section in this volume that enabled scholars to take on canonical assumptions about the field, to address elements of our understanding of Asian art that had calcified and perhaps become common knowledge without receiving the kind of interrogation they required. In the end, just about every essay in the volume fit into this category. The four chapters in Part V highlighted here address this issue head on, and do so in very different ways, whether taking on a particular period or type of art and deconstructing long-held views about it, challenging us to examine the objects and cultures that fall between our broad temporal, cultural, and geographical categorizations, or questioning philosophical presumptions that undergird our interpretations of the art we study. "Shifting Meanings" acknowledges that art always changes, as patrons change, as new politics emerge, as misunderstandings of earlier cultures percolate, and as masculinist, Eurocentric discourses blind us to other ways of seeing. In this section, the five authors show us how the meanings of the material culture we study alter over time and what the effects of those shifts can be. The final theme of the book returns us to the object, but highlights the ways in which the object slips out of our grasp, eluding our ability to fix it in time and place. From disembodied heads (and decapitated bodies) that travel around the world to the questionable existence of one of a set of Buddhist sculptures and on to the mobile, tactile, participatory experience of both Chinese handscrolls and ephemeral clay sculptures, this section destabilizes the object in productive and innovative ways.

As one travels on this raft, these themes highlight particular islands that one encounters in the archipelago of Asian art history. There are other islands. There

are large, varied and seemingly unending landmasses, rivers, and the tallest mountains in the world. We offer this itinerary as one among many, one that we find raises particularly salient issues for the directions Asian art is taking. Our "guidebook" includes the must-see sights and those off the beaten path. It is not an encyclopedic travel guide, not a gazetteer of each and every place and time along the way. Rather, it is an invitation to explore the scholarship that pushes at the boundaries of the field, whether that field is "Asian art history" or "art history." As such, this volume does not purport to provide a neatly packaged, book-shaped answer to the question "What is Asian art history?" – for to presume to do so would be to fall into the Orientalist, Eurocentric construction of Asia as a unified, whole category in opposition to (and yet mirroring) Europe. Instead we have provided a companion, one that will not sit still and quietly maintain good manners, one that, to the contrary, will purposely rock the boat and challenge us to pursue new directions.

Faxian traveled regions that we now lump together as Asia. He wrote about what he discovered, translated the texts he brought back, suffered aches and pains, felt homesick, returned transformed, and, in turn, transformed the world's understanding of religion, Buddhism, travel, geography, ritual, art, and many other things. His traveling companions died, left him, joined him, pursued other paths, kept him company, and no doubt challenged him from time to time. We see this volume as an on-going part of Faxian's journey, a continuation but also a beginning, a shift in the conversation among Asianists and art historians. On this journey we can see some connections across our vast area of study but we also acknowledge the problematic heritage on which it travels, the shaky raft of wood and bamboo and electrical wire and bicycle parts, sometimes with a speedboat engine propelling us along, unflinchingly denying purity and authenticity while engaging in a project that seeks out emic understandings of the art we study.

Notes

1 For further discussion of Faxian and a map of his travels, see Sen, "The Travel Records of Chinese Pilgrims," 24–33.
2 Fa-Hsien [Faxian], *Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, ch. 3.
3 Ibid., ch. 38.
4 Ibid., ch. 38.
5 See, for example, Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*. Part Two of the book is titled "The International Influence of Buddhist Art."
6 See Said, *Orientalism*.
7 Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents*, 37.
8 Ibid., 41. Academic departments and scholarly organizations (like the Association of Asian Studies) generally separate so-called "West Asia" from South, Southeast, and East Asia. These lines, reinforced by a broad and problematic division in the discipline between Islamic art and Asian art, raise further issues with the continental

framework we interrogate here. Finbarr Barry Flood's work in this volume and elsewhere (Flood, *Objects of Translation*) has pointedly investigated the interstices of these broad categories; some curatorial departments integrate or physically connect the Islamic and South Asian areas (e.g. Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Royal Ontario Museum).

9 Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents*, 41.

10 Ibid.

11 We echo Vishakha Desai's argument – see Desai, *Asian Art History in the Twenty-First Century*, vii. See also Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, and Coomaraswamy, *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*.

12 For the history of European reactions to Indian imagery, see Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*.

13 Coomaraswamy, Fenollosa, and Tenshin all became curators at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Tagore and Tenshin met again in 1913 in Boston.

14 For more information on the two men, their ideas and friendship, see Bharucha, *Another Asia*.

15 Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*, first edition in 1964, revised in 1973, fourth edition in 1982; fifth edition in 1994. We could not confirm the date nor the existence of a third edition. Many art historians have turned away from Lee and now divide the Asia survey into two segments, East Asia and South Asia. Others combine several regionally focused textbooks, use anthologies, or draw together readings independently. The other single textbook often assigned is John LaPlante, *Asian Art*.

16 He includes just a single example of Islamic art (a relief sculpture from a mosque) – and only then because it replicated the older, "Hindu" *wayang* style of Indonesia. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art* (5th edn.), 284.

17 This narrative can be glimpsed in the general layout of the book, which is divided into four parts: Part One: "Early Culture and Art: The Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Early Iron Age," Part Two: "International Influence of Buddhist Art," Part Three: "The Rise of National Indian and Indonesian Styles," and Part Four: "Chinese, Korean, and Japanese National Styles and Their Interplay." No artwork made post-1850 is included, and many later periods, such as Qing dynasty China, are covered only briefly. Lee writes in the preface that he has left out later works done in "conservative modes" because "their persistence beyond a certain point can only be called ossification." Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art* (5th edn.), 8.

18 Following Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Global Transformations*, we use the phrase "northern Atlantic" to describe with more precision the geographic area often labeled "the West." Using northern Atlantic enables a shift away from the oppositional west/non-west while it also points specifically to the eastern seaboard of the United States, the UK, and western Europe, instead of broadly gesturing to a compass point.

19 See Nelson, "Politics of Ethnicity in Prehistoric Korea." Additionally, Hyung Il Pai's various publications on the historiography and politicization of Korean archaeology in relation to the Japanese occupation shed new light on these questions.

20 John Clark's *Modern Asian Art* represented a major step towards including these periods in the study of Asian art. Partha Mitter has written several volumes focused on eighteenth- through twentieth-century South Asia. Other work focusing on the nineteenth century includes Mathur, *India by Design* and Screech, *The Lens within*

the Heart. Recent works that reconceptualize twentieth-century Asian art in terms of national or global politics include Cate, *Making Merit, Making Art*, which looks at contemporary Thai paintings, as well as Laing, *The Winking Owl* and Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China*, the latter two both examining art from the People's Republic of China.

21 Machida, *Unsettled Visions*; Chang *et al.*, *Asian American Art*; Chiu *et al.*, *One Way or Another*; Minglu, *Inside Out*; Munro, *Japanese Art after 1945*; Poshyananda, *Contemporary Art in Asia*; Sambrani and Jain, *Edge of Desire*.

22 Lewis and Wigen, for example, propose the following division: Islamic Central Asia, Lamaist Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia. Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents*, 187.

23 Desai, *Asian Art History in the Twenty-First Century*, ix–xi.

24 Art history curricula at institutions like the MS University in Vadodara, India, provide students with a strong grounding in European art history, alongside the study of India's visual culture. In some ways, the curricula at institutions like this offer a space to provide a more balanced view of global art history than entrenched institutions in the northern Atlantic.

25 Just as the solution to the lacunae in Asian art lies not in filling in all of the gaps, the solution to different ways of seeing and thinking around the globe is not to dredge up emic, somehow authentic, precolonial and premodern ways of approaching the art objects and replace art historical disciplinary approaches with premodern ones. We do, however, wish to take seriously the contributions "Asian art" makes to the discipline of art history, shaping it in ways that are productive for the entire discipline. Rather than a bifurcated world of "Western" art history against "Other," somehow more authentic art histories, we here seek to challenge the extant discipline by offering essays that speak to it, within it, and for it, but do so from a platform that sits on its margins. For more on these issues, see the essays engaging with James Elkins' and David Summers' arguments in Elkins, *Is Art History Global?* See especially Gupta and Ray, "Responding from the Margins."

References

Andrews, Julia F. *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China, 1949–1979*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Bharucha, Rustom. *Another Asia: Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Cate, Sandra. *Making Merit, Making Art: A Thai Temple in Wimbledon*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003.

Chang, Gordon H., Mark Dean Johnson, Paul J. Karlstrom, and Sharon Spain. *Asian American Art, 1850–1970*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008.

Chiu, Melissa, Karin M. Higa, and Susette S. Min. *One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now*. New Haven, CT: Asia Society with Yale University Press, 2006.

Clark, John. *Modern Asian Art*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998.

Coomaraswamy, Ananda Kentish. *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*. New York: Dover Publications, 1956.

Desai, Vishakha N. *Asian Art History in the Twenty-First Century*. Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2007.

Elkins, James, ed. *Is Art History Global?* New York: Routledge, 2007.

Fa-Hsien [Faxian]. *Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*. Translated by James Legge. Project Gutenberg EBook, accessed July 10, 2010. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2124/2124-h/2124-h.htm.

Fenollosa, Ernest. *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art, An Outline History of East Asiatic Design*. New York: Dover Publications, 1963.

Flood, Finbarr Barry. *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu–Muslim" Encounter*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Gupta, Atreyee, and Sugata Ray. "Responding from the Margins." In *Is Art History Global?* edited by James Elkins, 348–57. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Laing, Ellen Johnston. *The Winking Owl: Art in the People's Republic of China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

LaPlante, John. *Asian Art*. 3rd edn. New York: McGraw Hill, 1992 [1968, 1985].

Lee, Sherman E. *A History of Far Eastern Art*. 5th edn. New York: Prentice Hall, 1994 [1964, 1973 (rev. edn.), 1982 (4th edn.), 1994 (5th edn.)].

Lewis, Martin W., and Kären Wigen. *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Machida, Margo. *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.

Mathur, Saloni. *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

Minglu, Gao, ed. *Inside Out: New Chinese Art*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Mitter, Partha. *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850–1922: Occidental Orientations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Mitter, Partha. *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.

Mitter, Partha. *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1922–1947*. London: Reaktion Books, 2007.

Munroe, Alexandra. *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream against the Sky*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994.

Nelson, Sarah M. "Politics of Ethnicity in Prehistoric Korea." In *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, edited by Philip L. Kohl and Clare P. Fawcett, 218–31. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Pai, Hyung Il. "The Politics of Korea's Past: The Legacy of Japanese Colonial Archaeology in the Korean Peninsula." *East Asian History* 7 (1994): 24–48.

Pai, Hyung Il. "The Creation of National Treasures and Monuments: The 1916 Japanese Laws on the Preservation of Korean Remains and Relics and Their Colonial Legacies." *Korean Studies* 25 no. 1 (2001): 72–95.

Pai, Hyung Il. *Constructing "Korean" Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation Theories*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000.

Poshyananda, Apinan. *Contemporary Art in Asia: Traditions, Tensions*. New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1996.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Sambrani, Chaitanya, and Kajri Jain. *Edge of Desire: Recent Art in India*. London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2005.

Screech, Timon. *The Lens Within the Heart: The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Later Edo Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.

Sen, Tansen. "The Travel Records of Chinese Pilgrims Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing: Sources for Cross-Cultural Encounters Between Ancient China and Ancient India." *Education about Asia* 11 no. 3 (2006): 24–33.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World*. New York: Palgrave, 2003.

Part II

Objects in Use

2

The Material Facts of Ritual: Revisioning Medieval Viewing through Material Analysis, Ethnographic Analogy, and Architectural History

Kevin Gray Carr

Introduction

One of the most enticing aspects of studying history through visual culture is the tantalizing possibility it seems to offer of a direct experience of a particular time and place, neither mediated by language nor obscured by cultural distance. This impression is, of course, illusory, for art has its own historically conditioned languages that are seed to as many cross-cultural misunderstandings as verbal and written languages. Nevertheless, a thorough analysis of the material and formal qualities of the artifacts of history, coupled with comprehensive study of their social contexts, can bring us closer to specific historical moments than is possible through documents alone. Analysis that integrates a wide range of textual and visual materials can flesh out a multifaceted picture of the past that allows us to imagine people's experiences in ways that are not possible through any single type of historical source.

Among the many ephemeral aspects of the past, the experience of *performance* is perhaps the most elusive. As soon as a ritual ends, a song is sung, or a story told, it is already largely lost. Nevertheless, these performances often leave traces,

both in the people who experienced them and the material matrix in which they were enacted. By carefully assembling these clues and fitting them into their original context, an historian may be able to recreate a facet of lived experience that would otherwise appear to be beyond his or her scholarly reach.

As a case study in imagining the historical experience of performative art, this essay considers the use and reception of a subset of the large-format, narrative, painted hanging scrolls (*eden*) that were a large part of conversion activities in medieval Japan. This essay will ask two fundamental questions about them: How were the objects displayed? What did those presentations mean for the people who experienced them? The answers are not readily apparent from the historical record. Although scores of these objects remain and so provide abundant material evidence, there are almost no written documents recounting exactly how they were used. Texts do not reveal where and when they were viewed, who presented them, who was in the audience, or almost any other basic information about their performative context. Thus, these scrolls are ideally suited to exploring the larger question of how one might reconstruct aspects of past performance through non-textual means.

To this end, this essay will begin by introducing the historical figure whose biography was most frequently represented in the large hanging scrolls: Prince Shotoku. Next, it will consider some of the basic physical and formal qualities of the scrolls that suggest their roles in a performative context. After reviewing the history and historiography of pictorial exegesis (*etoki*) in Japan, this study draws inferences from ethnography and architectural history to reconstruct the ritual context of medieval narrative hanging scrolls. Based on this analysis, I argue that the scrolls were experienced not only as illustrations of entertaining and didactic stories, but also as iconic images which *re-presented* their subject and engendered a sense of sacred presence. This presence was made available to viewers as an object of worship and as a figure to whom an efficacious karmic bond (*kechien*) could be made. Although the performative context of these large hanging scrolls cannot be fully reconstructed through the limited historical sources available today, we shall see that the attempt itself reveals the fruitfulness of studying non-written history in order to enrich our understanding of the past.

Visions of a Japanese Cultural Hero

Japan's medieval age (roughly between the end of the twelfth century and the sixteenth century) saw the production of a great many types of large-format illustrated narratives, but none are more numerous or diverse than those depicting the life of Prince Shotoku (Shotoku Taishi, 574–622). As every Japanese schoolchild knows, he was the son of Emperor Yomei (r. 585–7, d. 587) and regent to Empress Suiko (554–628, r. 593–628). Although he probably was an actual historical figure, centuries of legendary accretions transformed Shotoku into a cultural hero of towering stature. He never ascended the throne, yet he is thought

to have served as a cultural minister in charge of foreign and domestic affairs at a crucial time in the establishment of the Japanese state. Texts attributed to him, such as his commentaries on three Buddhist scriptures (*Sangyo gisho*) and the so-called "Seventeen Article Constitution" (*Jushichi-jo kempo*), came to be treated as a kind of sacred writ unto themselves. The prince was later credited with establishing court ranks and founding many major Buddhist temples, and his cultural pre-eminence is undeniable. By at least the tenth century, he was also widely revered as a fountainhead of religious authority and Japanese identity.

There are well over 50 extant sets of large hanging scrolls depicting Prince Shotoku's biography, most including three or more scrolls. The composition of a typical painting might include a dozen scenes from his life, so a large set could depict over 70 separate events (fig. 2-1). The compositions include figures as part of narrative events, people representing various ethnicities and backgrounds, sweeping landscapes of Japan and China, and the architecture and icons at famous cultural sites. The richness of documentary evidence and the diversity of visual materials related to Shotoku's legends make the scrolls an invaluable group of objects for understanding the development of the narrative hanging scroll tradition and its significance in the religious history of medieval Japan. In addition, aspects of Shotoku veneration and its visual culture appear throughout Japan and in many different sectarian contexts. A wide range of groups adopted the narrative hanging scroll for use in their own proselytizing activities, clearly recognizing the rhetorical force of the form. Thus, what is said about Shotoku visual culture is generally true about a much larger class of religious art in medieval Japan.

Physical and Formal Characteristics of Large Hanging Scrolls and Their Context of Display

Today, the first encounter most people have with the illustrated legends of Prince Shotoku's life is either in a museum or through a book. Both of these venues present a decontextualized vision of the paintings that is quite at odds with premodern display practices. Under even light and lined up with other similar works, one is compelled to see the pieces either as objects of abstract aesthetic appreciation or as objects of intellectual analysis (something to be "decoded"). Divorced from their original, multi-sensory, ritual context – including incense, music, and even the jostling of the crowd – it is much harder to understand the ways these images would have engaged the minds and emotions of viewers in medieval Japan.

Even in the absence of texts, every object, by nature of its being a physical entity, carries with it formal information that can help us recreate aspects of its original context and function. The illustrations of the legends of Prince Shotoku are no exception. For example, in examining a wide range of scrolls depicting his life, one is struck by the poor condition of many of the pieces. This is not to say that the images were originally of poor quality. Quite the contrary: the

FIGURE 2-1 Illustrated legend of Prince Shotoku, scroll 10, Honsho-ji, late Kamakura–early Muromachi. Photograph by the author with the permission of Honsho-ji temple.

use of silk, high-quality pigments, and skilled artists was a conscious choice on the part of the patrons of the Shotoku scrolls, who clearly believed the large-scale hanging scrolls to be worth the investment. Still, even accounting for normal wear and tear on the objects over hundreds of years, the often sorry state of the mountings, pigments, and support silk suggests that these pieces were displayed frequently and that they likely passed through many hands. Furthermore, it is the specific patterns of damage on the individual scrolls that is most telling – some of the heaviest losses to the painting surfaces appear in the places with the greatest symbolic weight, such as key events in Shotoku's life. Thus, it is safe to assume that this damage was not completely accidental and was at least in part the result of abrasion caused by people who might have pointed at the work while explaining it to others. We shall return to this point below.

While it is perhaps one of the most striking characteristics of the objects when they are viewed in person, the size of the scrolls of Shotoku's life is not immediately apparent from slides or book illustrations. These hanging scrolls are consistently longer than a meter in height, and so would have allowed a relatively large gathering of people to view them simultaneously. Thus, the format would have appealed to religious groups interested in influencing large numbers of people, since it contains within it the possibility of a public performance that could have involved both preachers and their audiences.

On the other hand, these hanging scrolls depicting the prince's life were much more portable than wall paintings of similar size and thus were more appropriate to the peripatetic activities of the itinerant fundraisers (*kanjin hijiri*) and other mendicants who wished to promote particular sites or sects.[1] Despite the large number of pieces in each set, it would not have been impractical to carry them from the region around the capital to outlying communities that formed the provincial bases of support for Shotoku cults and the sects that promoted them.

Of course, these observations apply to large hanging scrolls (*kakefuku eden*) of Shotoku's life, and not necessarily to handscrolls (*emaki*), a format that scholars have previously associated most with the new religious movements of the early medieval period.[2] In medieval Shotoku visual culture, the latter format had a limited distribution and its audience was primarily confined to relatively high-status warrior and aristocratic patrons. In fact, handscrolls provide a useful contrast to the hanging scroll format, since their physical qualities actually imply the opposite of what has been observed above about larger hanging scrolls. The handscroll is an intimate medium like a personal letter that requires close physical contact between the viewer and object. It can be comfortably examined by only a few people simultaneously, and the included text and the fine details of the paintings preclude viewing them from more than about a meter away.[3] Thus, while the intimate medium of the narrative handscroll was undeniably a crucial art form for many medieval religious groups, its inherent possibilities and purposes were much different than those of the hanging scroll.

While the vast majority of public explications of pictures in medieval Japan employed the large hanging scroll format, rather than the handscroll, a notable

FIGURE 2-2 Koriki Tanenobu, *Kaicho danwa*, pictorial exegesis (etoki) of a handscroll, Nagoya: Hosa Bunko, 1829. Courtesy of Hosa Bunko, Nagoya.

exception is the ceremony performed at Dojo-ji in Wakayama prefecture. The handscroll used for the modern event dates from 1573, and Miyazaki Enjun suggests that the painting's large figures and explanatory surface inscriptions imply that the creators had pictorial explanation in mind when they made the image.[4] However, in order to display the handscroll to a group of any size, the priests of the temple today mount it on podia of different heights while awkwardly pointing to the images and advancing the scroll.[5] A slightly older example of a handscroll used in a public performance can be found in the text *Kaicho danwa* of 1829 (fig. 2-2).[6] It depicts an exhibition of temple treasures in which a group of visitors sits on mats looking towards a handscroll that is laid across an angled platform similar to those used in modern exhibitions. The monk, separated from the audience by a rope of some kind, points to the scroll as he faces the audience. Ironically, however, this position would have made it very difficult for him to see any of what he was describing. Indeed, these examples highlight the limits of the handscroll format for display to larger numbers of people, and the fact that there is no extant medieval account of pictorial explanation using handscrolls confirms the impression that hanging scrolls, rather than handscrolls, were the format of choice for such performances.

Finally, the general stylistic and compositional characteristics of the scrolls of Shotoku's life present some apparent contradictions that suggest distinctive display practices for these images. The paintings often employed bold colors, dynamic poses, and quirky details, suggesting an attempt on the part of the creators to make images that would have been engaging and exciting when seen in detail. Along with the common use of small textual cartouches placed on the surface of many illustrated legends to identify the scenes, such details imply that, at least sometimes, the pieces were meant to be viewed at close (reading) range. On the other hand, despite the small figures and the complex arrangement of scenes, the paintings of Shotoku's life were usually rather large and often came in sets of three or more pieces. For example, the largest extant set of illustrated legends of Prince Shotoku in a hanging scroll format is the group of ten scrolls from Honsho-ji (Aichi prefecture), which is datable to the fourteenth century (fig. 2-1). One can only take in the vista it presents from several meters back, yet at that distance the specific iconographic features of the individual scenes become quite difficult to distinguish.

From what vantage point, then, were the paintings of Shotoku's life meant to be seen? In trying to situate oneself as a viewer, one is faced with the dilemma that from close up it is impossible to comprehend the overall structure and enjoy the sweep of events across the sets of scrolls, yet it is equally difficult to know what is being depicted or appreciate the details unless one is close to the surface of the image. It is therefore safe to assume that the paintings actually had two intended types of viewers – one up close and one farther away. While at times those two roles certainly could have been played by a single, moving viewer, the size and expense of these objects and the range of their distribution suggest that that was not their primary function. Most of the occasions for viewing large

hanging scrolls in medieval Japan would likely have been attended by both a static audience at some distance from the images, and a trained interlocutor who stood nearer to the work to interpret its textual and visual details – the paintings spoke to both audiences, but with a different message for each.

The presence of a human agent to mediate the viewing of the Shotoku scrolls is also implied simply by the compositional and narrative complexity of the images. For example, as Asaka Hiroshi has noted, the three-scroll (originally probably six or eight scrolls) version of the Shotoku legends in the Nezu Museum that dates to the fourteenth century has no textual inscriptions and the events are situated relatively freely within each composition.[7] Although the scenes themselves are clearly depicted and Shotoku's legend was well known, it is hard to imagine that such an image could be comprehensible without the mediation of a knowledgeable explicator.

In sum, this brief examination of the physical and formal features of large hanging scrolls reveals a format rife with a variety of apparent paradoxes: the often poor condition of the objects suggests they were visual tools that were used frequently, but the details of their use is unclear from the textual record; they were small enough to be portable, yet still large enough to simultaneously reach a much larger group of viewers than the handscroll; and while the small figures and texts on the painting surfaces require examination from close up, the overall composition makes sense only from farther away. These basic characteristics point to the strong possibility that medieval narrative images of the life of Prince Shotoku were used in a public performance that required an interlocutor who could mediate these paradoxes and make the message of the image clear and comprehensible to its different audiences. Tangential textual evidence appears to corroborate the presence of such a person, but most scholars pay little attention to the material evidence provided by the objects. The defining formal characteristics of the large hanging scroll format conditioned the presentation and reception of the art, such that even given the lack of textual evidence concerning the display of these images in medieval Japan, one can still extrapolate a great many details concerning their ritual function and the experience of viewing them. Although such a reconstruction is necessarily speculative, only through the approach adopted here can one arrive at a proper understanding of the role these images played in the religious and political culture of the time. The next section considers ritual explication of pictures in order to clarify the functions of Shotoku legends and similar images in medieval Japan.

Painting Formats and the Spread of Pictorial Exegesis (Etoki)

As detailed above, medieval hanging scrolls depicting Shotoku's life were likely used in a performative context involving relatively large groups of people, probably with an interlocutor leading the viewing. This "explication of pictures"

is tied to a specific word in Japanese – etoki. The term has a wide range of meanings, but the characters literally mean "to unravel a picture," and it denotes either the act of explaining a picture, or the actor who does it. Hayashi defines it as "audiovisual religious education."[8] While a useful gloss, this obscures the fact that, especially in later medieval times, etoki was not always didactic or religious in nature, as is clear from both Hayashi's work and that of Ikumi Kaminishi, who has written the authoritative English treatment of the subject.[9] Instead, one can define etoki as a form of performance in which visual images are used to communicate a particular message to a specific audience. Thus, a large part of etoki studies has been devoted to uncovering the details of the intended messages, audiences, and methods of the pictorial presentations in various contexts.

Many medieval artworks like the illustrated legends of Shotoku's life can be profitably understood as ritual implements. While the methods of etoki have been likened to what goes on in a typical art history lecture, this comparison is misleading in most cases for medieval Japan. Deeper understanding of the image and its context is the goal of art historical practice; in medieval etoki, however, the image is primarily a tool. As Kaminishi points out, "pictorial exegesis" does not necessarily mean "elucidation *of* a picture" but rather "elucidation *by means of* a picture."[10] Although a painting (or sometimes a sculpture) was essential to the performance, it was deployed to compel people to take actions, such as making donations, changing sectarian affiliations, or worshipping in a new way. From this perspective, etoki shows more kinship with a modern commercial uses of images than art historical exegesis. Stated simply, hanging scrolls depicting Shotoku's life were fashioned to compel people to take particular actions desired by their creators and explicators.

Roughly speaking, one can distinguish two main streams of etoki. The first is private pictorial exegesis that is recorded as having occurred from the mid-Heian through at least the Muromachi period. Because it typically involved a high-status audience, it is described in some detail in diaries and other historical sources.[11] The second, public etoki for (and often by) lower-ranking people, is far less clearly understood and documented.[12] Although this is not a hard and fast division, the extant written evidence primarily records the former; the latter strand is much more elusive for a textual historian.

Between the eleventh century and the end of the thirteenth, there is a gap in production of large-scale paintings of Shotoku's life, and, during that time, the use, presentation, and reception of such images underwent profound changes. This shift is evident in the physical transformations of the narrative images at the core of the cult: one of the most important of these was the increased production of portable hanging scrolls instead of the fixed wall paintings that the earlier elites enjoyed. As the objects were freed from the constraints imposed by their original locations and formats, so too did the explicators begin to travel beyond the confines of a limited number of sites to which they would earlier have been tied. While many picture preachers may still have maintained an affiliation with a particular temple, shrine, or sect, the hanging scroll format depicting the

FIGURE 2-3 *Poetry Competition of Artisans, in Thirty-Two Pairs* (*Sanjuniban shokunin utaawase*), performer of pictorial exegesis (etoki), Suntory Museum of Art, *c.* 1494. Courtesy of Suntory Museum of Art.

life of Shotoku and others enabled them to take the tools of their trade with them to engage fresh audiences with their compelling visual hagiographies.

The effect of the geographic dispersion of the new painting format cannot be overestimated. The large narrative hanging scrolls of the late thirteenth century represented the first paintings meant for public display that were transported in significant numbers beyond a limited group of cultic centers. They gave people in the provinces the chance to experience multi-media etoki presentations of Shotoku's life, thus linking them to religious and political communities based in the capital. Correspondingly, creators of the paintings began to respond to the legendary and visual traditions of the localities in which the scrolls were presented. Thus, it is no surprise that this was precisely the time that Shotoku cults became truly "popular," cutting across lines of class, status, sect, and geography.

The new group of traveling etoki preachers who drove this expansion seems to have been perceived as having a very different social status compared to their forebears of the Heian period. Material evidence of this shift in the social position of the medieval etoki practitioner is provided by the depiction of a rather strange figure from the scroll entitled *Poetry Competition of Artisans, in Thirty-Two Pairs* (*Sanjuniban shokunin utaawase*), dating to around 1494 (fig. 2-3).[13] In it, an etoki preacher is depicted with an *eboshi* hat perched on his head, a pointer with a pheasant tail tip in his right hand, and a diminutive lute (*biwa*) on his lap. A box is open in front of the man, and he seems to have readied some large album leaves before him. However, he gazes vaguely upwards, as if reciting something from memory. One gets the impression that the paintings are almost an afterthought and that religious conversion could not be farther from his mind.

Again, a change in the format of the medium evinces concomitant shifts in performative and social practices. While no known extant medieval text clearly describes etoki based on loose album leaves, the painting in the *Poetry Competition of Artisans* is clear. The use of this format, which would have been limited like the handscroll to display before a small number of people, reminds us of the most fundamental problem with the majority of written sources used to trace the development of Japanese pictorial exegesis – they were all created from the perspective of the privileged aristocracy who kept written records and who would have viewed performances in relatively intimate surroundings. Even the "artisans" of the scroll are only a type of literary masque in which the high-status poets took on personae of workmen and entertainers. Visual and textual sources created by elites offer glimpses into the development of etoki as ritual performance and they reveal how its practitioners became part of the popular cultural landscape of later medieval Japan. Yet in general, they show little interest in the actual objects used in etoki, and they provide us with very few details about the content and practice of the performances themselves. To learn about that, one must turn to other sources. The following sections will explore the largely uncharted territory of popular religious etoki through some of these unconventional avenues. Building on the hints provided by the physical analysis with

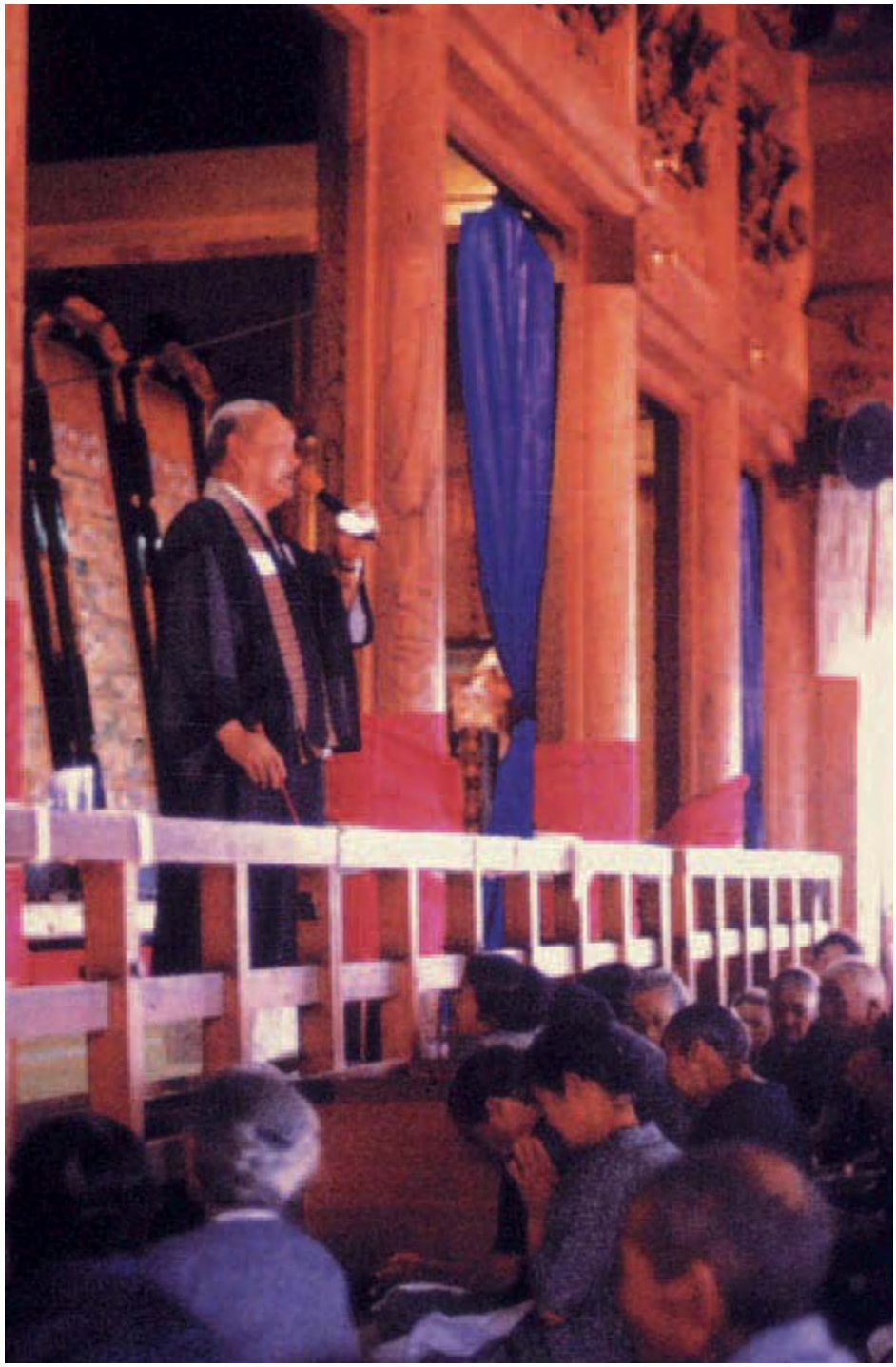

FIGURE 2-4 Pictorial exegesis (*etoki*) of Shotoku's illustrated legend at Zuisen-ji: audience and stage, 1985. Photograph courtesy of Zuisen-ji.

which we began, we can turn to modern ethnography and architectural history to create a fuller picture of the people, places, and experiences of popular etoki in medieval Japan.

Imagining Medieval Etoki through Ethnographic Analogy

It goes without saying that Japanese cultures of nearly 700 years ago are radically different from their modern descendants. However, since there are no textual sources explicitly describing medieval etoki performances for larger, lower-class audiences, it is necessary to draw on more indirect evidence in order to understand the display and reception of the images. If one is careful to guard against biases and anachronisms that it might introduce, modern ethnography provides many useful insights into premodern practice. Through observation of contemporary pictorial exegesis, one can with some confidence garner crucial clues as to how medieval viewers of the Shotoku scrolls might have interacted with larger hanging scrolls as physical and ritual objects.

The largest modern explication of Shotoku legends – held at Zuisen-ji Temple in Toyama prefecture – offers some hints concerning the possibilities and limitations inherent in the hanging scroll format.[14] This *Taishi-den* ceremony traditionally takes place from the twenty-second to the twenty-eighth day of the sixth lunar month. The earliest record of this etoki is datable to 1711, and it is thought that the ritual as it is presently practiced began around that time. The images now used for the event are copies of the original eight-scroll version from the fourteenth century. The reproductions have been set in European-style frames, each about 195 by 92 cm (fig. 2-4). A total of 91 scenes from Shotoku's life are arranged across the busy surfaces of the paintings, so that just to follow along, a solitary viewer would have to make extensive use of the painted cartouches that indicate the age of the prince depicted in each event. The large blocks of text on red and white paper (*shikishi-gata*) in the upper corners or center of each composition have no particular relation to the content of the scrolls on which they appear, and they seem to have been included not for their narrative content but because they link Shinran (the founder of the temple's sect) to Shotoku. Overall, the scrolls give the impression of a jumble of visually similar scenes punctuated only by the black court dress of the ministers and the wavy lines of the horizontal bands of mist. The paintings practically demand an explanation.

During the etoki performance itself, four framed images are set up on a stage on either side of the shrine containing a statue of the two-year-old Shotoku. Typically nine or ten trained monks take turns explaining the pictures. Each of them stands in the center of the stage, facing the audience with microphone in hand. Through much of the ceremony, the monks make surprisingly little reference to the paintings, sticking to the recitation of their part that is scripted in the preaching books they often carry on stage.[15] Yet at times, they seem to engage in a great deal of ad-lib, including much about Shinran, temple legends,

or even topics that come up in their conversations with the audience. The etoki goes on for four days and nights, progressing chronologically through the legendary life of Prince Shotoku. Because of the length of the presentation, people come and go freely, and they do not seem to be particularly concerned about which part of the story they hear – they are more interested in which preacher is most eloquent or entertaining. The audience evinces about as much interest in the paintings as the monks do, chanting the name of Amida Buddha or praying throughout most of the event.

Even if a viewer wishes to look more closely at the paintings, he or she is separated from them by a railing and a raised dais. The cavernous "Prince's Hall" (Taishi-do, rebuilt in 1918) – with its 143 mats – accommodates large crowds, but it distances one from the events depicted in the images on the stage. When a large number of people gather, despite the size of the scrolls and modern lighting, the individual scenes are quite difficult to distinguish. While the nearly 100,000 people attracted to Zuisen-ji each year surely represent an extreme example of large-scale etoki performance, even if ten people gather to examine such a work, it becomes difficult to look carefully at any of the details (as any visit to any crowded exhibition will demonstrate).[16]

This brief description of contemporary ritual explication of Shotoku images cannot tell us anything for certain about the details of popular medieval etoki.[17] Despite the clues they provide, naïve analogies drawn from modern ethnography have introduced some significant biases into many recent studies of pictorial exegesis, since the latter are often implicitly founded on the assumption that Japan's "unchanging folk culture" preserves old practices intact. For example, in modern etoki, the picture explicator uses a microphone and the images are illuminated with electric lights, but in a medieval hall lit with only a few candles or the indirect light of day, the images were surely even harder to see. However, ethnographic analogy does offer some insight into the experience of viewing the scrolls, which, as relatively stable physical objects, continue to condition many aspects of their display and reception. First, the simple fact that the large paintings (with their incongruous frames) are lined up in the inner sanctum of the hall gives one the strong impression of a momentous performance. However, since no one seems to pay very close attention to the pieces as artistic form, they appear with sculpture and decorative arts to contribute to a generalized sense of *shogon* – auspicious decoration of a ritual space.[18] The impression is strengthened by the fact that, despite the number and large size of the images (they are some of the largest of this type of work), it is very difficult to make visual sense of the dense compositions without the help of the oral explanation. In addition, although the act of etoki recitation is narrative in form, almost no one sits through the entire story of the prince's life and most people spend more time praying and chanting than receiving an "audiovisual education."[19] Thus, the preceding consideration of a modern performance of illustrated Shotoku legends suggests that the paintings of Shotoku's life may function less as a means for transmitting specific narratives, and more as objects of ritualized veneration.

Spaces for Displaying Shotoku

Having sketched the outlines of the material and performative aspects of medieval pictorial exegesis, the final element to be treated here is the physical space in which it occurred. Returning once more to the etoki ritual at Zuisen-ji, one sees that modern ethnographic analogy almost completely breaks down when one considers the original display space for the scrolls. The brightly lit illustrated legends explained by microphone-wielding monks may mislead us into thinking that the images were easily visible and the explanation of the monks always lucid. Instead, medieval textual and material evidence suggests that large-scale hanging scrolls were rarely seen clearly by a general audience and that the narrative that they contained performed functions beyond simple storytelling. Understanding the architectural context of these images clarifies these functions.

While the large format of the hanging scrolls did allow many people to see the scrolls simultaneously, it also necessitated a display space that was at least three meters wide – i.e. a hall of two bays or more even for the smallest sets of hanging scrolls.[20] However, this could represent a range of buildings, from a tiny, temporary hut to a vast hall like the Taishi-do at Zuisen-ji. In some modern ceremonies, large-format hanging scrolls are displayed in a temporary, non-architectural space.[21] However, there is no textual or visual evidence that large-format hanging scrolls were ever displayed in this way until recent times. In fact, such a practice would likely have caused a great deal more damage to the paintings than is already evident in the sets of illustrated legends remaining from medieval Japan. If displayed outdoors, such scrolls would have acted like sails, picking up even a small wind and flapping around, making pictorial exegesis quite difficult and endangering the valuable objects. Furthermore, unlike the itinerant monks and nuns who traveled around to raise money for a distant religious site, the clergy of the Shin and Shingon-Risshu sects who were the primary patrons and promoters of the scrolls tended to rely on local home bases by the time the narrative hanging scrolls became popular. Thus, while one cannot discount the possibility that smaller numbers of large-format scrolls were displayed in temporary spaces, the physical qualities of the scrolls themselves, along with their economic bases, indicate that they would have normally been viewed in more established architectural settings.

If one wishes to understand what kind of space would have been available at the Shin temples for the display of Shotoku hanging scrolls in medieval Japan, one can turn to the extant architectural record for answers. While almost no examples of early Shin buildings remain, the main hall of Shoren-ji in Gifu prefecture (made in 1504) is considered to be representative of the early stages of established Shin Buddhist architecture (fig. 2-5). One of the clearest architectural manifestations of the popularization of Buddhism in medieval times was the division of the floor plan of worship halls into inner and outer sections.[22] The medieval viewer was not only typically physically distanced from the altar area

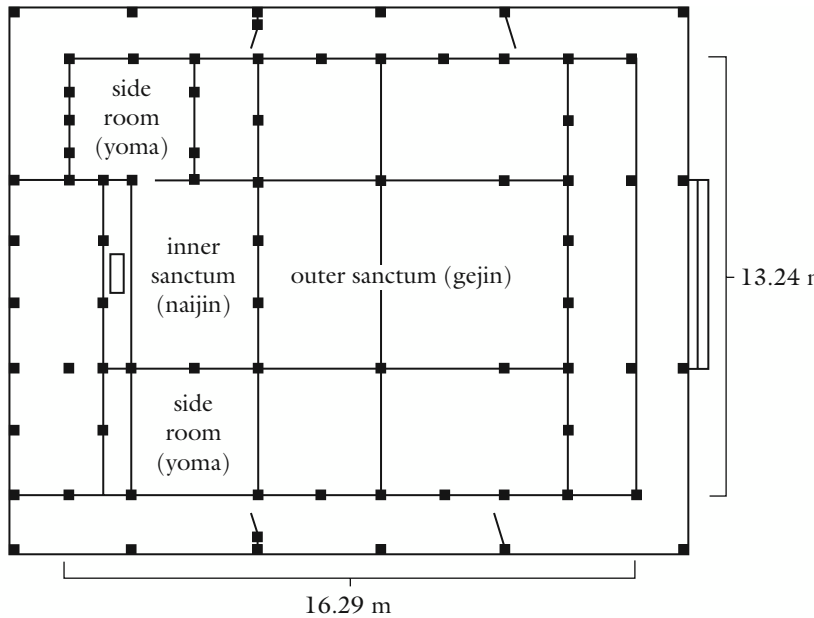

FIGURE 2-5 Plan of Shoren-ji Main Hall (Gifu Prefecture), 1504. Diagram by the author.

at the back of the structure; he or she was often also emphatically screened off from the inner sanctum, which is the case at Shoren-ji. Considering the building from the perspective of pictorial exegesis, a key problem quickly presents itself – the lack of light. Even if paintings were hung on the walls of a side room (*yoma*), they still would have been at least three meters from the direct light of the sun.[23] Moreover, as is clear from the ceremony at Zuisen-ji, when a large group gathers to experience etoki, most people would find it quite difficult to see the small figures and subtle details even when the image was well lit.[24] Therefore, based on their format and the architectural space that they necessitated, the question as to whether or not the details of the large hanging scrolls were easily visible in public presentations does not appear to have been of primary concern to the creators and disseminators of the works. Instead, etoki was not about "seeing" in a conventional sense at all.[25]

The halls in which the objects were hung would have probably engendered a response from the etoki participants that was akin to that of other objects they would have encountered in similar contexts. Even a cursory examination of the arts of the Shotoku cult that have remained to the present day shows that nearly every temple site that had a set of narrative hanging scrolls in medieval times also housed three-dimensional images of the prince that were made around the same time. Moreover, since painters clearly depicted sculpture in their hanging scrolls of Shotoku, and sculptors included elements from painted images, it is a safe hypothesis that painted and plastic arts were consistently

viewed and created together.[26] As in the Picture Hall at Horyu-ji in the eleventh century and almost every modern display of the Shotoku legend, it is easy to imagine that in medieval Japan hanging scrolls were consistently displayed along with a sculptural icon. Furthermore, when one imagines a statue standing in the center of a worship hall surrounded by some of the more extensive sets of illustrated legends of Shotoku's life from the fourteenth century – such as the eight-scroll versions in Kakurin-ji and Zuisen-ji, and the ten-scroll version at Honsho-ji – it is easy to understand the powerfully overwhelming effect of such a performative display.[27] If multiple scroll sets were actually hung around a centrally located sculpture, they would have appeared as a type of "auspicious adornment" (shogon), which served the primary function of marking sacred space-time rather than telling a particular story. In other words, the performative space that framed Shotoku imagery suggests that it is more correct to say that paintings of the prince's life were "enshrined" rather than "displayed."

Experiencing *Eden* and the Iconarrative

The preceding sections have focused on the clues one can gather from non-written sources concerning the people and places involved in religious exegesis of pictures for a popular audience in medieval Japan. It is clear that the sets of large-scale narrative hanging scrolls depicting Shotoku's life were inextricably linked to pictorial exegesis, and that their physical qualities imply a constellation of social and performative conditions for the creators and explicators. To summarize, the above insights present two very curious, but not mutually exclusive, possibilities: first, the Shotoku scrolls were probably not meant to be closely examined by the average viewer; second, they contained a story that was not necessarily intended to be told in its entirety. The small figures in the scrolls and the dark display spaces in which they were presented bolster the first possibility.[28] The extreme length and complexity of the Zuisen-ji ritual, the sprawling texts of medieval Shotoku biographies, and the labyrinthine compositions of most hanging scrolls of Shotoku's life together make it unlikely that many medieval viewers would have had the opportunity to experience etoki of the complete story of Shotoku's life in one sitting. Thus, while formal details and narrative structures were undoubtedly of great concern to the producers and perhaps the explicators of the scrolls (who would have been able to view them up close and at their leisure), the average audience member likely had a much different experience of the works.

The characteristics of the illustrated legends of Prince Shotoku enumerated here point to the strong possibility that for non-elite viewers the narrative elements of the scrolls were secondary to devotional aspects.[29] This hypothesis is bolstered by the fact that, judging from their continual appearance in tale anthologies and popular literature, a wide range of people in medieval Japan already knew the legends associated with Shotoku and so it would have been less important that the performances transmit new biographical information. Moreover, the vast

majority of incidents recounted in the scrolls lack even a tenuous connection to the sects that promoted their explication, and the paintings were very often enshrined alongside iconic images of Prince Shotoku and in spaces generally reserved for worship. Thus, the large-scale narrative scrolls promoted a "devotional mode" that, through the intermediary of the Prince Shotoku, engendered a mindset that made people receptive to preaching about more explicitly sectarian issues, such as the founder Shinran, faith in the Buddha Amida, or the chanting of his name (*nenbutsu*). Images and stories of Shotoku reinvigorated the charisma of the founders, made Shotoku ritually present, and held them all up as objects of veneration. Simultaneously for the etoki preachers, the same objects served as methods for instilling a sense of lineage and sectarian identity, which traced the origins of their sect to the Japanese prince, instead of to continental sources of authority. Therefore, the reception of Shotoku's visual hagiographies among the general populace may perhaps best be compared to sculpture in the way that the paintings were meant to serve as potent, personal, and ultimately mysterious objects of veneration.

It has been observed that in Gothic European churches many stained glass windows with ostensibly narrative content would have been placed in a location that would make "reading" the image almost impossible.[30] Robert Brown discusses reliefs of Shakyamuni's past lives (*jataka*) in South and Southeast Asian architecture in a similar manner.[31] Their condensed, highly symbolic styles of depiction and the seeming disregard for narrative sequence in their placement within the architectural space lead him to conclude that the reliefs were not intended as visual illustrations that prompt in the mind of the viewer the mental recitation of a prior known, verbal narrative. Instead, he argues that their significance lies in their iconic function within the sacred space of these religious monuments. In Japan, large narrative hanging scrolls of Shotoku's life acted in similar ways within their architectural and ritual context, likely serving as foci of devotion and contributing to a general sense of the sacred.

Various aspects of narrative paintings, such as mimesis and the sheen of historical accuracy, were pressed into service for the construction of a complete performative persona that did not rely on the coherence of the story itself. The narrative that forms the basis of Shotoku's visual hagiography was used less for communicating the comprehensive details of a life than it was about recreating the life itself. Thus, like relics and sacred images, sets of illustrated legends promoted a sense of interacting with a mysterious but powerful presence. Yet unlike images of the lives of Japanese patriarchs that were used in explicitly memorial contexts, there is no record that Shotoku's hanging scrolls were ritually linked to certain days of the year or funerary observances.[32] The memorial function is peripheral since their performance presented a vision of the *living* prince.

In this way, "seeing" an illustrated legend in medieval Japan had little to do with the mode of viewing a work in a visit to a museum; rather, it was more akin to the kind of visual interaction with iconic images that was meant to establish karmic bonds with an efficacious deity.[33] Etoki would have been primarily

experienced as a performative act of word and image that animated the Shotoku paintings on the ritual plane. Thus, the apparent contradictions – e.g. that the hanging scrolls illustrating Shotoku's life appear to not have been meant to be seen or recounted completely – can be understood as a function of the higher value placed on the ritual efficacy of the image over narrative detail.

Conceptually composite images like the illustrated legends of Shotoku's life combine iconic and narrative modes so that the two aspects are virtually inextricable – the story recreates an object of worship while the ritual devotions help to animate the narrative in the present. Such an image can be called an "iconarrative," which may be defined as an object that is narrative in form but which functions largely as an icon. Such images can be found in numerous genres of art in medieval Japan, and they represent one of the most important conceptual and artistic innovations of medieval Buddhist visual culture. The revived Taima Mandala and its copies, "The White Path between Two Rivers" (*nika byakudo*) iconography, and pilgrimage *mandalas* (*sankei mandara*) are all examples of this category. Images like the Kamakura period "Eight Aspects *Parinirvana* Painting" (*hasso nehan*) at Jodo-ji in Hiroshima prefecture are even more explicit in their melding of the iconic scene of the death of the Buddha with the narrative progression implied by the stories told in the surrounding boxes. All of these works demonstrate that the borders between the two modern conceptual categories are not nearly as firm as they might seem to be at first glance.

Throughout Japanese medieval religious art history, one can trace a basic tension between the awe-inspiring icon and the engaging narrative. "Iconarratives" such as those discussed above were powerful precisely because they combined elements of both. However, the delicate balance they necessitated was difficult to maintain for subsequent artists and ritualists. The amalgam was unstable, and the paintings of Prince Shotoku's life in hanging scroll format tended to resolve themselves into divergent strands of less composite, simpler images.[34]

The medieval statues representing Shotoku can be seen as another type of "iconarrative." In contrast to most of the works of the Heian period and before, which generally represented the prince in a more purely iconic mode, Shotoku sculpture from around the early thirteenth century on tended to represent one of four specific times in the prince's life: age two, when he chanted the Buddha's name and manifested a relic; age 16, when he attended to his dying father, thereby demonstrating his filial piety; age 22, representing Shotoku as Empress Suiko's regent; and age 35, as the pious preacher lecturing on the *Srimaladevi Sutra*. The establishment of this iconography and the use of "animating techniques" like rock crystal eyes and real hair embedded into the head of statues meant that the different types of sculpture were readily identifiable and – most significantly in this context – that each of them implied a larger narrative.[35] Thus, "narrative sculptures" such as these were often integrated into the "*e-toki*" ceremony, in what might be called "*zo-toki*" – or "explicating the sculpture." In "telling" the icon, the narrative constituted a kind of surrogate relic that could activate the material of the sculpture, making Shotoku present and available to the believer.[36]

What, then, did Shotoku art do? How did an "iconarrative" work on the people who experienced it? In the stories of Shotoku and his previous and subsequent lives, he stands as an exemplar of virtues such as filial piety and wisdom. However, unlike tales of Shakyamuni's previous lives, one does not find any exhortation to emulate the moral acts of the prince. While one can agree that Shotoku was certainly held up as an ideal, his life is not necessarily one to be emulated. He was already an enlightened being, rather distanced from the mundane experiences of a normal person. Furthermore, although there are scattered, minor miracles associated with his life story (such as creating a spring with his bow tip or flying over Mount Fuji), there is a striking lack of post-mortem miracle stories. One did not pray to Shotoku in the same way one might call upon Jizo or other salvific figures. Instead, the audience for visual and literary hagiographies of Shotoku was compelled to admire and worship him as an efficacious link to the transcendent. Witnessing an account of the prince's life strengthened that bond. Hagiographic iconarratives can be seen as crucial tools that connected a person with the presence of Prince Shotoku and thereby allowed them to form salvific karmic bonds with him.

In contrast to the plethora of legends about miraculous sculptures saving devotees, there were very few tales of narrative paintings acting in a direct and personal way to save believers. This may well be due to the simple fact that a sculpture has three dimensions, while a painting primarily works in only two. That is not an insignificant difference, for one tends to *view* (or, in this case, *experience*) a scroll, and *interact* with a sculpture, which takes up three-dimensional space just like a living being. Moreover, etoki is always narrative in form, and so even as the ritual connects one to a deity, site, or person (or all of them), it still tells a human story. Therein lay the power of the Shotoku illustrated legends and other works like them – the dual nature of the "iconarrative" both limited them as icons and made them accessible in a way that a normal icon could not be.

Conclusion: Scholarly Imagination, Grounded

One can never gain access to the subjective experience of another person, especially someone who is separated by the vast cultural and temporal divide across which we view a practice like medieval Japanese pictorial exegesis. There is often a great deal of wishful thinking and imaginative free play guiding a scholar's "re-creation" of the past, but such leaps are essential to the historian's craft. No history is free of speculation and in some form or another analogy to contemporary practices and concepts is implicit in all research. In fact, written materials can give one a false sense of security. Though fraught with methodological peril, working outside of the net of conventional textual sources is one of the key contributions that scholars of visual culture can make to the larger historical project.

We must make every effort to begin such flights on solid ground and constrain them within the bounds of what our sources allow. The above analysis suggests

a likely range of responses to the art that would be most plausible, given what is evident from the physical, material, and formal features of the paintings, the contexts of their display, and their social and religious backgrounds. Taken together, the evidence strongly suggests that large hanging scrolls of Shotoku's life were the linchpin of a ritual program which reanimated Shotoku as a living presence and established him as an object of widespread, popular devotion throughout Japanese history.

Notes

1 See Goodwin, *Alms and Vagabonds* and Ruch, "Medieval Jongleurs" on the *hijiri*.
2 The classic linkage of the handscroll format with new Buddhist groups of the medieval period can be found in Akiyama, "New Buddhist Sects and *Emakimono*."
3 At least from the Heian period, the text and image portions of handscrolls were sometimes separate, so that one person could read the text while others viewed the painting. However, even split in this way, the number of possible viewers of the paintings is still severely limited when compared to hanging scrolls.
4 Miyazaki, "Chusei ni okeru Shotoku Taishi-den no etoki," 79.
5 Hayashi *et al.*, "Zuisen-ji Otani shiin Yoshizawa-shi-zo 'Shotoku Taishi denki'," 128.
6 *Kaicho danwa* was written and illustrated by Koriki Tanenobu. The single volume is in the collection of Hosa Bunko, located in Nagoya, but it was originally in the collection of the Owari Tokugawa family.
7 Tokyo Municipal Museum, *Shotoku Taishi-ten*, 189.
8 Hayashi, "Nihon no etoki," 30. Hayashi's phrase rightly emphasizes the distinctive combination of image and text, but his linkage of etoki with narrative paintings in this and other essays is not completely accurate, unless "narrative" is taken in the most general sense of the word. For example, it is clear from records at Shitenno-ji and elsewhere that more iconic images such as the "White Path between Two Rivers" (*nika byakudo-zu*) were also the subject of etoki.
9 Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*. See also Kaminishi's essay in this volume (chapter 21).
10 Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 6.
11 The diary of the Fujiwara Yorinaga (1120–56), entitled *Taiki*, is the richest single document for understanding etoki for an aristocratic audience. See entries for Koji 2 (1143)10/22, Kyuan 2/9/14, and Kyuan 4/9/20. The text is discussed and many of the relevant passages are translated in Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 23–6.
12 Kaminishi (*Explaining Pictures*, 19), following Ruch ("Medieval Jongleurs," 297), rightly emphasizes this distinction between itinerant performers and those associated with a particular temple, but she avoids speculating on what etoki for non-aristocrats was really like.
13 See Iwasaki, *Shokunin utaawase*, 87ff. and Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 119–34. The scroll also includes a range of figures from Lotus Sutra and *nembutsu* devotees to carpenters.
14 The following discussion derives primarily from the author's own fieldwork at Zuisen-ji in summer of 2000, and the description of the ritual and its history found in Akai, *Etoki no keifu*, 83–91. See Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 50–4, for an alternate description of the ceremony.

15 For the full text of the script, see Hayashi *et al.*, "Zuisen-ji Otani shiin Yoshizawa-shi-zo 'Shotoku Taishi denki'."
16 For a perspective on similar issues from the perspective of illustrated hanging scrolls of Honen's life, see Yonekura, "Kakefuku denki-e kenkyu no kadai."
17 For more pictures and texts related to contemporary etoki, refer to Hayashi *et al.*, *Katari tsumugu – Etoki no furusato, Shinano.*
18 For more on shogon, see Morse and Morse, *Object as Insight*, 9 passim.
19 The entry for Chokyo 2 (1488)/8/28 in *Sanetaka koki* (completed 1536) lends credence to the view that Shotoku's story was not necessarily heard in its entirety (at least among the high aristocracy). The diarist records an evening where he read for the emperor (and perhaps others) from one volume (*issatsu*) of the "Taishi-den," covering the period from the prince's sixth to eleventh years.
20 It is certainly possible that the Shotoku scrolls may have been hung singly. If that was the case, it weakens the hypothesis that the images were "displayed" in larger architectural spaces that made them hard to see, but it strengthens the overall point that etoki was less a matter of telling Shotoku's story (which would necessarily only be partial) than it was the opportunity to reanimate him ritually.
21 For example, the ritual of "The Prince's August Circuit" (*O-Taishi-sama go-junkai*) occurs during agricultural respites in the Hokuriku region in January through March, June, and November. For a fuller description, see Kawaguchi, "Hokuriku chiho Shotoku Taishi-den no setsuwa-ga no etoki ni tsuite."
22 See, for example, the discussion of the 1161 renovation of the Mandara-do at Taima-dera in Morse and Morse, *Object as Insight*, 24.
23 Yorinaga's *Taiki* mentions that "Minister Sukekata" (probably the noble Minamoto no Sukekata, 1113–88) illuminated a statue with a candle, and it was possible (though somewhat dangerous) that the etoki preacher did the same.
24 While the nearly 100,000 people attracted to Zuisen-ji each year surely represent an extreme example of large-scale etoki performance, even if ten people gather to examine such a work, it becomes difficult to look carefully at any of the details (as any visit to any crowded exhibition will demonstrate).
25 Medieval written sources support this hypothesis. For example, the entry for Koan 8 (1285)/10/16 in *Sanemi-kyo-ki* describes an etoki recitation, which the royal audience "views" from behind a curtain. See Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 27, for a translation.
26 Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 50, emphasizes this point in her discussion of the Horyu-ji Picture Hall.
27 Honsho-ji's Shotoku scrolls represent the largest extant set, with ten scrolls. Honsei-ji only has five extant scrolls, but compositional elements strongly suggest that it originally had ten as well. Lastly, the four-scroll set from Kosho-ji is accompanied by three scrolls of Honen and one of Shinran (the last is dated to 1338/Kenmu 5). See also Tokyo Municipal Museum, *Shotoku Taishi-ten*, 209.
28 Although they are based on a very different set of materials, two studies that have reached similar conclusions about "art not meant to be seen" include Wu, "What Is Bianxiang?" and Yonekura, "Kakefuku denki-e kenkyu no kadai."
29 See Alpers and Alpers, "Ut Pictura Noesis?" 437, and Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 11.
30 There was no consistent formula for the disposition of narrative windows in Gothic churches. While some churches present narratives at levels that would not have been

visually accessible for a ground-level viewer, at sites such as Chartres Cathedral, more narrative images appear in the windows of the side aisles, while those of a more iconic nature appear in the clerestory. In the case of Christian churches, the human viewer was only part of the intended audience: God would have been able to view any image anywhere. For a thorough overview of the problem in Europe around 1300, see Kemp, *The Narratives of Gothic Stained Glass.*

31 Brown, "Narrative as Icon."

32 Starting a week before the anniversary of Shinran's death (11/28 in the lunar calendar – January at Nishi-Hongan-ji) and continuing for about eight days, the Shin sect's largest ritual, *Hoon-ko*, takes place. During the event, large hanging scrolls depicting the founders are hung and the ritual text is read.

33 The emic Japanese term appropriate here is *kechien*, but it is also fruitful to consider the Sanskrit term *darshan*, implying a kind of "inter-being" occurring when one views an image of a deity. See Eck, *Darśan.*

34 To give one example, in the medieval period aspects of the Taima Mandala appeared in *raigo* imagery, narrative handscrolls, and simpler Pure Land mandala such as those attributed to the monks Chiko and Shokai.

35 The iconographic characteristics of these types of sculptures represent what Cynthia Hahn, "Absent No Longer," 171, has referred to as "indexical signs . . . recording the trace of an event." Offering the example of stigmata, she shows how some iconographic features are intrinsically narrative. The 16-year-old Shotoku's long-handled censor or the two-year-old Shotoku's hands pressed together are obvious examples of the same from Shotoku imagery.

36 There are many artistic examples demonstrating the interchangeability of sculptures and explicitly narrative art, but one of special note is the *Taishi mandara* from Shitenno-ji (Muromachi period), which includes a painting of a sculpture. See Osaka Municipal Museum of Art, *Shotoku Taishi shinko no bijutsu*, 164.

References

Akai Tatsuro. *Etoki no keifu* [*Lineages of Pictorial Exegesis*]. Tokyo: Kyoiku-sha, 1989.

Akiyama Terukazu. "New Buddhist Sects and *Emakimono* (Handscroll Painting) in the Kamakura Period." *Acta Asiatica* 20 (1971): 58–76.

Alpers, Svetlana, and Paul Alpers. "Ut Pictura Noesis? Criticism in Literary Studies and Art History." *New Literary History* 3, no. 3 (1972 Spring): 437–58.

Brown, Robert L. "Narrative as Icon: The Jātaka Stories in Ancient Indian and Southeast Asian Architecture." In *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*, edited by Juliane Schober, 64–109. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

Eck, Diana L. *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. 3rd edn. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998 [1981].

Goodwin, Janet R. *Alms and Vagabonds: Buddhist Temples and Popular Patronage in Medieval Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994.

Hahn, Cynthia. "Absent No Longer: The Saint and the Saint in Late Medieval Pictorial Hagiography." In *Hagiographie und Kunst: der Heiligenkult in Schrift, Bild und Architektur*, edited by Gottfried Kerscher, 152–75. Berlin: D. Reimer, 1993.

Hayashi Masahiko. "On 'Etoki' in Japan; Nihon no etoki." *Etoki kenkyu* 1; 2, (1983 April; 1984 September): 30–24 (i–vii); 73–68 (v–x).

Hayashi Masahiko, Takashi Inukai, and Kazuo Makino "Zuisen-ji Otani shiin Yoshizawa-shi-zo 'Shotoku Taishi denki' ['The Legend of Prince Shotoku' in the Collection of Mr Yoshizawa from the Otani Branch Temple Zuisen-ji]." In *Nishio Koichi sensei koki ki'nen ronshu: Etoki: shiryo to kenkyu* [*Festschrift for Nishio Koichi: Pictorial Exegesis, Source Materials and Research*], edited by Masahiko Hayashi, Shogo Watanabe and Kazuo Tokuda, 87–193. Tokyo: Miyai shoten, 1989.

Hayashi Masahiko, Ichiro Kobayashi, Mitsuyoshi Nakanishi, and Tetsuro Yamashita, eds. *Katari tsumugu – Etoki no furusato, Shinano (Daihon-shu)* [*Weaving Tales: Shinano, the Homeland of Pictorial Exegesis*]. Tokyo: Kasama shoin, 2000.

Iwasaki Kae. *Shokunin utaawase: Chusei no shokunin gunzo* [*Poetry Competitions Among Artisans: Portraits of Medieval Artisans*]. Tokyo: Heibon-sha, 1987.

Kaminishi Ikumi. *Explaining Pictures: Buddhist Propaganda and Etoki Storytelling in Japan.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Kawaguchi Hisao. "Hokuriku chiho Shotoku Taishi-den no setsuwa-ga no etoki ni tsuite [Concerning Pictorial Exegesis of Narrative Images of Prince Shotoku Legends in the Hokuriku Region]." *Nihon kaiiki kenkyu-jo hokoku (Kanazawa Daigaku Nihon kaiiki kenkyu-jo)* [*Report of the Japan Sea Region Research Center (Kanazawa University Japan Sea Region Research Center)*] 3 (1971 March): 88–96.

Kemp, Wolfgang. *The Narratives of Gothic Stained Glass.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 [1987].

Miyazaki Enjun. "Chusei ni okeru Shotoku Taishi-den no etoki – Shoborin-zo o chushin toshite [Medieval Pictorial Exegesis of Shotoku Taishi Legends: Focusing on *The Storehouse of the Holy Wheel of the Dharma*]." *Shotoku Taishi kenkyu* [*Prince Shotoku Studies*] 1 (1967 September): 76–88.

Morse, Anne Nishimura, and Samuel Crowell Morse. *Object as Insight: Japanese Buddhist Art and Ritual.* Katonah, NY: Katonah Museum of Art, 1995.

Osaka Municipal Museum of Art, ed. *Shotoku Taishi shinko no bijutsu* [*The Art of Prince Shotoku Veneration*]. Osaka: Toho shuppan, 1996.

Ruch, Barbara. "Medieval Jongleurs and the Making of a National Literature." In *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, edited by John Whitney Hall and Takeshi Toyoda, 279–309. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.

Tokyo Municipal Museum, Osaka Municipal Museum, Nagoya Municipal Museum, and NHK, eds. *Shotoku Taishi-ten* [*The Prince Shotoku Exhibition*]. Tokyo: NHK, 2001.

Wu Hung. "What is Bianxiang? – On the Relationship between Dunhuang Art and Dunhuang Literature." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52, no. 1 (1992): 111–91.

Yonekura Michio. "Kakefuku denki-e kenkyu no kadai – Honen den'e kara kangaeru [Topics for Research on Illustrated Biographies in the Hanging Scroll Format: Beginning with a Consideration of Honen]." *Bukkyo bungaku* [*Buddhist Literature*] 24 (2000 March): 15–26.

Further Reading

Carr, Kevin Gray. "Presenting the Prince: Envisioning of the Life of Shotoku in Medieval Japanese History." PhD thesis, Princeton University, 2005.

Como, Michael. *Shotoku: Ethnicity, Ritual, and Violence in the Japanese Buddhist Tradition.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Lee, Kenneth Doo Young. *The Prince and the Monk: Shotoku Worship in Shinran's Buddhism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007.

Mair, Victor H. *Painting and Performance: Chinese Picture Recitation and Its Indian Genesis*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988.

Ruch, Barbara. "The Other Side of Culture in Medieval Japan." In *Cambridge History of Japan 3: Medieval Japan*, edited by Kozo Yamamura and Peter Duus, 500–43. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

ten Grotenhuis, Elizabeth. *Japanese Mandalas: Representations of Sacred Geography*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999.

3

Textiles and Social Action in Theravada Buddhist Thailand

Leedom Lefferts

In this paper I propose that material objects – things, *objet d'art*, usually categorized as part of the art world and therefore peripheral to human action – are, in the Thai and Lao context of Theravada Buddhism, crucial in moving and shaping people's lives. Specifically, I consider two examples of textiles, one that achieves power through its production and dedication, the other that gathers its importance through its usage one day a year. Both of these textiles change, mold, and provide opportunities for individual expression in people's behavior, arising from the social and cultural matrices in which these cloths are produced and used. In showing the power of material culture to shape and expand human behavior, this chapter expands our understandings of the importance of Thai, Asian, and artisanal work in general.[1]

As a cultural anthropologist, I am concerned with understanding and translating the lives of people who tend not to be heard. My base is rural northeast Thailand,[2] where I live with a village family, interacting with other families and village monks, observing and talking with people as they go about their daily and occasional activities, visiting other villages and urban settings to do the same, and extrapolating my observations and discussions to a larger universe, all the while considering changes that occur through their lives. Fortunately, the people in this village accept my periodic returns and inquiries; I hope they continue to do so.

These people are Thai-Lao, people of Lao ethnicity separated from their Lao kin by a political divide along the Mekong River imposed during the colonial period. Altogether, people of Thai-Lao and lowland Lao ethnicity total perhaps

30,000,000, of whom those in northeast Thailand (called "Isan" – northeast in Sanskrit – because it is northeast of Thailand's Bangkok capital) are perhaps 25,000,000. Of the several ethnic groups in Thailand, including the central Thai, often called Siamese, the Thai-Lao are the most numerous, totaling perhaps one third of the total population and occupying one third of the land area of the kingdom.[3] As with the central Thai, the Thai-Lao are Theravada Buddhist, although there are significant differences as well as similarities. This chapter's discussion of monks' robes may be extrapolated to other Theravada Buddhist groups, while the later discussion concerning the long painted scrolls used in the festival for the celebration of the life of Prince Vessantara seems applicable only to the Thai-Lao and possibly the lowland Lao living along the left bank of the Mekong River.

My concern with Thai-Lao material culture and textiles, as well as with Southeast Asian art in general, derives from intense observation and interaction; I observe what people do, how they construct what they do, how these things, in turn, construct the life of the people, and then what the people make of all of this. Thus, I observe and write about what and who are present at and during an activity, where things and people go, what things do to the people around them, and what people do to and with those things.

Things are produced by people, but yet these things carry more than just the meanings of the person who produced them; these things participate in broader contexts of meaning and use. Both categories of objects I discuss in this essay participate in the framework of Theravada Buddhism, a religion shared by a number of Southeast Asian nations and Sri Lanka, and also employed by the Thai monarchy and government to support a kingdom-wide system of power, prestige, and goal-achievement.

Central to our consideration of textiles among the Thai-Lao but also true of much of Southeast Asia is the knowledge that, 200 and more years ago, before the appearance of industrially produced textiles, almost all cloth would have been hand woven, usually by one or more female members of a household; little cloth would have come from outside the rural context. Certainly a trade in textiles existed, between households where one woman was especially skilled in weaving and another was not, or didn't have the time, between communities within a region, and between regions of Southeast Asia, China, and India. The trade in textiles, usually between centers of power and urban complexes, has been well documented.[4] However, because of its ephemeral nature, trade within and between communities is less well known.

The first example showing the power of textiles in daily life focuses on the array of cloth that moves a young man from layman to becoming a member of the Theravada Buddhist order of monks and novices, the *sangha*. The textiles that are woven and worn to move a man from lay status to monk define a two-stage process, the first designating the liminal period between lay status and ordination, the second designating the new monk's or novice's status as a member of the sangha. The textiles for the liminal period vary from community to community, but have special import because of their close association with ordination. They

serve to separate the ordinand from the lay members of the community and initiate his move to the status of novice or monk. Because of their close association with the person who becomes ordained, these textiles take on power, an aura, that imbues them with special meaning. The employment of these textiles is not subject to Theravada Buddhist ritual, though villages do tend to have self-defined rituals for these occasions.

The second stage in becoming a member of the sangha is the donning, in a prescribed ritual, of the three saffron robes (*chiwaun*) that designate the wearer a member of the Buddhist sangha. While the cloth for these robes was woven by women, traditionally they would have been cut, sewn, and dyed by monks. The ordinand's mother presents these robes to her son during the ordination. According to accepted Theravada Buddhist tradition, the design and method of wearing the robes, as well as the timing of when certain robes are worn, were dispensed by the Buddha some 2,550 years ago as he ordained the sangha's first members.

For my second example of textiles with power, I consider those whose meanings come from the paintings on them. These long painted scrolls, usually 30–40 meters long and approximately one meter wide, depict the life of Prince Vessantara, the penultimate life of the karma reborn as Siddhartha Gautama, who became the Enlightened One, the Buddha, in the karma's next life. In northeast Thailand, this painted scroll is usually unrolled and carried in procession by members of a Theravada Buddhist temple (*wat*) congregation as one of the opening events of that wat's annual and most significant festival, the *Bun Phra Wet*, the festival on the occasion of the celebration of the life of Prince Vessantara.[5] Following the procession, the scroll is hung in the *sala wat*, the meeting hall, for the next day's recitation; after the members of the sangha recite the birth story, the scroll is removed, rolled, and stored until the following year.

As with all important rituals, the meanings of this scroll and its procession are many. Fundamental is the message of donations to improve one's karma, resulting in a better rebirth; this meaning has always been acknowledged as the benefit of listening to the recitation. But consideration of the scroll and the communal action required and facilitated by it and the multitudinous other material objects created for the festival give voice to expanded meanings. In other words, things bring about a larger arena of meaning than is communicated simply by the recitation. For instance, the communal action required to carry the scroll makes contemporary communicants consociates of the people of Vessantara's city as well as of Vessantara himself. Using Buddhist scholar Jonathan Walters's felicitous phrasing, the living community becomes a socio-karmic community.[6] In addition, in the northeast of the kingdom of Thailand, the cloth and painting conduce congregants to participate in allegiance to monarchy; this leads to voicing legitimation for the current king, reinforcing the participants in a subaltern relationship while providing them with a modicum of positive reinforcement for their popular support of the beneficent ruler.

Northeast Thailand's Thai-Lao

The social contexts in which the meanings of these textiles are activated are communities, usually villages, and their constituent households. Many northeast Thai-Lao continue to live in agricultural villages, growing paddy-field rice and other crops. Increasingly, these people have become intimately involved with urban life, usually through sons and daughters who migrate to live and work in cities such as Bangkok or other urban centers. These former villagers provide, through remittances, money to assist their parents, who often also house and care for the children of this urbanized generation. This shift to urban dependency is relatively recent, having occurred over the past 30 years or so. Prior to that, while Thai-Lao villages always had a relationship to a *muang*, an elite administrative center that sometimes included an economic marketplace, villages and their households tended to be more self-supporting.

The vast majority of villages contain a living area, consisting of a number of usually loosely kin-related households, with an adjacent wat, usually located east of the living area. The wat is understood as a household, but only for male members of the sangha who have renounced normal household life: monks (*phra*); novices (*neen*, from Pali, *saminera*); and a few boys and sometimes older men who assist in wat activities (*dek wat*). The wat is governed by an abbot, *chao ao waat*, the monk who has been in robes longest. Members of the sangha and wat are organized by the Thai government through the Department of Religious Affairs.

Households in the living area are organized matrifocally. Usually ownership of a house and rice land devolves from mother – or mother and father in case of joint ownership – to daughters, with the youngest married daughter at the time of parental disbursement of the inheritance acquiring ownership of the house and her own and her parents' rice land. Elder married daughters move out of the household to their own house and rice land, usually with some inheritance from the wife's parents. A son receives his inheritance, which may be substantial, or, more likely, consist only of support for wedding expenses, when he moves into the house of his bride's parents. Unmarried daughters at the time of the parents' deaths may become almost totally disinherited.

The focus of parental management of a household is on mobilizing sufficient labor or income to improve its economic well-being. This improvement is charted generally in individual and familial well-being, as well as comparatively, with other village households. Over time, as a couple capitalizes on its ability to produce offspring as well as to generate greater resources through inheritance and ownership, its members expect that its well-being will improve. This improvement is recognized by the couple and others not only through better housing and more consumer goods but also, and perhaps most importantly, by its ability to support the couple's parents in housing, goods, and donations to the wat. As elderly

household members come to the ends of their lives, they hope and expect to make donations to improve their karma and better the chances of a propitious rebirth. This includes facilitating the ordination of sons and grandsons, which increases the elders' merit as well as that of the household. This wealth also permits them to make donations to the wat during important festivals, such as during the Bun Phra Wet.

Cloth, Sons, and Mothers[7]

Women of the Lao of lowland Laos, the Thai-Lao of northeast Thailand, the Khon Muang, Lue, and other Tai peoples of north Thailand, the Dai of Sip Song Panna of Yunnan, southwestern China, and the White and Black Thai of northern Vietnam were major producers of textiles in the centuries prior to the inroads of factory manufactured cloth. In addition, a long-standing trade in yarn was integral to the pattern of exchange across mainland Southeast Asia. Cotton was traded north into southern China, while silk was traded south. Trade in yarn and in completed cloth was an essential part of Southeast Asian patterns of exchange. The exchange of textiles, whether through monetary means, barter, or gifts, was a basic way by which design elements and techniques moved across the region. In addition, loom pieces and strung elements were exchanged, so that different manufacturing techniques and technologies became known in different areas.[8]

However, constraints existed so that some kinds of cloth seem to have been produced by women at certain stages in their lives. An apprenticeship in weaving began early, with a young girl learning not only how to weave, but also how to grow and process yarn. A girl's earliest production seems to have begun by helping her mother, aunt, or neighbor complete a piece of cloth. Later, as a girl approached maturity and marriage, she wove cloth showing that she was a capable home-maker, able to discipline herself to provide for her future family. To secure this status, she gave some of these textiles to her new spouse's relations during the wedding ceremony.

Later, as a mother had children and they matured, her productive repertoire might be restricted to items necessary for the home, such as blankets and pillows. However, after sons were provided for and daughters had matured to weave their own cloth, a more elderly woman might move to produce pieces of the finest silk or cotton, incorporating fine twisted yarns of differing colors (*kuap*), supplementary warp (*muk*), supplementary weft (*kiit*), and resist tie-dyed yarn (Lao, Thai, *mat mii*; in the textile world, *ikat*).

Thus, through the domestic cycle of Thai-Lao households, a woman and her textiles were intertwined with and signified the stages in the lives of her children. A daughter might be raised, as the mother had been, to weave, thus providing, as weaving did for her mother, evidence of preparedness for the life of a home-maker. Similarly, a son was raised with the expectation of leaving the household

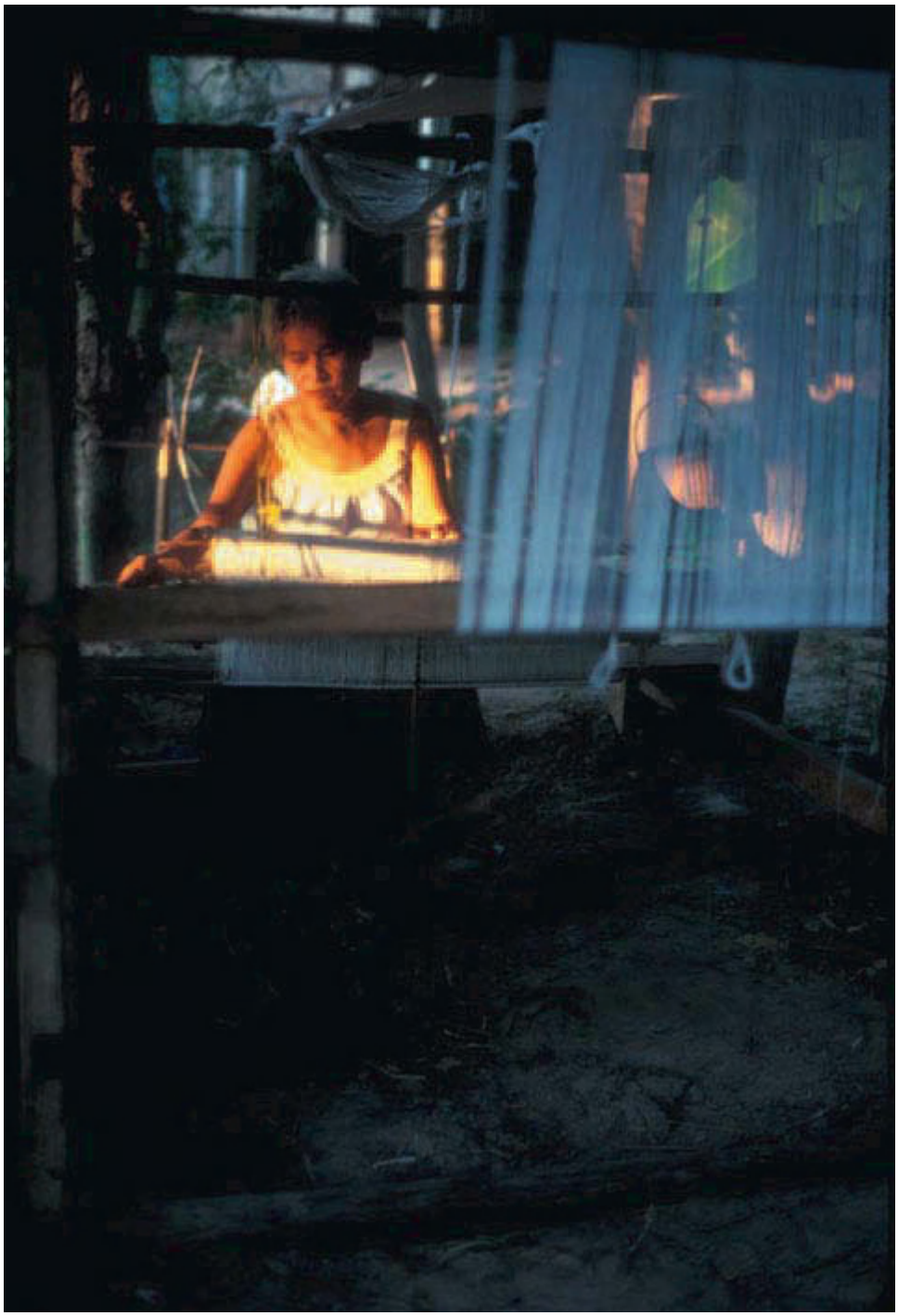

FIGURE 3-1 Woman weaving white cloth, Roi-et province, 1989. Photograph by the author.

– for the monkhood, for work, and for the life of a householder with his wife, initially in her parents' household and then, circumstances willing, in a separate one.

Among Theravada Buddhist Thai-Lao, a mother's goal for her son includes his entrance into the sangha for a period of time. It is through this joint sacrifice – that of the mother with and through her son – that this generational couple attain its greatest merit, each member improving their individual and joint karma. Even with the weight of this expectation, however, a young man's entrance into the sangha cannot be coerced; it occurrs freely while constrained by familial and work obligations as well as by the son's sure knowledge that his ordination transfers merit to his parents and others.

Young men are usually ordained under two conditions: one kind of ordination, to the rank of novice only, occurs at the death of a deceased relative, such as a grandparent, father, or mother. This ordination usually occurs the morning of a cremation, with return to lay status afterwards.

The second kind of ordination occurs as the initial part of an ordination to become a monk. Usually a young man becomes a monk a short time before the three-month long Rains Retreat from July through September and leaves it a month or so after.[9] This second kind of ordination involves a break between a young man's life in his household of orientation and his life in the sangha. Becoming a monk severely disrupts a man's life and the life of others around him.[10] While he has become an active agent in his parent's household, he has not yet attained full personhood. To do that, he must become a monk.[11]

But this change is too abrupt to be accomplished in a single step; an intermediate, preparatory step is required.

Before ordination, the young man enters an in-between, liminal period,[12] during which he is called a water serpent (Pali, *naga*, Thai, Lao, *naak*).[13] During this liminal period, which may last from a few days to a month or longer, he learns some of the routines he will experience and must know in the wat. He may be required to sleep there; he may eat his meals there, sitting below the level of the ordained members of the sangha, receiving his food after them, and respectfully waiting on them. He may be ordered to clean parts of the wat and study texts used during the ordination. This period also provides a time for his household and the surrounding community to adjust to his changing status; he no longer acts in these domains as he had before.

A focus on the ordinand, though, neglects the role played by his mother and other female relatives, who employ textiles they have woven as proxies for their aspirations. Special attire is required both for the culmination of the liminal period as a naak and for ordination as a member of the sangha. On the day before the ordination, after the naak's head and eyebrows are shaved, thus beginning to deprive him of the attributes of selfhood which defined him as a person, he is dressed in special clothes that, because they accompany him into the first stages of ordination, are especially important.

Often the lower garment is a tube skirt in a man's design (*phaa sarong*) of the finest silk. Perhaps the naak's mother made special efforts to weave it or to

preserve it after its previous use. Sometimes this lower garment is the oldest extant textile in a household and has significant age. Saved from previous ordinations, or draped over the coffin of deceased relatives and then ritually cleansed by tossing back and forth over the coffin three times before cremation, the phaa sarong gains special power and becomes a household heirloom. Likewise, the upper garment consists of a special shoulder cloth (*phaa biang*). This may have been saved from previous ordination and ceremonial occasions. On his head, the naak may wear a special hat with serrated edge (*muak naak*), representing the scales of a serpent.[14]

Whether or not members of a community have standardized their naak "uniform" with treasured textiles, or whether the naak dresses simply in white – retaining the meaning of the world before Buddhism, of Brahmanism, the religion that preceded the discovery of the Way – his procession to the wat is fraught with the meaning of movement from this world to the next.[15] Thus, embedded in this congeries of things and actions – clothes, title (naak), and procession – he becomes a bridge between two worlds, permitting members of this world, especially his mother, the chance to attain the next.[16]

FIGURE 3-2 Procession around the *ubosot*: from right to left, lay leader, naak (ordinand) in checked phaa sarong and special hat, followed by mother carrying robes and father carrying alms bowl, Khon Kaen province, 2005. Photograph by the author.

FIGURE 3-3 Mother presenting robes to the ordinand, Khon Kaen province, 2005. Photograph by the author.

An ordination solidifies the exchange between son and mother, signified by the first set of robes (*chiwaun*) a monk wears, which also come from her. Even with the near-universal purchase of factory-produced and dyed robes, these robes are understood as coming from the ordinand's mother. This gift is communicated directly: the ordinand's mother carries the robes as the procession of the lay leader (*makatayok*), ordinand dressed as naak, sponsors, parents, and other family and celebrants, proceed clockwise three times around the ordination hall (Lao, *sim*; Thai, *ubosot*).[17]

After the audience has entered and the service begun, the ordinand is directed by the senior officiating monk, the preceptor (*upajjhaya*), to turn around and receive his robes.[18] He receives them from his mother. The ordinand then reverses himself, faces the upajjhaya, hands him first a tray of offerings and then, bowing down with the robes on his forearms and his hands joined in respect, requests the going forth, *Pabbajja*. The upajjhaya leads him in this recitation and receives the set of robes. He then instructs the ordinand in the foundational knowledge of Buddhism: the Triple Gem of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the sangha, and how to turn to these for refuge. Finally, he leads the ordinand into his journey of non-attachment by instructing him in memorizing backwards and forwards the five words for the unattractive parts of the body and their meaning.

Then the upajjhaya opens the package containing the robes and drapes the shirt over the ordinand. The ordinand rises, goes to a corner of the ubosot, and dresses in the complete set of robes. He returns and faces his appointed monk-teacher (*acariya*). The acariya leads the ordinand through the initial part of the Buddhist service, receiving the ten precepts defining a novice's life. In this way the ordinand has moved from lay status, as a member of his mother's household, to *samanera* (Pali; Thai, Thai-Lao: *neen*), the initial sangha rank. Following this, if the neen is to become a monk, he again approaches the upajjhaya, this time with a monk's bowl over his shoulder, and requests acceptance into the higher order, *Upasampada*.

The transformation from the distinctive, sometimes exceedingly elaborate, dress of a naak to the extreme "plainness" of the robes of a novice or monk – both the product of women's work – graphically denotes a young man's shift from attachment to the things of this world to non-attachment. The naak's dress certifies existence in ritual space apart from daily life. The quality and color of the naak's attire celebrate a mother's handiwork, even as they celebrate her accomplishments in raising a proper son.

Contrastingly, the plainness and color of the three robes of the sangha, embodying meanings given by the Buddha over 2,500 years ago, accompanied by the weight and opportunity of tradition – that they are worn by the new monk's teacher and preceding generations of teachers – signify a different universe. The robes endow the wearer with certain meanings, strengths and obligations, opportunities and conventions. The new sangha member learns these rapidly because, usually, he returns to live in the wat for his community, where people with whom he is intimately familiar, such as his mother and father, sisters and brothers, girlfriends and age mates, treat him differently. Furthermore, in all Theravada Buddhist societies, everyone who sees a person in these robes knows their significance, and how to treat someone who wears these robes.

The Long Painted Scrolls of the *Vessantara Jataka*[19]

The long painted scrolls of the *Vessantara Jataka* similarly evidence power, the transcendence of this life, and the promise of fulfillment for individuals and the members of a Thai-Lao community. A long painted scroll that has been donated to a wat is brought out, forms the focus of a procession, is displayed for one to three days per year during the Bun Phra Wet, the festival celebrating the life of Prince Vessantara, and then rolled and stored until the following year. During the short time of its procession, it provides a focus for community members to celebrate the possibility of their rebirth in better future lives, even as they relive their lives together in past time and live it now in the present. While the painting depicts the 13 chapters of the *Vessantara Jataka*, focusing on Prince Vessantara's gifts to ensure rebirth as the Buddha, the scroll in its procession and display focuses on community members as consociates of Vessantara.

The *Vessantara Jataka* is the last of over 500 birth stories, or stories of the Buddha's past lives, depicting the life of Prince Vessantara, a karma that will be reborn in the person of Siddhartha Gautama, who will become the Enlightened One.

Almost every Thai-Lao wat in northeast Thailand, as well as ethnic Lao wat in other parts of Thailand and elsewhere in the world where diasporic ethnic Lao or Thai-Lao live, has one or more of these long, painted scrolls. There are over 10,000 wat in northeast Thailand; almost all wat hold the festival. The festival is held annually in rotation among neighboring wat, each one taking a weekend from February through April. Thus, not only is this ceremony important for each wat, it also is extremely important in the religious and community ritual calendar.

Wat of other Theravada Buddhist ethnic groups, such as central and northern Thai, contextualize the story differently and have different works of art to commemorate it. The celebration of the *Vessantara Jataka* varies from region to region throughout the ritual calendar. In central Thailand, the ceremony is called Thet Mahachat, focuses on the recitation of the story of the great birth (Vessantara's birth), and takes place at about the same time as among the Khmer of Cambodia and southern northeast Thailand, shortly before the end of the Rains Retreat, in late September or early October, when the lives of deceased ancestors are commemorated. Rather than a long scroll, central Thai and Khmer wat usually have separate panels, each depicting the 13 chapters of the story.[20] These are hung in the wat's meeting hall, *sala*, as the jataka is read. In north Thailand, recitations of the *Vessantara Jataka* are now rare;[21] when they do take place, they are the subject of humorous performances, directed at the problems and perils of Chuchok, the Brahman who is the unwitting enabler of Prince Vessantara's gift of his children so that he might succeed in his goal of the perfection of giving.

Among the Thai-Lao, the celebration of *Vessantara Jataka* story evolved differently. The painted scroll has become an integral enabler of a community's quest for purification, communal search for better rebirths, and pledge of allegiance to the ruler.

Most accounts of the northeast Thai *Bun Phra Wet* focus on the recitation of the *Vessantara Jataka* that takes place in the sala wat, the meeting hall of the temple. However, while these accounts tend to remark that this festival is the wat's annual festival, *Bun Pracham Pii* – the festival on which the most effort is expended, the most money gathered from the community, and, usually, the largest crowd for any regularly celebrated festival – most accounts neglect the many items of material culture that decorate the sala and the wat's surrounding courtyard. Along with the scroll, these items define the festival and the events that take place; they give the event the significance it holds in the community.

In Isan, the festival is, today, usually a two-day affair. The first day, the day of gathering together (*muu hoom*), residents and former residents of the community come together, many visitors come to visit friends, and, continuing the emphasis on the community reforming, Phra Wet and his family are welcomed into the community where they reside. The second day (*muu thet*) the recitation takes place.

Usually, large crowds are present and actively participate in the events of muu hoom, while only elderly men and women sit and listen to the recitation on muu thet.

The decorations in the sala and the surrounding wat yard direct and channel the meanings of this event. They are erected every year in the two to three weeks prior to the festival. One or more recitation chairs are grouped toward the center of the sala wat. A largish space surrounding the recitation chairs, called the place for royals, *rachawat*, is designated using a split lattice-work fence, denoting that this area is sanctified: Buddhism's personification of evil, Mara, may not enter this area.[22] In addition to the chairs, two or more large jars or tubs of water are placed in the rachawat. One connotes the lotus pond in which Vessantara's children attempt to hide so that he will not give them away to Chuchok, the Brahman. This restoration of the lotus pond is indicative of the extent to which community members recreate and participate in the time and place of Prince Vessantara as they welcome him into their midst. The other jar is used for making lustral water, *nam mon*, over which candles are burnt during the recitation.

Also within this space the things designating royalty are gathered, four examples each of a multi-tiered umbrella, fly whisk, and fan, one for each of the rachawat's corners.[23] Banana stalks, sugar cane, and coconuts are brought in; the banana stalks and sugar cane, which grow rapidly from cuttings, indicate to Vessantara and his family the road to his palace laid out for him by the members of his community wishing for his quick return from exile. The bananas and coconuts provide food for this return journey; they also indicate the prosperity of this place. Finally, 1,000 each of hand-rolled cigarettes, betel nut chews, flags, and other items are prepared, duplicating the number of stanzas in the Vessantara recitation and signifying, again, the items necessary for royalty. Often these are tightly packed into a container brought out only for this festival, the *kuluphan*. This object was made by the founders of the wat the first time a Bun Phra Wet was held here. It thus symbolizes the presence of ancestral parents and grandparents while it also ensures that precisely 1,000 of the necessary objects are present for the ceremony.

Outside the sala, on wat grounds, a minimum of four and, usually, nine, long flags are raised on tall bamboo poles, one for each of the eight directions plus a ninth to indicate, as yet another sign of royalty, that Vessantara's palace is ready to welcome him. Along the road and street leading to the community and wat sponsoring the festival, Thai national flags and Thai Theravada Buddhist flags are erected. These flags not only inform Vessantara that he is on the correct path to return to his home, they also tell people driving by that this community is holding a Bun Phra Wet. The event's fulsome material culture signifies that this is an extremely important occasion for community, wat, and individual.

Often, in order to increase the number of attendees and make the festival attractive to people of many ages, booths are built for games of chance, play areas, and multiple ways to make merit. In the evening of muu hoom, movies, Thai-style kick boxing, and, often, a folk opera performance are brought in, depending on the amount of money donated by village households to the success of the festival. This is in addition to the invitations each household sends to household

members and friends who have moved away or who may be working elsewhere, encouraging them to return for this community-wide merit-making occasion. Often, a village sends out letters of invitation through workplaces, to friendly businesses, to nearby wat, some as many as 20 to 30 kilometers away, encouraging their attendance.[24] Many recipients, if they cannot come, donate money, put into the envelope that carried the invitation and returned to someone attending the festival, so that they may also make merit.

The focus of the preparation is the invitation and welcoming of Prince Vessantara and his family back to the community. "*Choen Phra Wet khaw nay muang*," (to invite Prince Vessantara to return to the city) expresses this invitation. The long painted scroll is the vehicle by which this is accomplished. The scroll is taken to the place designated as the "forest" or "jungle," *paa*, into which Vessantara and his family had been sent into exile. The people of the community go there, ask him or his surrogate to return, unroll the scroll, and bring Vessantara and his family back into the community, now termed a "city," "center for royalty and administration," or *muang*.[25]

The story of Prince Vessantara resonates with giving. Vessantara gave so much away, including the white elephant that ensured the prosperity of the kingdom, that the citizens, fearing he would give everything, asked his father, the king, to exile Vessantara. During the Bun Phra Wet, the people undo their error: they return to the forest where he has been in exile and invite him to return. In recreating this event, the king, Vessantara's father, and the kingdom's citizens re-enact their roles. Twice the king asks his son to return and twice he refuses. It is only on the third appeal, by the citizens of the kingdom, that Vessantara agrees to return. Through this appeal, the people acknowledge the prince as their rightful leader and invite him to return and become king, thus ensuring his kingdom's prosperity. Prince Vessantara, in accepting their appeal, recognizes that his relationship with the kingdom's citizens is contractual and negotiated. The invitation and the return procession acknowledge this negotiation and the people and king's mutual allegiance.[26]

Sometime toward mid-afternoon of muu hoom, monks and laity go to the forest (paa). They carry with them the rolled scroll and a dish on which an offering of five pairs of small candles, small flowers, and incense sticks are placed (*kan haa*). The scroll and plate are placed on an elevation between the lay audience facing the members of the sangha. After receiving the usual five precepts that initiate every Buddhist service, one of the wat leaders recites, either from memory or by reading, the invitation to Phra Wet to return to the muang. Sometimes, in an especially evocative performance, another man recites Phra Wet's response, in which he regretfully takes leave from the paa where he has garnered the perfection of his giving.

The plate with the offerings is given to the lead monk while the laypeople unroll the scroll. As it is stretched to its length, people vie for more auspicious sections, while others take what remains. In some communities the people break branches off nearby trees to hold the scroll aloft; usually, however, they simply hold it shoulder high, with the painted side facing outward.

FIGURE 3-4 Blessing of the scroll prior to the procession, Khon Kaen province, 2008. Photograph by the author.

Most scrolls are painted with the story line going from left to right, others are reversed; on some the procession painted on the scroll walks back into the scroll's storyline, on others the procession walks out of the scroll. Of course, the scroll must be held so that the direction of the procession in the scroll, walking with Phra Wet and his family to the muang, agrees with the direction of the actual procession, walking its way to the same muang.[27]

If money is available, elephants are hired. Prince Vessantara and his wife, in best traditional dress or in the imagined costume of an earlier period, ride on the elephant; perhaps another is available for Vessantara's father and mother, the king and queen of the muang; the two children are dressed appropriately and tied to a vine or rope held by Chuchok, the Brahman who asked for them.

Through all of this – the journey to the forest, the invitation to Vessantara, the commencement of the procession back to the muang – the people of the present recreate and put themselves in past time, the time of Vessantara, before Buddhism, when Buddhism was promised but not at hand. The scroll and its procession allow contemporary wat members to identify with Vessantara's consociates; thus contemporary wat members become eligible to participate in the merit of Vessantara's consociates as they celebrate his return to rule their muang. Additionally, the members of today's congregation live in the time

FIGURE 3-5 Processing with the scroll, Khon Kaen province, 2008. Photograph by the author.

of the Buddha, able to participate, as Buddhists, in amassing more merit for their rebirths on the occasion of the time of the next Buddha, Maitreya. This conflation of eras – past, present, and future – is made manifest through the scroll and its painting, held by all who were present before, are present now, and wish to be present again together.

The scroll embodies Phra Wet's life; some participants go so far as to state, as they carry the scroll, that they carry Phra Wet to the muang. They may also say, as the procession speeds up and gets closer to the wat where the scroll will be mounted, that Phra Wet is eager to arrive home. Monks lead the procession, followed by men and women, boys and girls; the procession's numbers increase as it nears the muang, and people sandwich themselves between others to hold onto the scroll. Because this is a pleasurable occasion for all, laughter and fun increase, even though the procession may take an hour and involve walking a kilometer or more. People remaining in the community lay mats on the street and put out water for participants to drink and throw on each other, quenching thirst and providing cooling. They also kneel to ask for monks and elders to bless them. In other words, they welcome the prince and his escort to the muang.

The procession enters the wat and circumambulates the sala three times in a clockwise direction. Flowers and branches which are carried in the procession

are placed in baskets at the bases of the flagpoles. The scroll, unrolled, is carried into the sala and hung around the outside wall, bringing Vessantara, his family, and his story, into the space where the recitation takes place the next day.

Once the scroll is hung it plays a minor role in the proceedings. It witnesses the events in the sala and the recitation. It is usually not referred to; it becomes similar to a mural mutely painted on the wall. On the day following the recitation, the day after muu thet, the scroll is unhooked from the sala wall, rolled – sometimes carefully, sometimes not so carefully – and put away until next year, when it will be used again.

Scholarly discussions about the Bun Phra Wet state that it could act as the focus for a revitalization movement.[28] During the late 1800s and early 1900s, in reaction to the increasing hold of the Bangkok monarchy over the Lao of northeast Thailand, several rebellions occurred, during which *phu mii bun*, men of merit, came from the forest, mobilized the people, and attempted to establish independent governments. All of these were quashed. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, Siam's king during this period, saw that the Bun Phra Wet contained the seeds of continuing rebellion and, through a series of measures, successfully disestablished this ritual in central Thailand. Contemporary commentator Young notes:

> At one time, in Siam, Pegu, and Cambodia, it was the universal custom at the end of the rainy season, to gather in private dwellings or temple halls to listen to the reading or recital of the thousand stanzas of the poem which tells the story. The annual celebration is now chiefly a state ceremony performed in special places. In the olden days, offerings were made for the decoration of the halls in which the recital was to be held, and this custom continues in a smaller degree. The general celebration that formerly took place degenerated at last into a kind of theatrical performance, and was accompanied by pantomime and song . . . The late king [Mongkut, Rama IV, Chulalongkorn's father] . . . sternly denounced the exhibition . . . [which led to the story being] now recited in a decent and becoming manner.[29]

Jory asserts that Rama V's effort began part of a larger program: "It was during Chulalongkorn's reign that the process by which the Jatakas were displaced from their formerly central position in popular Buddhist teaching began."[30] However, as we have seen, at least in northeast Thailand, the Bun Phra Wet and the scroll's role in it remain unchecked. The scroll embodies the life of a prince who goes into exile at the request of his people, but who, after achieving his goal, is asked by the people to return to his rightful place. They joyfully accompany him on his return, following the charter laid down in the recitation.

We have no information about the history of the idea of the scroll. The oldest known northeast Thai scroll now in existence belonged to Wat Luang in Ubon Ratchathani and is displayed in the Ubon National Museum.[31] It is reputed to be 150 years old.[32] The oldest reliably dated Vessantara scroll, 1928, was collected from Baan Phran Muan in Udon Thani in 1968 and is now housed in the ethnographic section of the Moesgaard Museum, Århus University.[33] In January

1953 Archaimbault extensively documented and photographed a Bun Phra Wet at Wat Phu, southern Laos, during which a scroll was carried in the procession.[34] He noted that the Phra Wet ceremony was used by the king of Laos to strengthen ties with the south, so that, from 1954 on, the Phra Wet ceremony eclipsed in importance the festival of the *That* (*stupa, chedi*) in Bassac, the royal center of southern Laos. This use of the festival, solidifying citizen's ties to the monarchy, is the opposite of King Chulalongkorn's fear that the Bun Phra Wet would sow discontent among the citizens.

Today, the scroll and its procession have two mutually reinforcing functions. The first is to ensure the success of the socio-karmic community that is the village community become muang.[35] By evoking and recreating the known successful life of Prince Vessantara, who becomes the Buddha, contemporary wat congregations across northeast Thailand associate themselves with Vessantara's past, present, and future. Through the scroll, they do this as a community, not solely as individual merit-seekers.

The second function of the scroll and the procession is that they align the muang's populace with a particular kind of social organization, in the case of the Thai-Lao of northeast Thailand, the Thai monarchy.

The people who bring Phra Wet home anticipate that he will bring prosperity to their kingdom. The prosperity of the kingdom of Thailand today is proof of the rightness of this vision; the procession with the scroll makes its way between the flags of the kingdom of Thailand and of Thai Theravada Buddhism. The present in which the members of the community exist – with its symbols of rightful monarch and prosperity – signifies that events are proceeding correctly.[36] In other words, rather than the Bun Phra Wet becoming a symbol of defiance through the bringing of an outsider onto the political stage, it has become a ritual of allegiance toward the present system.

Understanding the Bun Phra Wet and its scroll in this manner historicizes the ritual. This approach follows in the footsteps of Archaimbault, when he famously described the new year ceremony at Basak (South Laos).[37] In his intricately depicted ethnography, he noted the ways by which this ritual was subject to historical forces.[38] Similarly, while the *Vessantara Jataka* can express Buddhism's eternal verities, specific expressions, as in today's Bun Phra Wet, become adapted to fit specific historical circumstances. These rituals are not eternal, but shaped by the times and their customs. Today, the Bun Phra Wet and the performance with its scroll reinforce the glory of the Thai monarchical system. As events continue in the Thai kingdom, it will be interesting to see how this festival changes and how its material artifacts activate these changes.

Conclusion

This essay has explored how artistic things in Southeast Asia, in this case cloth, shape the lives of the people who use them. In the ordination ceremony for

members of the Theravada Buddhist sangha, cloth makes manifest, first, separation of ordinand (naak), and then ordained man, monk (phra) or novice (neen), from the world of which he was a part. We have traced the origin of this cloth, both the cloth that initiates the separation, as the ordinand becomes a naak, and then the ordained novice leading to monkhood. In both instances, the cloth is a product of the women most closely associated with the ordinand, especially the mother. Thus, the ritual of ordination (the Bun Buak Naak), as constructed in Thai-Lao Theravada Buddhist culture today, expresses a link between mother and son for which cloth provides the connective tissue.

The other cloth is the long painted scroll of the Bun Phra Wet, the festival celebrating the life of Prince Vessantara, whose karma will be reborn as Siddhartha Gautama, to become the Buddha. These long scrolls, the major artifact for this festival, provide a contrast to the usual emphasis on the story's recitation and emphasis on donation. The scroll's procession from forest to community allows community members to participate in the story of rebirth that is at the heart of the *Vessantara Jataka*. They can then see that they are part of a group seeking salvation. As consociates of Vessantara during his – recreated – time, and associates today during the Buddha's time, they have the opportunity to be reborn in the future during the time of Maitreya, the next Buddha.

Through these artistic objects, people participate in important episodes of the lives of the Buddha, the culmination of his lives before he was reborn as Siddhartha followed by the historical Buddha's decision to renounce the world and seek enlightenment. The robes embody both the "going forth" and the "seeking of refuge" which are fundamental to the Buddhist quest. Thus, they attach the wearers and the people who donate them – the mothers and other female relatives of these members of the sangha – to the universal message of the Buddha. While the robes are universal, they are also local, coming from specific people in specific places.

The long painted scrolls of the festival of the recitation of the story of Prince Vessantara, the Bun Phra Wet, display localism within a penumbra of universalism. The scroll, its procession, and the festival focus on the salvation and success of the people of a community and its temple. The festival originates against the backdrop of the universal promises of the Buddha in rebirth and his recounting of his past lives. The scroll activates the salvation explicit in this story and brings it into a local context: this community, these people, this event.

Robes indicate the women who made them, as they are cut, sewn, and dyed to the Buddha's specifications. They signify inclusivity, all working together to achieve enlightenment. The scroll presents the life of the one who preceded the Buddha, but by processing with it, a community energizes it and becomes energized, so that salvation is possible.

Through these artistic artifacts, we see the multi-dimensionality of Southeast Asian art: its meanings arise through the use of objects and the performances which activate them.

Notes

1 In taking this stance, this essay continues the pioneering work of Lansing and Clark, *Priests and Programmers*, which holds that art make the temples work, and temples make the irrigation work in Balinese agriculture and life.

2 In this paper, I focus on the Thai-Lao, northeast Thailand's largest ethnic group. These people were ethnic Lao who have become Thai-Lao by virtue of living within the modern borders of the kingdom of Thailand for more than a century and becoming subject to the educational, administrative and religious administrative systems of the kingdom. Lowland Lao refer to close kin of the Thai Lao who live across the Mekong river in Laos. Many of the points I make in this paper about the Thai-Lao may be extrapolated to the Lowland Lao; however, for expository ease I simply use, "Thai-Lao."

3 The Royal Thai Government classifies Thai-Lao, Thai citizens of Lao background, as ethnically Thai; however, they live predominantly in northeast Thailand and in selected areas in central Thailand to which they were forcibly moved in the early to middle 1800s.

4 Gittinger and Lefferts, *Textiles and the Tai Experience*.

5 Bun Phra Wet: *Bun* – festival for making merit; *Phra* – monk or royal, in this case prince; *Wet* – Lao for Vessantara, "Wetsandaun." Central Thai call the same festival, performed at a different time of year, *Thet Mahaa Chaat*, the festival for making merit during the recitations of the great birth of Prince Vessantara.

6 Walters, "Communal Karma," 9–39.

7 The research summarized here began in the early 1970s and reached fruition with the international exhibition and catalog, *Textiles and the Tai Experience in Southeast Asia*, co-authored with Mattiebelle Gittinger. I have also published several papers on the clothing of the serpent and robes of the sangha ("Cut and Sewn," "Clothing the Serpent," "The Ritual Importance"). I wish to express my thanks to Gittinger for working with me on that project.

8 "Loom pieces" refers to "hardware," "strung elements" refers to hardware which has been at least partially set up with warp or weft yarn in place.

9 Today this period of lengthy ordination has been considerably shortened; the norm is now for young men to become monks for periods of a week to a month. Of course, this short period of ordination cannot take place during the Rains Retreat, when members of the sangha must be resident for the whole three-month period.

10 Mattiebelle Gittinger (personal communication, 1992) referred to this transition as a death and the robes that are eventually adopted signify the death of this young man to the community in which he lived.

11 Thai-Lao linguistically signify this shift by noting that a man who has not become a monk is raw, *dip*, while one who has is cooked, *suk*.

12 Turner, *The Ritual Process*.

13 The water serpent (*naak*) has a multitude of meanings. See Lefferts, "Cut and Sewn" and "Clothing the Serpent," as well as Cœdès, *Angkor*, 46–8 for explorations of a number of these.

14 I have looked at several of these muak naak. In many, pin-up pictures of girls clipped from magazines are sometimes placed, graphically acknowledging the world the naak is leaving.

15 Lefferts, "The Ritual Importance."
16 Lefferts, "Clothing the Serpent."
17 The color, patchwork design, and conditions of wearing the robes were defined by the Buddha as he first established the sangha over 2,500 years ago. These are discussed in Lefferts, "Cut and Sewn."
18 Vajirananavarorasa, *Somdet Phra Maha Samana*, 16–35, and personal observation.
19 The work in this section is quite recent, begun in 2005 when I was asked to write an article for the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland, on the three long painted scrolls they had received as gifts from the Doris Duke Memorial Foundation. This article ("The Bun Phra Wet Painted Scrolls") led to further research and, with Sandra Cate, has led to several papers which are to be published and presentations. I owe great respect and gratitude to Dr Cate for agreeing to be my co-worker on this on-going project.
20 McGill, "Painting."
21 Ferguson and Johannsen, "Modern Buddhist Murals," Catherine Bowie (personal communication, 2008).
22 Ling, *Buddhism*.
23 Veera, "Thung Phawet."
24 Mizuno, *Social System*, 278.
25 Almost all Thai-Lao wat of the majority Mahanikay sect of the sangha, and many of the Thammayut sect in northeast Thailand annually hold the Bun Phra Wet. The vast majority of these have scrolls, some of a remarkable age, others new. Almost all wat hold the procession, *choen Phra Wet khaw nay muang* (ask Prince Vessantara to return to his city and take up its kingship). In only one area of northeast Thailand, north of Udon Thani city, have I found a group of wat which do not regularly process with the scroll; interestingly, this includes the location in which S. J. Tambiah conducted the fieldwork for his survey of northeast Thai Theravada Buddhism (Tambiah, *Buddhism*). Thus, Tambiah's book does not note the Phra Wet procession, but the other procession which usually takes place on muu hoom, inviting Phra Uppakut to guard the rachawat's premises for the duration of the festival. Some wat combine the two processions into one. If a wat does not have a scroll, either because one has not yet been donated or because the sala has plastered walls with permanent murals painted on them, the people may process with flowers which are used to decorate the sala. In this latter case, the people say they are doing that which they would do with a scroll, *choen Phra Wet khaw nay muang*.
26 Much of this paragraph is the result of detailed discussions regarding versions of the Vessantara story recited by monks during this event. I especially acknowledge the wisdom of Phra Khru Uthai of Wat Pho Yen, Baan Thaa Phuu, Amphur Lom Khao, Petchabun province.
27 In our survey of Vessantara scrolls across northeast Thailand and Laos, Sandra Cate and I discovered that while, decades ago, scrolls seemed to be the work of local artists, today two villages in northeast Thailand produce almost all of them. This has resulted in an unfortunate standardization of folk artistry: Lefferts and Cate, *Final Report*. One village has standardized its production so that the procession in the scroll "walks" out of the scroll, the other so that the procession "walks" into the scroll. This difference seems to make no difference to the people carrying the scroll; they simply ensure that the scroll's procession, naturally, walks the same direction they do.

28 Ishii, "A Note"; Keyes, "Millennialism"; Murdock, "The 1901–1902 Rebellion."
29 Young, *The Kingdom*, 324–5.
30 Jory, "Thai and Western Buddhist Scholarship," 892.
31 See Gittinger and Lefferts, *Textiles and the Tai Experience*, 124–9; Songsri, *Moradok*, 44; Chaarunii, *Phrabot*, 75–8.
32 Suriya, *Wat Luang*.
33 Collected by Poulsen, *Childbirth and Tradition*, cited by Tambiah, *Buddhism*.
34 Archaimbault, *La course*, 106–11.
35 Walters, "Communal Karma."
36 In other words, to continue the analysis, the revitalization movements of the early twentieth century have metamorphosed into the flamboyant Bun Phra Wet of today, with the scroll as the major transformative item of material culture. See Liebmann, "Innovative Materiality," for an example from archaeology.
37 Archaimbault, *The New Year Ceremony*.
38 As noted by Keyes, "Review."

References

Archaimbault, C. *The New Year Ceremony at Basak (South Laos)*. Translated by S. B. Boas. Data paper No. 78. Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1971.

Archaimbault, C. *La course de pirogues au Laos: Un complexe culturel [The Race of Pirogues in Laos: A Cultural Complex]. Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 29 (1972).

Chaarunii Inchoetchaai. *Phrabot* [Temple cloth paintings]. Bangkok: National Museum, Fine Arts Department, 2545/2002.

Cœdès, G. *Angkor: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Ferguson, J. P., and C. B. Johannsen. "Modern Buddhist Murals in Northern Thailand: A Study of Religious Symbols and Meaning." *American Ethnologist* 3 no. 4 (1976): 645–69.

Gittinger, M., and H. L. Lefferts. *Textiles and the Tai Experience in Southeast Asia*. Washington, DC: The Textile Museum, 1992.

Ishii, Y. "A Note on Buddhistic Millenarian Revolts in Northeastern Siam." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 6 no. 2 (1975): 121–6.

Jory, P. "Thai and Western Buddhist Scholarship in the Age of Colonialism: King Chulalongkorn Redefines the Jatakas." *Journal of Asian Studies* 61 no. 3 (2002): 891–918.

Keyes, C. F. "Millennialism, Theravada Buddhism, and Thai Society." *Journal of Asian Studies* 36 no. 2 (1977): 283–302.

Keyes, C. F. "Review: 'Religious and Social Change in Southern Laos'." *Journal of Asian Studies* 31 no. 3 (1972): 611–14.

Lansing, Stephen J., and William C. Clark. *Priests and Programmers: Technologies of Power in the Engineered Landscape of Bali*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Lefferts, H. L. "The Bun Phra Wet Painted Scrolls of Northeastern Thailand in the Walters Art Museum." *Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 64/65 (2006/2007, published 2009): 99–118.

Lefferts, H. L. "Clothing the Serpent: Transformations of the Naak in Thai-Lao Theravada Buddhism." In *The Transformative Power of Cloth in Southeast Asia*, edited

by L. Milgram and P. Van Esterik, 19–38. Montreal: Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies, Toronto: The Museum for Textiles, 1994.

Lefferts, H. L. "Cut and Sewn: The Textiles of Social Organization in Thailand." In *The Anthropology of Dress and Gender*, edited by R. Barnes and J. B. Eicher, 44–55. New York: Berg, 1992.

Lefferts, H. L. "The Ritual Importance of the Mundane: White Cloth Among the Tai of Southeast Asia." *Expedition* 38 no. 1 (1996): 37–50.

Lefferts, H. L., and S. B. Cate. *Final Report, Research on Vessantara Scrolls*. Presented to the James H. W. Thompson Foundation (2009).

Liebmann, M. "The Innovative Materiality of Revitalization Movements: Lessons from the Pueblo Revolt of 1680." *American Anthropologist* 110 no. 3 (2008): 360–72.

Ling, T. *Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil*. Oxford: Oneworld 1997.

McGill, F. "Painting the 'Great Life'." In *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*, edited by J. Schober, 195–217. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

Mizuno, K. *Social System of Don Daeng Village: A Community Study in Northeast Thailand*. Kyoto: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1971.

Murdock, J. B. "The 1901–1902 'Holy Man's' Rebellion." *Journal of the Siam Society* 62 (1974): 47–66.

Poulsen, Anders. *Childbirth and Tradition in Northeast Thailand: Forty Years of Development and Cultural Change*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2007.

Songsri Praphatthaung. *Moradok sing thau nay Phraphuttasaatsanaa* [Heritage of woven things in the Buddhist religion]. Bangkok: National Museum, Fine Arts Department, 2537/1994.

Suriya Chaoksawad. *Wat Luang Ubonratchathani* [*Luang Temple, Ubonratchathani City*]. Ubon: Privately published, 2550/2007.

Tambiah, S. J. *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-East Thailand*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Turner, V. W. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Chicago, Aldine, 1969.

Vajirananavarorasa, Somdet Phra Maha Samana Chao Krom Phraya. *Ordination Procedure and the Preliminary Duties of a New Bikkhu*. Bangkok: Mahamakutarajavidyalaya, 2532/1989.

Veera Vuthichamnong. "Thung Phawet khaung samkhan thii khamlang chathuukluum" [The Phrawet flags: too important to forget]. Unpublished manuscript (n.d.).

Walters, J. S. "Communal Karma and Karmic Community in Theravāda Buddhist History." In *Constituting Communities: Theravada Buddhism and the Religious Culture of South and Southeast Asia*, edited by J. C. Holt, J. N. Kinnard, and J. S. Walters, 9–39. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003.

Young, E. *The Kingdom of the Yellow Robe*. Westminster: Archibald Constable, 1898.

Further Reading

Brereton, Bonnie Pacala, and Somroay Yenchuey. *Buddhist Murals of Northeast Thailand: Reflections of the Isan Heartland*. Chiang Mai: Mekong Press, 2010.

Cate, Sandra. *Making Merit, Making Art: A Thai Temple in Wimbledon*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003.

4

Functional and Nonfunctional Realism: Imagined Spaces for the Dead in Northern Dynasties China

Bonnie Cheng

Introduction*

Tombs constructed during the Northern Dynasties (386–581 CE) owe much to traditions extending back to ancient China. While specific tomb types, particularly the single-chamber tomb with level corridor connecting to a long, sloping passageway, and innovations such as life-sized figural compositions are distinct developments of the post-Han era, the impulse to construct underground spaces and bury objects or images for the benefit of a soul's post-mortem existence was a perennial one. This essay aims to define the types of space constructed by and for Chinese funerary art of the late fifth to sixth centuries. To do so requires explicit consideration of the ontological status of tomb furnishings, as it is the nature of objects and images, their placement, and their relationship to one another that render tomb spaces meaningful. Tombs of this era are relatively unknown compared to predecessors in ancient China or later Tang dynasty (618–907) examples, and what is known from them is too often fragmented: a group of horses rendered realistically and with deft knowledge of pictorial space, an exotic silver ewer, or a carved pictorial stone chamber. To be sure, these are features to be

celebrated, but they were also components of a configuration of goods in a carefully conceived underground context, whose meaning is obscured when they are considered in isolation. But while fuller recognition of the context and assemblages of large-scale tombs of this period is indeed one objective of this essay, my primary goals are, first, to define the function of tomb furnishings and their role in delineating various conceptions of space and, second, to reconsider the ways in which scholars have approached these objects in the past by foregrounding their position within the full tomb context and a broader temporal trajectory.[1] This is no easy task. The richness of the material has drawn the attention of scholars of many disciplines who share in the excitement of the evidence but diverge in focus and approach, and contemporary textual evidence is largely silent on both tomb space and the contents contained within it.

Attempts to understand the content and concepts of tomb art of the period are hindered by several challenges. Besides the lack of explication in primary texts, the conditions of archaeological material, by nature fragmentary and dependent on chance discoveries, pose another formidable challenge. Both of these issues will be addressed below. But the underground context of tombs sets up a significant complication. Unlike painting and calligraphy or Buddhist cave temples and monasteries, funerary art exists in a context that was, at the onset, inherently inaccessible aside from above-ground markers such as tumuli or commemorative stone statues. Besides tomb builders and original mourners who may have moved about the tomb to inspect its contents during a funerary ritual, we cannot assume a viewer in the manner of a temple and its worshippers since these images and objects were not intended for us to see. It is precisely because tombs lack the conventional audience associated with "works of art" that we cannot rely on conventional parameters used to examine artistic genres such as painting and sculpture. We must reconsider our subjectivity in relation to objects and images interred with the dead. As a broader subject of study, tomb art is poised in an ambiguous space between something functional and utilized in life and something made specifically and only for the grave. We examine artifacts to reconstruct history, as in discussions of luxury objects such as silver ewers, likely traded on the Silk Road, to illuminate the significant role of cultural exchange. But items made for the grave must be, and often (but not always) are, also examined in terms of their specific role in the underground context. Studies of excavated material culture thus shift between discussions of the historical role of objects as they circulated and functioned above ground to the religious or social role of funerary goods viewed from their interment in underground space. We need to attend to this distinction more explicitly in our approaches to and engagement with tomb art.[2]

The majority of scholarship on tomb art, and studies that examine notions of space, focus on ancient tombs of the Warring States (475–221 BCE) to Han (206 BCE–220 CE) dynasties. While no one assumes that tombs constructed after the fall of the Han merely replicated Han and pre-Han graves entirely, few have questioned how precisely tomb furnishings differ, despite significant religious and political changes during these centuries. But are these the same

post-mortem realms that were configured in Han tombs? It is difficult to tell, in part because studies remain descriptive rather than interpretive, and because many tombs were unearthed in the last 50 years, so we are still only beginning to get a sense of tomb practices in key regions around Pingcheng, Luoyang, Ye, and Chang'an, the capitals of the many short-lived Northern Dynasties. A recent study of material culture of the era by Albert Dien summarizes these challenges, noting that the sheer mass of information coupled with the distorted archaeological record of disrupted tombs and new finds may all potentially alter our interpretations.[3]

I use the term "tomb art" broadly, to refer to items produced for or interred in the grave. This includes both objects and images that may have been used first in life and then buried in the tomb and also those made specifically for burial. It also includes the structure of the grave itself – its architecture below and above ground – that may have been fashioned after a household or courtyard, but rendered in a symbolic, rather than literal manner. The notion of space thus refers both to the physical space of the tomb and also to the symbolic space fabricated via pictorial or sculptural means. In some cases, the line between objects made for the grave and those that may have been used in life is difficult to draw, and these categorical divisions are complicated by early philosophical debates on the function of goods made for the grave, i.e. *mingqi* ("spirit vessels") and other categories of vessels. But how did people of fifth- and sixth-century China understand the function of the tomb and its furnishings? What concerns were they addressing in the construction of these items? We know that after the fall of the Han and the Jin dynasties disparate groups with nomadic origins invaded the north; we also know that Buddhism became widespread during these centuries. How did these changes alter attitudes towards tomb art or its ideological framework? Given these challenges, at best we can only conjecture how contemporaries understood tomb art, but I propose that we examine the tension between the ancient concept of mingqi and the artistic innovations that emerged in the later era, and consider that the ambiguity of the status of tomb furnishings allowed adherence to ancient traditions to be reformulated for more contemporary concerns.

This essay is by no means meant to be comprehensive in its scope. While I examine tomb art from the Northern Dynasties, primarily of the ruling elite in capital areas, it is worth noting that substantive tomb traditions played important roles in other regions of the time. Impressed brick tombs of the Southern Dynasties (420–589) near Jiankang and painted mural tombs of the far northeast and distant northwest each developed along a separate yet not unrelated course.[4] Besides regional variations, small to mid-sized tombs of more modest construction in the north also offer findings for understanding key cultural or technical developments, e.g. stirrups or glass technology, but are less relevant for the current study.[5] My hope is to expand upon extant studies and to raise issues that will open up other dimensions and directions in which to interpret tomb art.

Research on Medieval Tomb Art

Although knowledge of ancient Han and post-Han tombs dates to the centuries immediately after these burials, contemporary sources such as Li Daoyuan's *Shuijing zhu* (Commentary on Rivers and Waterways) tend to reference only above-ground structures such as stone shrines and steles as geographic markers. They rarely discuss what was buried in the grave except in the context of grave robbing. Within standard histories written by contemporary authors or compiled in the Tang or Song, references to burials generally only listed goods prepared for the grave or recount attitudes towards lavish or modest burials. These passages, to which we will return later, allude to earlier edicts proclaimed by model emperors or final edicts left by dying emperors.[6] It was not until archaeology as a discipline was established in China in the early twentieth century and tombs began to be excavated more regularly in the 1970s that knowledge of their contents became clearer. Still, until recently, tombs of the Northern Dynasties were less frequently excavated and published compared to ancient tombs. Nonetheless, the establishment of an archaeological discipline in China launched several important journals, including the monthly *Kaogu*, *Wenwu*, and quarterly *Wenwu xuebao* in the 1950s, followed by the establishment of regional journals (e.g. *Zhongyuan wenwu*) beginning in the late 1970s. Although announcements of discoveries in newspapers such as *Zhongguo wenwu bao* generally precede publication of reports in these sources, the journals offer the first, and sometimes only, glimpse of tombs and their furnishings.[7] Modern scholarship of medieval monuments thus owes a tremendous debt to the work of Chinese archaeologists, in particular the work of Yang Hong, who has been publishing studies on third- to sixth-century archaeology for almost half a century.[8] These preliminary reports provide crucial information regarding tomb location and structure, an account of tomb furnishings, a description of any imagery, and a transcription of inscriptions. Often these discussions comment on whether relevant texts corroborate the deceased's life or ancestry, or whether the epitaph or inscription presents biographical material not available in known sources.

Although these studies are crucial introductions to this material, one should be aware that the reports aim to present tombs as objective data and to classify items in order to draw broader typological, regional, and chronological comparisons. Tomb furnishings are thus categorized according to media and type. This format can be useful for comparing similar and distinct qualities across a broad sampling of tombs, as is the aim of archaeological surveys. But it is less useful to get a sense of the original arrangement of goods in the grave and to discern any relationship between tomb furnishings and how these interrelationships may have been meaningful. In fact, although an object distribution plan remains a standard component of these reports, the breakdown of objects into media and types destroys the original configuration of objects by the tomb builders,

subjecting them to our modern taxonomies and challenging our ability to reconstruct the spaces conceived for the deceased.

Following growing interest in tomb art in the 1980s and 1990s, art of Northern and Southern Dynasties tombs has garnered more attention in European and North American scholarship in the past decade, as much sparked by chance discoveries as by revisionist perspectives on groups and subjects previously neglected or works by anonymous artisans deemed inferior to painters and calligraphers held in greater esteem by centuries of critics. Studies of decontextualized tomb imagery, examined in the absence of early painting for representations of the human figure or achievements in the rendering of pictorial space, have taken a backseat to the contexts in which these items were originally situated. Yet the amount of material and the relatively small timeframe in which tomb art has been studied have meant that scholarship has not progressed in a linear historiographic fashion. Instead of methodological considerations shifting with the times, from interest in details of individual objects to political or cultural interpretations, more thematically inclined approaches are being written alongside basic reconstructions. Tomb art of medieval north China has thus been examined from two main perspectives, including traditional, archaeological-inspired descriptive overviews, and thematic studies of cultural exchange, hybridity, and ethnicity. These alternately broad and narrow approaches stem from the need to map a coherent view of the period from fragmented material evidence and a desire to pursue interpretive analyses. The first, dominant approach follows the archaeological view that maps features of the tomb as described above. A second more analytical approach isolates individual images or furnishings from tombs and highlights them within the medieval political or cultural context. Interpretive studies of uncommon motifs such as fire altars allude to the era as a time of great transformation and artistic interaction and gesture to the presence and surge of a great range of religious traditions.[9] Catalogs from two important exhibitions, the Asia Society's *Monks and Merchants* from 2001, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *China: Dawn of a Golden Age* from 2004, combine both of these two approaches within a single volume.[10] The exhibitions and essays showcase the vast scope of material evidence from this era, and some essays and individual catalog entries highlight crucial issues such as interaction and trade. The studies of mural tombs and material culture of the era by Zheng Yan and Albert Dien deserve mention for their comprehensive scope and insights, but this scope also hinders their ability to offer more in-depth examination of the full tomb context.[11] Zheng's 2001 study of the systemization of mid to late sixth-century tombs at Ye under the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi offers a model for future research.

The three volumes in the *Between Han and Tang* series represent a collective effort to grasp the complexity of art from this era and to combine disparate approaches of scholars working on the period from many disciplines. Published over several years, each volume frames crucial features or themes of the transformative period: religious art, cultural interaction, and material culture, and the essays vary between broad and more contextually specific studies.[12] While these

variations, and the two approaches mentioned above, may draw general parallels to diachronic and synchronic studies, they are not equivalent to merely historic versus descriptive examinations but may combine elements of both approaches. The studies reveal a mixture of perspectives of historians, archaeologists, and art historians, though a historical view dominates. Several essays in these volumes, such as Lillian Tseng's study of the constellation mural in the tomb of Yuan Yi, suggest fruitful spaces for further examination of tomb art as it intersects with the political context of the time; an essay by Zhao Yonghong on the Wanzhang tomb focuses on adaptations of procession compositions, although once again this study highlights pictorial representations, leaving their relationship to remaining elements of the tomb context largely unexplored. We might also look beyond textual explications of iconography and consider the logic of changes we may discern from relationships between material traditions.[13] Since these exhibitions and collaborative efforts have occurred in the last decade, it is premature to assess the impact of their efforts, but they have sparked recognition of the importance of the era and laid foundational work for further study.

Mary Fong and Jessica Rawson are among the few scholars to address space as an explicit subject of Northern Dynasties' tombs. Fong's early essay examines tomb structure and introduces the iconography of sixth-century tombs as part of a developmental trajectory culminating in the imperial tombs of the Sui-Tang. Rawson takes this a bit further and articulates the physical relocation or elaboration of certain spaces of the grave as defined again by murals. She notes, as other Chinese scholars have, the tendency to depict consistently celestial imagery on the domed ceilings of tomb chambers, and human components on the lower wall registers. She also historicizes these changes by raising the issue of the appropriation of Chinese burial practices by foreign tomb occupants and concludes that although Chinese views of the afterlife and the universe in which that afterlife is situated were tenacious, evidence demonstrates that foreign artifacts and practices were also well integrated into Chinese tombs, and that these became part of Chinese culture.[14]

Rawson draws out important connections between tomb components, and her assessment of the space of medieval graves offers an interesting conclusion that deserves additional consideration. She argues that in the appropriation of tomb practices by foreign tomb occupants (Xianbei conquerors) the Chinese view of the afterlife persisted, but at the same time, foreign artifacts were also adapted into these tombs. One point with which I would contend is her assessment of the afterlife, for which her use of the term "universe" holds a crucial key. The belief in an afterlife certainly persisted in the fifth and sixth centuries, as evidenced by the construction of tombs and burial of furnishings, but the ancient Han conception of the afterlife was much more complex than what is articulated in these later tombs. The delineation of ancient tomb space was not so consistently or structurally fixed as the universes she rightly identifies in later tombs. Perhaps due in part to this complexity, and because more lavish tombs have been excavated and published since the late 1970s and 1980s, analyses of the conception

of the afterlife, tomb spaces, and the function of grave goods are more common to studies of ancient China.[15] To fully grasp the changes and understand the notion of tomb spaces in the Northern Dynasties, we need to go back to consider how the ancients regarded these spaces of the dead.

Tomb as Household

The notion that tombs were modeled after above-ground dwellings emerged some time in the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–221 BCE). Material evidence from as early as the fifth century BCE reveals efforts to build timber-frame structures beneath the earth's surface and to divide them into compartments that replicate spaces of the living. The well-known tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng (*c.* 433 BCE) contained a ritual chamber, arsenal, private inner chamber, and harem. These early efforts to denote distinct spaces were achieved through the placement of goods – ritual bronze vessels, weapons and armor, the body of the deceased and his personal effects, and numerous coffins containing the bodies of young women – within the relatively narrow confines of underground compartments.[16]

But by the late Western Han (*c.* second century BCE), graves began to expand from wooden multi-sectioned chambers (*guo*) sunk into vertical pit-graves to more cavernous "horizontal" tombs in which one could move laterally along an axis from chamber to chamber. Grave goods were not simply crammed into narrow spaces, but could be laid out neatly in open spaces as if they recreated a palace underground. The rock-cut tombs of Liu Sheng (d. 113 BCE) and his consort Dou Wan at Mancheng are good examples of this well-documented shift. Ceramic containers filled with wine and food and the remains of chariots and horses in two front chambers defined a granary and stable, while bronze vessels and dishes laid out in the cavernous central chambers, along with the remains of two canopied "seats," imitated a lavish banquet. This impetus to arrange objects in space for the deceased soul was already visible 50 years earlier in another well-known tomb. The tomb of Lady Dai (d. 168 BCE) at Mawangdui generally resembled other large ancient burials, consisting of a large wooden encasement sunk into the bottom of a deep pit.[17] The center of this encasement contained her body, shrouded in silk layers and then placed in several lacquer coffins with painted decoration. Four rectangular compartments surrounded her corpse. Three of these were crowded with stores of food, cosmetics, and many ceramic attendants to provide for her in her post-mortem life with all that she enjoyed in life. But as others have noted, the arrangement of food and a lacquered screen on one side of the north "chamber," and figurines of musicians and dancers on the other, suggests an attempt to construct a context in which the deceased's soul would have enjoyed a banquet and performance.[18] Despite differences in their spatial construction, these are grand examples celebrated for their rich furnishings and exceptional items such as Lady Dai's painted silk banner and Liu Sheng's jade suit. By the Eastern Han, even less elaborate tombs of lower-ranking officials were structured so that "chambers"

were defined not merely by the objects placed within them, but by the construction of physical space itself and the careful arrangement of goods.[19]

Textual sources of this early conception of tomb as household can be found in several late Eastern Zhou and Han Confucian texts. The following passage from Xunzi's "Discussion of Rites" details analogous structural components of tomb and home:

> The grave and grave mound in form imitate a house; the inner and outer coffin in form imitate the sideboards, top, and front and back boards of a carriage; the coffin covers and decorations and the cover of the funeral carriage in form imitate the curtains and hangings of a door or room; the wooden lining and framework of the grave pit in form imitate railings and roof.[20]

As Mark Lewis has recently narrated, by the end of the Eastern Zhou the idea that the tomb was modeled on a house was commonplace both in theory and in practice.[21] But despite the common recognition that tombs were modeled after above-ground dwellings, or were recreations of households of the living, there is little agreement on the function of tombs and tomb art. Xunzi's account also narrates appropriate tomb contents:

> In funeral rites, one adorns the dead as though they were still living, and sends them to the grave with forms symbolic of life . . . As for the articles placed in the coffin . . . the carving on the wooden articles and the moulding of the pottery are left unfinished, the rush and bamboo articles are such as cannot be used; the reeds and pipes are complete but cannot be sounded; the lutes and zithers are strung but not tuned. A carriage is buried with the coffin but the horses are taken back home, indicating that the carriage will not be used.
>
> Articles that had belonged to the dead when he was living are gathered together and taken to the grave with him, symbolizing that he has changed his dwelling . . . all this is done to make clear that these things will not actually be used. Thus the articles used by the dead when he was living retain the form but not the function of the common article (*yongqi*), and the spirit articles (*mingqi*) prepared especially for the dead man have the shape of real objects but cannot be used.[22]

These types of articles and media have all been confirmed by material evidence in ancient tombs. More significantly, this passage raises the issue of the ontological status of tomb furnishings debated here by Xunzi and also by other scholars during the Warring States and Han.

Mingqi

Central to these debates is the definition of mingqi, or "spirit vessels," featured in this account by Xunzi, and similar descriptions in the later *Li ji* (Records of Ritual), though it is in the *Yi li* (Book of Etiquette and Rites) that the term is first used to denote vessels used in the funerary ritual.[23] Studies of mingqi naturally

reference tombs of ancient China, because the tombs feature the diverse materials and objects mentioned in these passages and are contemporary to the ritual texts in which the term was debated.[24] There is little consensus over the term's precise definition, and how the term (or its scope) subsequently changed. But it is worth noting that the idea of functionality, or lack of it, is crucial to its definition. Most scholars agree that mingqi refers to vessels made specifically for the deceased in death, but the term could also include, more broadly, vessels used by individuals in life (*shengqi*), rendered useless, then buried with them in death. Most often they are relatively low quality or smaller ceramic reproductions of bronze objects used in temples, but they could also be items made of other materials such as bamboo or even bronze.[25] Some mingqi were quite elaborate, and not mere imitations of other items. The term specifically distinguishes objects for the grave from those used to offer sacrifices to ancestors at the temple, known as *jiqi*, "sacrificial vessels." Hence, mingqi are also defined as *guiqi*, or "ghost vessels." The above passage emphasizes that objects taken from life were rendered nonfunctional, while those made specifically for the dead, though resembling those used by the living, had to be clearly distinct.

Thus diverse materials were used to replicate, abbreviate, transform, or miniaturize other often more expensive ritual vessels. But while the media and shapes of mingqi could be diverse, the term is most often associated with ceramic models, and specifically figurines (*yong*) that first emerged in place of human offerings, like the women in lacquer coffins who followed the Marquis Yi of Zeng to his grave.[26] Scholars have shown that variations in the construction of figurines could denote distinct meanings in relation to other objects. Figurines with painted clothing differed from those dressed in real silk garments to distinguish female attendants from dancers in the Mawangdui tomb. In addition to these visual modes of distinguishing their attire, however, the figurines were also defined in relation to the objects with which they were found. Thus, figurines discovered with miniature musical instruments formed the musicians on one side of a chamber who performed for Lady Dai, whose presence was implied by the screen and lacquer dishes of food on the other. Elsewhere, figurines discovered with cosmetic cases presumably functioned as Lady Dai's personal attendants.[27] Together, these relational groupings of figures and objects defined underground spaces and their functions. We should note that while nonfigural objects dominated tombs in the late Zhou and Western Han when the tradition of tomb figurines was emerging, the attention to render figurines' formal features distinctive was crucial to defining their role underground.[28]

The manner in which these figurines, other contents, and the pictorial coffin and banner in the Mawangdui tomb constitute a coherent program and represent an important shift in ancient funerary practices has been studied extensively.[29] Both the function of varying figurine types, and the tomb's complex pictorial imagery, which included depictions of fantastical beasts and immortal symbols, are seeds of significant developments in grave furnishings that continued in the Eastern Han. Most relevant to my discussion is that these pictorial practices

delineated spaces of the otherworld through representational means, though the original passages on mingqi specifically discussed objects. While imaginary and figural depictions were found painted on objects in clearly framed scenes on the famous painted banners from Mawangdui and during the Warring States, pictorial imagery grew more common in Eastern Han tombs. This development may well have been the result of artistic innovations and pictorial trends, it may have been an extension of the growing separation between the living and the dead begun in the late Warring States, or perhaps it indicates that images more clearly articulated the distinction between life and death. Exemplifying the latter trend, imagery in Eastern Han tombs offered a more clearly defined post-mortem world. This space developed in at least two directions: one that was primarily human and one that was distinctly non-human. The first of these spaces continued to include representations of needs previously indicated by tomb furnishings such as mingqi, e.g. granaries and kitchens for the storage and preparation of food.[30] But human figures began to occupy this realm too, logically occupying the pictorial space in the way figurines and objects were related together and defining spaces in the Western Han. These figural scenes included banquets, like the type seen in the north chamber at Mawangdui in three-dimensional form, but grew to include officers paying visits to rulers or long chariot processions.

The second type of Han post-mortem space was decidedly non-human, inhabited instead by imaginary deities such as the Queen Mother of the West and fantastical animals associated with immortal lands. Dragons, tigers, and bizarre-looking creatures occupied this space, and the notion of the deceased passing to this realm was featured in the configuration of these scenes. In one well-known scene from the Eastern Han tomb at Cangshan, a ram-drawn carriage approaches a station where a figure waits before half-opened doors.[31] A poem inscribed in the tomb describes this as a hearse approaching a *ting* station, which contemporary sources define as a commune where travelers rest but which here, borrowing the visual trope of the half-opened door, represents an entrance into the afterlife.[32] As one scholar notes, the tomb became a space in which one could achieve immortality *after* death.[33] Iconography from large and mid-sized graves such as those constructed from carved pictorial stones began to draw from a standard repertoire of these themes.[34]

The relationship of these images to the literal space of the tomb often determined the manner in which the narrative program was to be understood. In fact, the conception of a more complex pictorial afterlife grew along with the expansion of the physical structure of tombs in the Eastern Han. While there was no one way of "reading" a program, which by definition implies a logical relationship of images contained within it, scenes generally unfolded in one continuous direction that wrapped around the length of various walls of multi-chambered tombs, or were arranged, as objects did previously, to define a single function per chamber.[35] The innermost chamber, for example, tended to contain the body, and images decorating the walls of this space were generally otherworldly. A larger, separate space often contained an area designated for a banquet. We find similar

sculpted objects and pictorial representations in Northern Dynasties tombs, but structurally the tombs underwent significant alteration after the north was first invaded in the fourth century and again after the political climate settled down in the fifth century and the Northern Wei reunified the north. Tombs were then, for the most part, reduced to single-chamber tombs. But ceilings were expanded and elevated into domed ceilings, and tomb passages were lengthened. Did such changes above and below ground alter the conception of the post-mortem realm? Or were these merely superficial structural changes to the shape of space?

Modest Spaces?

Although material evidence in post-Han graves confirms that the tradition of burying mingqi in tombs continued, to what extent a similar ideological basis permeates later tomb traditions remains to be seen. Rulers of the Cao Wei kingdom (220–65) championed modest burials, a backlash against lavish Han tomb practices, and argued that tomb construction harmed the economy of the living or invited grave robbing and desecration of the corpse.[36] Their graves have not been discovered, suggesting that their successors adhered to their demands against erecting tumuli and above-ground markers.[37] The promotion of modest burials remained a prevalent theme in historical discussions of graves for several centuries and extended to most regions of the fragmented Northern and Southern Dynasties. But it is clear that, by the fifth and sixth centuries, despite imperial entreaties, individuals still constructed large tombs and furnished them with goods.[38] The tombs of Song Shaozu and Xu Xianxiu are emblematic of late fifth- and late sixth-century tombs of high-ranking officials.[39] Both are single-chamber graves with long passageways, furnished with ceramic figurines, models, and a few items made of stone or precious metal. Song's tomb also contained an intricately carved and painted stone sarcophagus set in the center of the tomb chamber, while Xu's walls were covered with murals. But did these constructions replicate similar post-mortem spaces, and did the furnishings adhere to ancient categories of interring spirit vessels? If not, what was distinctive?

Early accounts of mingqi all imply a crucial comparative element to the term; that is, mingqi, no matter how broadly or narrowly described, is defined against another type of object. They are replicas of bronze vessels in ceramic form, smaller or unadorned versions of vessels used for sacrifices at temples (jiqi). As Xunzi proclaimed, "the articles used by the dead when he was living retain the form but not the function of the common article (yongqi), and the spirit articles prepared especially for the dead man have the shape of real objects but cannot be used."[40] Thus mingqi are emphatically nonfunctional, defined against another category of vessels that are functional, or otherwise distinct in their function as ritual vessels. They are also defined against items used in life (shengqi) that were buried in the grave but rendered useless. All of these efforts were to distinguish tomb furnishings from vessels used by the living, and to make the living and dead distinct.[41]

Archaeologists have unearthed a wealth of objects of diverse types and media from ancient tombs: ritual bronze vessels and bells, lacquer zithers and dishes, bamboo baskets and ceramic figurines and containers of food and drink. They have even uncovered identical sets of bronze and smaller ceramic vessels buried in the same grave to illustrate how these subtle distinctions between categories of vessels were understood.[42] But these methods of visually distinguishing objects are not visible for us in tombs after the Han, though we still find the term mingqi in excavation reports used generically for ceramic models. Fewer tomb furnishings obscure our ability to discern whether size, coarseness of production, or evidence of molds marks an object as something that might be called mingqi. Since the Bronze Age had long waned by this time, we have no ritual bronze vessels which formed the most exclusive category against which mingqi were defined (temple vessels used for sacrifice). We find a few items made of bronze (e.g. those found in the sixth-century tomb of the Northern Qi dynasty prince, Kudi Huiluo) or other expensive material that appear to be luxury items and may perhaps be defined as items used in life, but it is unclear if these were rendered useless for burial, and they certainly do not constitute ritual vessels.[43] And unlike ancient philosophers who debated the relationship of the living and the dead and delimited the parameters of spirit vessels, Northern and Southern Dynasties authors are relatively silent on the concept; the term appears in sources most often in a negative sense to denote an absence of such objects in the funeral ritual. Accounts record, for example, that for the funerals of Xue Chu and Li Yan, no spirit vessels were used or otherwise arranged.[44]

These passages allude to the trend towards modest burials that surfaced during the centuries between the Han and Tang and reveal individuals' attitudes towards these trends, largely as a mode of censure against the wasteful extravagance of the past.[45] To be sure, compared to the richly furnished ancient tombs of the late Zhou (Warring States) through Han dynasties, early medieval graves seem to have been sparse post-mortem realms. Even the large-scale tombs of the elite were not furnished with ritual bronzes, weapons, multiple lacquer coffins or instruments and silks found in ancient graves. But this is not to say that Northern Dynasties graves were all modest and the grave goods crude. Furnishings from Northern Wei tombs in Datong suggest that the trend towards modest burials was widespread in the fifth-century capital. While a few bronze mirrors, glass or silver bowls, and lacquer cups were found in the roughly 200 graves clustered in the southern suburbs, the majority of these small tombs contained only a few ceramic items, generally large glazed *hu* vessels of refined quality. Notably, about 65 of the graves also contained several small ceramic objects identified in the report as mingqi. These were coarser and smaller, predominately *guan* vessels standing only about 10 cm high. Several pieces found in one tomb were almost identical in shape, décor, and volume, suggesting that they were mass-produced. It appears that some conception of functional versus nonfunctional vessels existed to prompt the placement of both large and small vessels in these tombs.[46]

At least one set of objects from a tomb in the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi capital Ye indicates that the hierarchical notion of vessel types and understanding of mingqi as distinct from furnishings of the living were still present in the mid to late sixth century. Twenty ceramic *ding* cauldrons from the tomb at Wanzhang appear to be replicas of ritual vessels.[47] Ding are perhaps the best-known ritual vessel shape from ancient China, made for use in temples, and as bronze and ceramic mingqi for tombs. But they rarely appear in tombs after the Han, where the majority of burial furnishings are ceramic figurines or small models of agricultural or domestic implements.[48] Two types of ding were discovered near the stone coffin platform at Wanzhang. Their relatively large size and rare presence in graves of this era corroborate the largely shared belief, surmised from the scale of the tomb and its numerous murals and furnishings (including nearly 1,500 figurines) that this was the mausoleum of Gao Yang, Emperor Wenxuan (r. 550–9). Numerous bells and chimes, instruments often found together with ancient ritual bronzes, were also uncovered in this tomb and corroborate the notion that these ding were intended to be a special set of mingqi modeled after ancient ritual vessels. These were similarly rendered in clay rather than in bronze or stone. And while the ceramic ding are relatively large (height 26–28.8 cm), the bells and chimes are quite small, ranging between 5 and 6 cm in height and 3 and 7 cm in length, respectively. The miniaturization further suggests they were intended to be rendered nonfunctional and stand as symbolic substitutes.

Yet while it is clear that these vessels replicate ancient ritual shapes, and they indicate that the notion of making them visually distinct was present, the ding bear an odd resemblance to other ceramic containers (a *guan* jar and a straight-sided bowl), merely distinguished by the addition of handles and set upon three legs. Moreover, these legs appear unlike the gently tapered legs of ancient ding vessels but resemble the legs of animals with a hoof-like foot and extra contouring of the upper section.[49] While the awkward construction may indicate that the artisan was less familiar with this shape, the bands of incised lines on the straight-sided ding and painted red interiors of the dozen guan-shaped ding suggest efforts to distinguish these vessels through additional décor as some ancient mingqi were made distinct.[50] This brings us back to an important question: How do we reconcile these contradictory tendencies – to render a known type of object useless, yet also endeavor to make it distinct?

Lewis's study of ancient space emphasizes that the function of grave goods and the intent behind their interment lay in establishing a separation between the living and the dead. While his argument holds true in relation to ritual behavior, of which funerary rituals are crucial, he relies on textual descriptions of mingqi as evidence of the concept of a division between the living and dead. From the perspective of understanding tomb art and its function, however, textual descriptions of mingqi are not entirely sufficient to describe the role of images and objects buried in the grave.[51] There appears to be great effort to distinguish the images and objects in a manner that runs counter to Xunzi's and others' entreaties to render the objects useless.

Medieval sources may not describe the specific contents of the tombs, but they do tell us that preparations for the grave came from multiple sources. A Jin account records that Han emperors began to prepare their mausoleum a year after ascending the throne; a late fifth-century account of Empress Dowager Feng presents a dialogue between the empress and her ministers about the location of her grave. While advance preparation was likely reserved for such imperial personages who could afford this luxury, tomb furnishings were also culled from several sources. Contemporary historical records do not debate the nature of spirit vessels, but biographies continue to record gifts posthumously awarded to individuals by the court. Although they merely list the items, known as *biqi* without further details, these gifts were meant either to function as tomb furnishings or to help the family prepare for the funeral.[52] Literally "hidden," or funerary equipment, they could include vestments, gold thread, and coffins. These items were prepared by the Dongyuan (literally: Eastern Garden), a workshop designated to produce funerary equipment.[53] This department appears to have continued to produce these items in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, though records of this office in post-Han sources are almost always terse and simply record that so-and-so was awarded "hidden vessels" from the Dongyuan. In Han records the office appears to be more specifically connected to wooden constructions, such as catalpa coffins. These earlier sources also describe officers from the department entering the tomb under construction and arranging the spirit vessels for the deceased.[54] What these sources suggest is that the shape of the tomb and its contents were neither determined by the deceased alone, nor by an individual artist or artisan. Instead, they represent a collective effort and thus draw on a collective understanding and construction of tomb space.

While it is certain from the haphazard placement of furnishings in some tombs that the burial of grave goods did not always entail careful planning or forethought, consistent clusters of objects and their recurrence across a corpus of graves indicate that tomb builders recognized the need for a limited type of objects that defined specific types of spaces. Thus, ceramic models of implements, items such as granaries, stoves, and mills, and animals such as pigs, chickens, and sheep furnished the post-mortem realm with agricultural implements and animals, which provided food or rendered a type of service. Though they may not have a consistently designated position in tomb chambers, these types of objects tend to be clustered near each other, suggesting distinct spaces believed necessary to each single-chamber tomb. In Song Shaozu's tomb, mentioned above, animal figurines were found together along the east side of the chamber surrounding an ox-drawn cart in a chamber otherwise dominated by mounted guards and infantry. Figurine types were grouped as well. In ancient multi-chambered graves their placement could be related to other objects and designated banquet spaces such as the type found in the Mawangdui tomb, but they were not so clearly related in the single-chamber tombs that dominated the Northern Dynasties. While most figurines were strewn around the narrow sides of Song's stone sarcophagus, female figurines were found confined within it, together with

the coffin platform for the body, items made of precious material, and lacquer dishes. The relationship of the figurines to these objects once again suggests the private inner chamber of the deceased. Elsewhere I argue that a shift away from this relational mode of defining space occurs some time after the late fifth century. Instead, in the sixth century figurine assemblages develop into processions with more variegated details and their singular "display" within single-chamber tombs replaced the clustered, spatially contingent relational groupings of earlier figurines.[55] This trend is in some ways also mirrored in pictorial developments on the walls of medieval tomb chambers.

The original debates regarding mingqi date to the late Warring States and Han, when objects dominated the furnishings of graves and before mural painting and carved pictorial stones became more prevalent.[56] In the Eastern Han dynasty, as murals and pictorial stones became more common and tomb space expanded to multiple chambers, representations of figures performing ritual actions or kitchen scenes replicated pictorially what was previously (and still) implied through the burial and arrangement of furnishings. What is more, carvings could have been rendered in workshops according to copybooks, as a more economical alternative to murals, which remained individualized compositions painted directly on the tomb walls. But where do these images fall in ancient categorizations of tomb furnishings? They are not among the burial furnishings mentioned in ritual texts. As a component of the tomb itself, there is no question that they were produced for the grave. And given the representational nature of tomb murals, functionality was not an issue since the representation could never to be confused with what was depicted.[57]

A tension is also inherent in the production of tomb murals. By their very nature they were meant for the dead, yet great strides were achieved in the rendering of pictorial space during this era. In fact, if we examine Northern Dynasties' graves more closely, there is a distinct incongruence between the simple mingqi models and the many artistic innovations datable to this period, including advances in ceramic technology and pictorial representation. Since early types of visually distinct mingqi shapes or forms are rare in Northern Dynasties tombs, we may have to reassess how builders of Northern Dynasties tombs were conceptualizing the distinction between living and dead and to identify how this contrast was expressed in new ways. This tension between material contrasts and technical innovations is an avenue of research that needs to be pursued further.

Reformulations

It may be clear to the modern art historian that murals are distinct from functional objects, and because early philosophical debates took place before murals were common features in tombs, it may not be relevant to consider them within mingqi discussions. While ceramic models and some figurines demonstrate simplification in production and consistency in construction, other items indicate

that no effort was spared to render them distinctive. But this was done largely via form rather than content. Artistic innovations in composition and sculptural or structural details made tombs distinct where dramatic alterations of content did not. The mass production of figurines for the grave in a workshop would make it easier to regulate a hierarchy of social status by limiting the number and type of figurines interred with the deceased. Their simplified arrangement indicates that such types of tomb furnishings continued the earlier regulatory tradition of mingqi, albeit with a new emphasis. But the preparation of components of the grave *on site* was less easy to regulate. The structure itself required tremendous labor and murals could clearly not be painted in a workshop. Great innovations are visible along both of these avenues.

Perhaps we might return to the notion of space and how it is delineated by tomb components. Whether objects or images, the notion of their functionality works along two trajectories: in one, situated within the debates of mingqi, tomb items articulate a distinction between things used by the living and the dead; in the other trajectory, tomb furnishings may not be functional from the perspective of the living, but things made for the grave nonetheless "function" in the underground tomb context to craft a post-mortem space for the dead. As Rawson and Chinese archaeologists have narrated in their accounts of Northern Dynasties tombs, images follow a fairly consistent spatial arrangement. In the tomb of Xu Xianxiu mentioned above, for example, the domed ceiling is covered with stars, emblematic of the celestial maps that are found painted in tombs in the late sixth century in the Cixian and Taiyuan areas, or on the lids of coffins in Luoyang. Between this celestial realm and the chamber walls we find a fantastic creature, half-man, half-beast, who appears to be descending from the domed cosmos.[58] The chamber walls present life-sized human representations that appear rooted in the image of the deceased and his wife on the north wall seated under a canopy enjoying a sumptuous banquet and entertained by musicians to either side. They are flanked on west and east walls by an ox-drawn cart and a riderless horse, each surrounded by groomsmen and attendants, and oriented out of the tomb. Additional guards flank the doorway on the south wall and a procession of honor guards continues the composition up the sloping passageway out of the tomb. The configuration of murals in other tombs of this era are mostly variants of this same core content and fixed spatial arrangement: representation of the deceased, ox-cart and horse pairing and attendants in chamber, procession along passageway, celestial representation on ceiling.[59] One could rightly argue that the content of these murals does not deviate far from that found in ancient tombs, except for the substitution of the ox-cart and horse as preferred mode of transportation. Xu's tomb portrait and procession certainly have antecedents in the Eastern Han portrait from Anping or the line of identified officials at Wangdu, and the deceased seated in front of a screen enjoying a banquet surrounded by musicians (and in some representations dancers) recalls the arrangement implied by the objects and figurines in the narrow Mawangdui north chamber. But is the sixth-century scene still the same afterlife as it was conceived in Han tombs?

The core content of portrait, banquet, and attendants has not altered dramatically, but the form of the content has shifted its emphasis.

Of the two directions of Han pictorial art mentioned above – representations of humans and depictions of a non-human realm – it is the human realm that dominates in scale, detail, and form. Murals and even figurines show a greater ceremonial focus in the expanded compositions of processions elaborated in precise detail. Changes to figurines, which I have studied elsewhere, emphasize the same efforts to render these features in the most meticulous manner.[60] Perhaps the intent was not to make them functional vis-à-vis objects used by the living, but rather to make them realistically functional to serve a particular role in the afterlife. Even the celestial compositions are inhabited by features and animals associated with constellations clearly situated in a cosmos, rather than by deities and fantastic creatures of immortal lore.[61] While deities such as the Queen Mother of the West or winged immortals do appear on the decoration of coffins and occasionally on tomb walls, these motifs are much less common than in the Han. Returning to Rawson's notion of a constructed universe, we note a crucial distinction between the constructed spaces of Northern Dynasties tombs and Han representations: the absence of clear ascension into the immortal realm, the crossing of a boundary, as seen at Cangshan, or the intermingling of the deceased or human figures with the realm of otherworldly creatures. Humans and fantastical creatures in Northern Dynasties murals are rarely shown in the same realm, but rather construct and occupy levels of a clearly delineated and separate universe.[62] One might argue that the entire tomb space and its contents are intended to represent the household in the post-mortem world, and yet the nagging trend towards realism that characterizes the wall murals, as well as the figurines, suggests a slightly different emphasis.

The contradictory tendencies and tensions described above might be reconciled by considering the construction of tomb spaces and tomb furnishings as serving a dual purpose. On the one hand, they are emphatically distinct from the living in the nonfunctional nature of ceramic models and miniature furnishings. On the other hand, the increasingly articulated human component rendered in sixth-century tomb murals and figurine assemblages serves to distinguish the dead on another level not explicit in the debates on mingqi: to proclaim the high social standing and authority that the deceased had achieved in life. While not a component of the mingqi discourse, this hierarchical social distinction is certainly widespread in these same early ritual texts. Returning to Xunzi's account, we note that one "adorns the dead as though they were still living, and sends them to the grave with forms symbolic of life."[63] The forms of life, however, have changed in their appearance.

Tomb traditions of the Northern Dynasties indicate a continued belief in a post-mortem existence, but on what ideological basis? While we would be remiss to think that tomb furnishings do not represent evidence of religious beliefs, we should not be so quick to assume that we can identify a coherent religious logic behind objects interred in the grave, or that their interment was based on

a similar interpretation of ancient categories.[64] Some items buried with the dead were objects used in life: a sword in the tomb of the general Li Xian and a bronze belt found in the tomb of Emperor Wu. Though tombs and their furnishings may indicate that they were built upon ancient Confucian notions of filial piety and the enactment of rituals to express proper grief towards the dead, it is not so clear that changes emerged solely from the age-old philosophical debates on the character and meaning of tomb art. One of the most crucial and dramatic historical changes in this era was the conquering of north China by Xianbei rulers. Seeking cultural authority in their new territory, they adopted traditions of the conquered groups, and the core of their funerary traditions retain features whose content we can easily trace back over 500 years. Despite these linkages, sociocultural shifts and artistic innovations nonetheless altered the face of tomb art and space.

Epilogue

Research into medieval tomb art remains in a nascent phase relative to other genres such as painting and would benefit from attention to shifts and inroads in the field of art history and in the study of tomb art more broadly. Because tombs are furnished with multiple media and new finds continue to be unearthed as scholastic approaches shift, future work is ripe with a rich range of possible approaches, yet demands attention to the multiple levels of interpretation inherent in the study of tombs. While issues of cultural identity, ethnicity, and exchange, marked by visual details of tomb goods, are significant issues of the era, these subjects must be pursued with a consciousness towards our own relation to the tomb context and with attention to interpretations of tomb art as it served potentially multiple functions above and below ground. And while there is no one way of "reading" a tomb, in regard to the specific underground tomb context, we would do well to consider further how objects or images are used to define the various spaces, physical, pictorial, or architectural, and to refine our view of potentially meaningful interrelationships between media.

Studies of tomb art and its context emerged as a supplement to strictly formalist interpretations and the long dominance of studies of elite painters and calligraphers. Aside from early formal analyses of pictorial art in tombs, early scholars such as Fairbank drew attention to the relationship of structural features and iconographic programs. Later foundational works by Kesner, Powers, and Wu expanded this scope to analyze historical and ideological contexts, including how tomb components illuminated patterns of political patronage, production, and religious or ritual processes.[65] Implicit in these studies is a consciousness of the components of above and underground contexts, yet these earlier studies tended to focus on tombs of the Qin and Han dynasties. Attention to medieval tombs grew as an extension of the broadening of the field of Chinese art studies and has only continued to do so with the systematic excavation of more tombs.

Several strands of recent research have isolated tomb components while acknowledging their distinct context. The direction of discussion depends on the specific questions authors asked about them. We see greater historical specificity in some studies, such as work by Tseng, who analyzes motives behind the production of mural iconography; and we see attention to the interrelationship between tomb components in the work of Zhao, who indirectly foregrounds the role of space.[66] Contemporary theoretical models have fueled these productive shifts, yet scholarship remains dependent too upon trends in the field of archaeology in China. An archaeological and textual approach dominates the study of tomb art and space in China, but given that the tombs are still being unearthed these reconstructions are essential. Primary materials such as historical documents, tomb reports, and full-length monographs remain invaluable sources for future research, keeping in mind that modern taxonomies decontextualize meaningful tomb configurations. The recent monograph on the cemetery at the Yanbei Teachers College is an exemplary model of attentiveness to the original context and potential relationships between media. And though they remain highly descriptive, broader surveys nonetheless link up regional and temporal connections that can be related to diachronic shifts and ruptures. Works by Zheng mentioned earlier demonstrate growing attention to broader cultural studies and historical developments, for example.

The relationship of tomb art and space to Buddhist art, a distinct but not unrelated field, remains a large area for future research. Since anonymous artisans were largely responsible for the production of tomb art, and we can find only limited ties to identifiable historical figures, the subject has afforded fewer studies from the perspective of patronage or issues pursued by scholars of Buddhist art; thematic studies nonetheless alert us to historical and cultural intersections of objects and important dynamics of these centuries. Many more tombs of this era have been excavated in the past few years and await publication, and the speed and quality of reports continue to improve. So while the fragmentary nature of tomb art and its underground context has obscured our perspective on the material, its concealment also means that additional finds await our discovery.

Notes

* Due to copyright restrictions, images could not be obtained for this publication. Sources for relevant images have been indicated in the notes.

1 This period has been called the Dark Ages of Chinese history, drawing comparisons to medieval Europe. I favor the geographic Northern and Southern Dynasties designation for the period that will be the focus of this chapter. Six Dynasties is often used as an alternative, but since this appellation refers specifically to the courts at Nanjing in the south, I prefer the more general term. Where possible, I use specific dynastic names (e.g. Northern Wei, Northern Qi). While I recognize that use of the term medieval is problematic, I employ the term as a temporal contrast to references to ancient China, which in this context refers to the late Zhou through Han dynasty.

2 A recent piece addresses methodological perspectives on tomb art through an examination of space, material, and time. See Wu, "Rethinking East Asian Tombs" and Wu, *The Art of the Yellow Springs*.
3 Dien, *Six Dynasties*, vii.
4 Audrey Spiro (*Contemplating the Ancients*) and Annette Kieser (*Grabanlagen der Herrscherhauser*) have published extensive studies on southern tomb traditions, but only a few short, English-language studies examine the northeast and northwest traditions. For one excerpt see Abe, *Ordinary Images*, 110–23.
5 Dien's *Six Dynasties* compiles data on thousands of tombs of this era into useful topical divisions.
6 For example, *Jin shu* [*History of the Jin*], ch. 60, Biography of Suo Lin, 1651.
7 The practice of publishing book-length monographs for large finds started at the beginning of the twentieth century with the discovery of the Shang cemetery at Anyang, but the publication of these more comprehensive studies was inconsistent over most of the century.
8 Essays compiled in *Han Tang meishu kaogu* demonstrate the range of Yang Hong's most important work.
9 These Zoroastrian motifs have been found recently on several stone funerary couches and sarcophagi and contain the bodies of Sogdians. There is overlap between these items and tomb murals in particular, but they represent a separate strand of research that has been well researched by others. See Trombert and de La Vaissiere, *Les Sogdiens en Chine*.
10 Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*; Watt *et al.*, *China*.
11 Zheng, *Wei Jin Nan Bei chao*; Dien, *Six Dynasties*. For a more interpretative article, see Zheng's "Ye cheng guizhi." This article focuses on murals and their relationship to structure and does not incorporate other tomb contents.
12 Wu, *Between Han and Tang*.
13 Tseng ties the depiction of a representation of the celestial sky in the tomb of Yuan Yi to court intrigues and reveals surprising motivations for its construction. See Tseng, "Visual Replication"; Zhao, "You mushi dao mudao." On patronage and the construction of Buddhist cave temples, see McNair, *Donors of Longmen*.
14 Fong, "Antecedents of Sui-Tang Burial Practices"; Rawson, "Creating Universes." For studies by Chinese scholars, see for example Zheng, *Wei Jin Nan Bei chao*.
15 Early excavations were also subject to inconsistent reporting so many large tomb finds from the sixth century, discovered in the 1970s and 1980s, e.g. the tombs of Lou Rui, the Ruru princess, and Li Xian, were only published in preliminary reports. Of these tombs, only Lou Rui's was ever published as a full monograph, and although it was discovered in 1979, the monograph did not appear until 2006. Tombs from later eras have, until recently, been overshadowed by the extraordinary finds of ancient tombs, which have been well published, e.g. the tombs at Mawangdui and Mancheng, or the tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng. Most of these early publications date to the 1980s.
16 The furnishings of the Marquis' tomb are too lavish to detail here, but items found in the central chamber tended to be big ritual vessels made largely of bronze, while those in the east chamber with the Marquis' body were smaller items of lacquer, bamboo, wood, or jade, stone, and gold. See *Sui xian Zeng Hou Yi mu*.
17 See *Changsha Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, pl. 8.

18 *Mancheng Han mu fajue baogao*; *Changsha Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*. Some scholars have dated the notion the soul could move about freely in the grave even earlier to the fifth century BCE. The tomb of the Marquis of Zeng mentioned above, a structural precedent for the Mawangdui tomb, contained small holes in the lowest plank of each chamber wall, which authors of the report describe as passageways (literally: "gate holes" *mendong*) between compartments. In support of this theory, a hole was cut out of the foot end of the Marquis' outer coffin, and "windows" were also painted on the sides of his inner coffin, as well as on the ends of many of the female coffins. See *Sui xian Zeng Hou Yi mu*, 12–45, esp. 14–15.

19 There is extensive scholarship on tombs and the afterlife in ancient China. See e.g. Loewe's *Chinese Ideas* and *Ways to Paradise*, Pu, *Muzang yu shengsi*, and Loewe and Shaughnessy, *Cambridge History*.

20 *Xunzi jijie*, 366–71 in Watson, *Basic Writings*, 105. For an alternate translation, see Lewis, *Construction of Space*, 120. These early philosophical debates and the underlying motivations behind the passages and conceptions have been studied in the excellent essay by Pu, "Ideas Concerning Death."

21 Lewis, *Construction of Space*, esp. 119–30.

22 *Xunzi jijie* in Watson, *Basic Writings*, 103–4.

23 Several scholars have examined these passages in light of changing tomb practices in the Eastern Zhou. See the chapters by von Faulkenhausen and Wu in *Cambridge History*. On these texts, see Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*. A full discussion of the term's applicability to later tomb art still requires further study.

24 See von Faulkenhausen, "The Waning of the Bronze Age"; for an overview of the term and early evidence of these tendencies in material culture, see Wu, "'Mingqi'."

25 Von Faulkenhausen, "The Waning of the Bronze Age," 474. Mingqi that were made of bronze were often smaller, and distinguished from temple vessels by exposing seams from casting, which may have been sanded down for use in a temple.

26 For a fuller discussion of tomb figurines in ancient China, see Wu, "On Tomb Figurines," 13–47.

27 These were arrayed in the narrow compartment east of her body. See *Changsha Mawangdui yi hao mu*, pl. 18.

28 Kesner's study of the army of the First Emperor of Qin argues that the representational ability of sculptures made figurines more appropriate to their function as members of the underground army, since human sacrifices could not have designated their function as cavalry, infantry, or other military roles as well as sculpted versions did. See "Likeness of No One," 115–32.

29 For interpretations of the banner, see Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, Silbergeld, "Mawangdui," and Wu, "Art in a Ritual Context."

30 The original parameters of the mingqi in the ritual texts refer specifically to objects, but were later assumed to include pictorial images made for the grave.

31 See *Kaogu* 1975.2, p. 129.

32 See Wu, "Beyond the Great Boundary."

33 See Seidel, "Post-Mortem Immortality," and as it is related to Han pictorial imagery in Wu, "Beyond the Great Boundary."

34 Many modern studies on Eastern Han China focus on pictorial tombs. See for example Xin Lixiang, *Han dai huaxiangshi*. See also Powers, *Art and Political Expression*.

35 This structural key to reading narrative programs has been studied extensively, beginning with Wilma Fairbank's seminal study of the Wu Liang shrine, "A Structural Key."
36 See the annals of Cao Cao and Cao Pi. *San guo zhi* (*Wei shu*) ch. 1, 27; ch. 2, 81–2.
37 A grave excavated in fall 2009 has been rumored to be Cao Cao's tomb. Its massive size, a few recovered objects and inscribed items suggest that it belonged to someone of great stature, but it had been severely looted and awaits confirmation.
38 Several Northern Zhou emperors promulgated modest burials, and grave furnishings in the region around Chang'an are indeed modest compared to their western counterparts. Structurally, however, they are quite complex. To what extent these factors are symptoms of these edicts merits additional study. See Cheng, "Muzang, meishu yu zhengzhi."
39 *Datong Yanbei*; "Taiyuan Bei Qi Xu Xianxiu."
40 *Xunzi jijie* in Watson, *Basic Writings*, 103–4.
41 As Xunzi notes, the purpose of this is to emphasize the feeling of grief and to do so in the most appropriate and fitting fashion.
42 Wu, "Art and Architecture of the Warring States Period," 729–32.
43 I thank Shi Jie for reminding me of these types of contemporary bronzes. See Wang Kelin, "Bei Qi Kudi Huiluo mu."
44 *Bei Qi shu*, ch. 26 "Biography of Xue Chu," 370; *Zhou shu*, ch. 37 "Biography of Li Yan," 666. A more extensive study of textual sources on the subject is necessary.
45 The Western Han Emperor Wen is often cited as the model source of this trend. He proclaimed that the production of lavish tomb furnishings harmed the economy (and thus the living), but the rationale behind the adoption of modest burials varied in later eras. *Han shu*, ch. 4, "Annals of Emperor Wen," 132.
46 The number of mingqi found in the graves ranged from two to seven, with the majority containing between three to five. The report does not offer a suggestion regarding the origin of this practice. In fact, it suggests a Xianbei origin for the placement of many of the ceramic furnishings near the foot of the body and argues that the mingqi may have been receptacles for the soul. See *Datong nanjiao*, 488–91.
47 See *Cixian Wanzhang Bei chao bihua mu*, pl. 50.
48 To this author's knowledge, this is the only set of ding vessels found thus far in a Northern Dynasties tomb.
49 The legs of bronze dings in the Marquis Yi of Zeng's tomb possess a similar hoof-like foot but only on the exterior sides of the vessel legs. The Wanzhang ding legs fully resemble hooves and have, as well, a slight bump higher up which resembles a knee-like protuberance. They do resemble legs of earlier Eastern Zhou vessels, but the interior portion of the legs are not contoured, and the handles are more proportionately attached. For a typical ancient example, see von Faulkenhausen, "The Waning of the Bronze Age."
50 *Cixian Wanzhang Bei chao bihua mu*, 132–3, fig. 101 and pl. 50. The two ding stood 26 cm and 28.8 cm high and measured 29.4 cm and 21 cm in depth at the lip. Some elaborate sets of decorated ceramics identified as mingqi have been found in ancient tombs, e.g. Zhongshan mausoleum.
51 We are reliant on texts to elaborate ancient beliefs, but it must be mentioned that these sources were written by members of the upper strata of ancient society and thus denote a particularly narrow frame of mind. And while it is likely that these conceptions represent broader trends, it is also likely that there were variations to beliefs touted by ancient philosophers.

52 Loewe's earlier study of Han imperial tombs defines these and other technical terms associated with burials. These were produced by artisans in the *Dongyuan*, the department responsible for making funerary equipment for the court. We know little about this department during the Northern Dynasties, but it is presumed to have still existed because of references in historical accounts and the similarity of massive numbers of sculpted figurines in tombs of certain regions, i.e. tombs of the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi in the Cixian region, that could only have been mass produced in such a department. See Loewe, "State Funerals."

53 *Sui shu*, 755–6. While numerous biographies in Northern and Southern historical accounts reference gifts of funerary items from this workshop, only the *Sui shu* defines its function as handling funerary equipage. *Jin shu* [*History of the Jin*] 24.736 lists its position relative to other departments.

54 *Hou Han shu*, ch. 9, "Annals of Emperor Xian," 391.

55 Cheng, "Attending the Dead."

56 Pictorial representations dating to before the Han have been unearthed, but except for a few painted silk fragments they are largely decoration on bronze or lacquer vessels. These early images show knowledge of representational qualities beyond decorative patterns, so it is likely that pictorial images were more common but due to less durable surfaces no longer extant.

57 Kesner, "Likeness of No One."

58 Texts are silent on the identity of this creature, which appears painted and carved in funerary murals, as well as Buddhist cave-temples in the fifth and sixth centuries. As authors of the Wanzhang tomb report have noted, this creature appears to assume different identities with the addition of accoutrements. Here he appears as a general fantastic creature inhabiting a position below the celestial realm, but in the Lou Rui tomb he is depicted directly on the ceiling with a circle of drums and becomes the God of Thunder. Carved on the bottom level of Buddhist cave walls, he appears to serve a role as protector: *Cixian Wanzhang Bei chao bihua mu*, 162, footnote 1.

59 Extant examples demonstrate remarkable homogenous iconography in several distinct regions in the sixth century, with slightly more abbreviated murals in the few examples from the western territory of Northern Zhou. The Shandong region shows slightly more variation in mid-sized mural tombs, which generally lack the procession but contain figural scenes in the chamber.

60 Sculpted fantastical creatures are also absent from tombs of this era, except for the pair of *zhenmushou*, or apotropaic beasts, which flank the tomb entry. On the shift in figurine assemblages in the fifth to sixth centuries, see Cheng, "Attending the Dead."

61 In some ways, these hark back to some of the earliest known mural tombs from the Western Han, such as the Shaogou tomb. A long celestial map runs horizontally along a flat central surface on the ceiling. Still, in these early representations, human figures who are presumed to be the deceased are depicted amongst immortal creatures, ostensibly ascending into the afterlife.

62 Exceptions appear to include imagery from the carved stone coffin tradition from Luoyang in the early sixth century, and a few lacquer examples from the fifth century, which depict the Queen Mother of the West and King Father of the East in a celestial realm on top of coffins. Whether there is some connection between this type of iconography and coffins remains to be studied. Figures carved on the

stone sarcophagus of Wirkak (Shi Jun) appear to be ascending to an immortal realm atop a winged figure.

63 Watson, *Basic Writings*, 103–4.

64 An excellent, more recent work by Stephen Bokencamp explores contemporary medieval views on the afterlife. The author examines an impressive array of textual sources and at times relates them to significant burial practices and tomb furnishings (e.g. soul jars), but his work focuses on the interactions between the living and the dead and how the dead might be mobilized to solve problems of the living. The question of the status of tomb furnishings is not addressed directly. See Bokencamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety*.

65 I exclude here important work by Robert Bagley and Jessica Rawson on ritual bronzes of earlier eras, despite occasional overlap with the tomb context. The recent book on artisans by Barbieri-Low (*Artisans in Imperial China*) offers a wonderful discussion of craftsmanship in ancient China, and while it does not focus on tomb space per se, it presents a variety of alternative historical contexts from which tomb art can be productively examined.

66 Tseng, "Visual Replication"; Zhao, "You mushi dao mudao."

References

Abe, Stanley. *Ordinary Images*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Barbieri-Low, Anthony. *Artisans in Imperial China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007.

Bei Qi shu [*History of the Northern Qi*], by Li Baiyao (564–647 CE). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995.

Bokencamp, Stephen R. *Ancestors and Anxiety: Daoism and the Birth of Rebirth in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

Changsha Mawangdui yi hao Han mu [*The Han Tomb Number One at Mawangdui, Changsha*]. Edited by Hunan sheng bowuguan [Hunan Provincial Museum], and Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo [Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences]. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1973.

Cheng, Bonnie. "Attending the Dead: Shifting Needs and Modes of Presentation in Sixth Century Tombs." In *Between Han and Tang*, vol. 3: *Visual and Material Culture in a Transformative Period*, edited by Wu Hung, 425–69. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2003.

Cheng, Bonnie. "Muzang, meishu yu zhengzhi – Ningxia Guyuan Bei Zhou Li Xian mu zai sikao [Tombs, Art, and Politics: A Re-examination of the Northern Zhou tomb of Li Xian in Guyuan, Ningxia]" *Yishu yu kexue* [Art and Science] 5 (2007): 12–23.

Cixian Wanzhang Bei chao bihua mu [*The Northern Dynasties Mural Tomb at Wanzhang, Cixian*]. Edited by Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo [Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences] and Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo [Hebei Province Cultural Relics Institute]. Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2003.

Datong nanjiao Bei Wei muqun [*The Northern Wei cemetery in the Southern Suburbs of Datong*]. Edited by Shanxi daxue lishi wenhua xueyuan, Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, and Datong shi bowuguan [Shanxi University College of History and Culture, Shanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, and Datong Municipal Museum]. Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2006.

Datong Yanbei shiyuan Bei Wei mu qun [*The Northern Wei Cemetery at the Yanbei Teachers' College*]. Edited by Liu Junxi and Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo [Datong Institute of Archaeology]. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008.

Dien, Albert. *Six Dynasties Civilization*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006.

Fairbank, Wilma. "A Structural Key to Han Mural Art." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 7 no. 1 (1942): 52–88.

Fong, Mary. "Antecedents of Sui-Tang Burial Practices." *Artibus Asiae* 51 no. 3/4 (1991): 147–98.

Han shu [*History of the Han*], by Ban Gu (32–93 CE). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962 [reprint, 1983].

Hou Han shu [*History of the Latter Han*], by Fan Ye (398–445 CE). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979.

Jin shu [*History of the Jin*], by Fang Xuanling (578–648 CE). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974.

Juliano, Annette L., and Judith Lerner, eds. *Monks and Merchants: Silk Road Treasures from Northwest China, Gansu, and Ningxia 4th–7th century*. New York: Harry N. Abrams with the Asia Society, 2001.

Kesner, Ladislav. "Likeness of No One: (Re)Presenting the First Emperor's Army." *The Art Bulletin* 77 no. 1 (March, 1995): 115–32.

Kieser, Annette. *Grabanlagen der Herrscherhauser der Sudlichen Dynastien in China (420–589): Geisterwege und Graber im Spiegel der Geschichte* [*Imperial Tombs of the Southern Dynasties in China (420–589): Spirit Paths and Tombs as Reflected in History*]. Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz 60. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004.

Lewis, Mark E. *The Construction of Space in Early China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.

Loewe, Michael. *Chinese Ideas of Life and Death: Faith, Myth and Reason in the Han Period (202 BC–AD 220)*. Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1982.

Loewe, Michael, ed. *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographic Guide*. Berkeley, CA: The Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1993.

Loewe, Michael. "State Funerals of the Han Empire." *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 71 (1999): 5–72.

Loewe, Michael. *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality*. Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1979.

Loewe, Michael, and Edward Shaughnessy, eds. *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Mancheng Han mu fajue baogao. Edited by Hebei sheng wenwu guanli chu and Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980.

McNair, Amy. *Donors of Longmen*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.

Powers, Martin J. *Art and Political Expression in Early China*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991.

Pu Muzhou (Poo Mu-chou). "Ideas Concerning Death and Burial in Pre-Han and Han China." *Asia Major* 3rd series 3 no. 2 (1990): 25–62.

Pu Muzhou (Poo Mu-chou). *Muzang yu shengsi – Zhongguo gudai zongjiao zhi xingsi* [*Tombs and Death: Ancient Chinese Thought and Religion*]. Taibei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1993.

Rawson, Jessica. "Creating Universes: Cultural Exchange as Seen in Tombs in Northern China between the Han and Tang Periods." In *Between Han and Tang*, vol. 2: *Cultural and Artistic Interaction in a Transformative Period*, edited by Wu Hung, 113–49. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2001.

San guo zhi [*Annals of the Three Kingdoms*], by Chen Shou (233–297 CE). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975.

Seidel, Anna. "Post-Mortem Immortality or: The Taoist Resurrection of the Body." In *Gilgul: Essays on Transformation, Revolution, and Permanence in the History of Religions: Dedicated to R. J. Zwi Werblowsky*, edited by S. Shaked, D. Shulman, and G. G. Stroumsa. 223–37. Leiden: Brill, 1987.

Silbergeld, Jerome. "Mawangdui, Excavated Materials, and Transmitted Texts: A Cautionary Note." *Early China* 8 (1982–3): 79–92.

Spiro, Audrey. *Contemplating the Ancients: Aesthetics and Social Issues in Early Chinese Portraiture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Sui shu [*History of the Sui*], by Wei Zheng (580–643 CE). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973.

Sui xian Zeng Hou Yi mu [*The Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng, in Sui County*]. Edited by Hubei sheng bowuguan [Hubei Provincial Museum]. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980.

"Taiyuan Bei Qi Xu Xianxiu mu fajue baogao [Excavation Report of the Northern Qi Tomb of Xu Xianxiu in Taiyuan]." Edited by Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo. *Wenwu* 10 (2003): 4–40.

Trombert, Eric, and Etienne de La Vaissière. *Les Sogdiens en Chine* [The Sogdians in China]. Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrème Orient, 2005.

Tseng, Lillian Lan-ying. "Visual Replication and Political Persuasion." In *Between Han and* Tang, vol. 3: *Visual and Material Culture in a Transformative Period*, edited by Wu Hung, 377–417. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2003.

Von Falkenhausen, Lothar. "The Waning of the Bronze Age: Material Culture and Social Developments, 770–481 BC." In *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, edited by M. Loewe and E. Shaughnessy, 450–544. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Wang Kelin. "Bei Qi Kudi Huiluo mu [The Northern Qi Tomb of Kudi Huiluo]" *Kaogu xuebao* 3 (1979): 377–402.

Watt, James, and Prudence Oliver Harper. *China: Dawn of a Golden Age 200–750*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004.

Wu Hung. "The Art and Architecture of the Warring States Period." In *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, edited by M. Loewe and E. Shaughnessy, 651–744. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Wu Hung. "Art in a Ritual Context: Rethinking Mawangdui." *Early China* 17 (1992): 111–44.

Wu Hung. *The Art of the Yellow Springs: Understanding Chinese Tombs*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010.

Wu Hung, ed. *Between Han and Tang*. 3 vols. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2000–3.

Wu Hung. "Beyond the Great Boundary," In *Boundaries in China*, edited by John Hay, 81–104. London: Reaktion Books, 1994.

Wu Hung. "'Mingqi' de lilun he shijian ['Spirit Vessels' in Theory and Practice]." *Wenwu* 6 (2006): 72–81.

Wu Hung. "Rethinking East Asian Tombs: A Methodological Proposal." In *Studies in the History of Art* 74: *Dialogues in Art History, from Mesopotamian to Modern: Readings for a New Century*, edited by Elizabeth Cropper, 139–65. New Haven, CT, and London: National Gallery of Art, Washington, 2009.

Wu Hung. "On Tomb Figurines: The Beginning of a Visual Tradition." In *Body and Face in Chinese Visual Culture*, edited by Wu Hung and Katherine Tsiang, 13–47. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.

Xunzi jijie. Edited by Wang Xianqian (1842–1918), translated by Burton Watson. In *Basic Writings of Mo-tzu, Hsun-tzu, and Han Fei-tzu*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.

Yang Hong. *Han Tang meishu kaogu he fojiao yishu* [*Art, Archaeology and Buddhist Art of the Han-Tang Period*]. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1999.

Zhao Yonghong. "You mushi dao mudao – Nan Bei chao muzang suo jian zhi yizhang biaoxian yu sangzang kongjian de bianhua [From Tomb Chamber to Passageway – Processions in Northern and Southern Dynasties Tombs and the Transformation of Funerary Space]." In *Between Han and Tang*, vol. 2: *Cultural and Artistic Interaction in a Transformative Period*, edited by Wu Hung, 427–61. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2001.

Zheng Yan. "Lun 'Ye cheng guizhi' – Han Tang zhi jian muzang bihua de yige jiedian [A Discussion of the 'Ye City System': A Point of Intersection between Han and Tang Tomb Murals]." *Yishu shi yanjiu* 3 (2001), 295–329.

Zheng Yan. *Wei Jin Nan Bei chao bihua mu* [*Painted Mural Tombs of the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties*]. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2002.

Zhou shu [*History of the [Northern] Zhou*], by Linghu Defen (583–666 CE). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971.

Further Reading

Juliano, Annette L. *Teng-Hsien: An Important Six Dynasties Tomb*. Ascona: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1980.

Wei shu [*History of the (Northern) Wei*], by Wei Shou (506–572 CE). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973 [reprint, 1995].

5

The Visible and the Invisible in a Southeast Asian World

Jan Mrázek

In English, terms such as "visual art" and "visual culture" reflect the privileging of visuality in the practices and discourses of western art. An overwhelming emphasis on the visual sense, as well as the development of particular, historically specific ways of seeing, displaying, and conceptualizing objects, are indivisibly part of the history of European and American art.

Modern fine art is typically seen, not touched, heard, or tasted. The painting as an illusionary window through which one sees the represented world, the conventional mode of experiencing such painting, museums and art galleries as technologies for seeing in which other senses are systematically suppressed (Do not touch! Silence! No food!), the centrality of photography in writing on art and slides in art history classes (the photography creates visual images in which other senses are forgotten) – all these are aspects of modern art too obvious to be normally questioned (*of course* one can't touch the Mona Lisa!), but they manifest how the visual sense is the focus and conventional limit of European fine art. This separation of seeing from the other senses is part of a larger history of European thought, and relates particularly to the special place given to vision – looking, observing, inspecting – as the most rational and objective sense. Correlatively, rational thought is commonly construed as a kind of clear vision (rather than, for example, sense of touch or taste), as can be seen in the prominence of visual metaphors of knowledge.

These seeing and thinking habits have also shaped Euro-American approaches to Asian art. This essay explores how things are seen and not seen in Southeast Asia, how seeing is often part of experiences that go beyond seeing, and how what is (un)seen is itself often essentially different from the "art object" of western art history.

While the thinking of this essay grows from studying Southeast Asian art and living in Southeast Asia, most of the examples are from one particular Southeast Asian culture, Java, and even here I focus on a limited number of selected cases, often returning several times to one example as I consider it from different perspectives (notably the *keris*, a dagger with magic powers). It is not my aim to generalize about Southeast Asia (or Java), but rather to let the examples tickle our thinking about the visible and the invisible. It is also my aim to give a sense of some of the local ways of conceptualizing and debating the visible and the invisible.

Anthropologists, historians, students of textiles, and other scholars of culture have written about some of the issues discussed below, more often than art historians. However, some art historians, most notably Stanley O'Connor, have discussed the being of things in Southeast Asia, local forms of connoisseurship, and the "imaginative frameworks" within which objects are perceived, and compared them to European and American connoisseurship and its imaginative frameworks. My own approach learns both from this strand of Southeast Asian art history, and from scholars working in other disciplines.[1]

Multisensory Experience

Perhaps the most obvious way in which Southeast Asian art leads us to think beyond the visual is the multisensory nature of the experience of art. For instance, among the most visually striking and impressive objects displayed in galleries of Southeast Asian art are various objects used in performances, such as masks, puppets, textiles, and richly decorated musical instruments. When one perceives these objects in a performance, one does not just see them – not just see, and not just them. One perceives them as integral components of multisensory events, and the objects themselves become more fully what they are through their integration in the larger event. The event, the larger experience, is not simply visual, nor are visual and other experiences juxtaposed to each other, but rather they are one.

Let me use as an example performances in the Central Javanese Mangkunegaran Palace, although much of what I say resonates with innumerable other cases of Southeast Asian performances. When one sees a mask in a performance of masked drama, one perceives it as the face of the sensuous body of the dancer moving to the sound of music. As the dancer dons the mask, it affects his feeling and bodily movements, gives him new identity, becomes part of his living body, while he gives it life, movement, and sight. A person and a thing are united. In this process, seeing is important: the dancer looks at the mask before he wears it in order to better feel and enter into its character – it is a kind of seeing which leads to the unification of the seer and the seen, rather than one in which the subject contemplates an object. During the opening movements of the dance, the dancer may hold the mask and look at it before donning it. The term for this is *ngliling*, a word used also when a mother holds her baby and lovingly looks at her. It is an appropriate metaphor: the dancer nurtures an inner, intimate connection with the mask and its soul.

When the dancer dons the mask, he is looking through the mask's eyes – it is dark inside, and the world is glimpsed only through narrow openings. He makes it appear as if the mask itself has the power of sight and thus brings it to life, at the same time succumbing to its character. Various "looking" gestures are frequent in mask dances (as well as in puppet theater), because creating a feeling that the mask (or puppet) can see is a powerful way to animate the thing. But what happens involves more than seeing. It involves touching, the physical feeling of the mask pressed against one's face, as a constant reminder of one's other face, one's other self (the dancer keeps the mask attached by biting onto a small piece of leather attached to the inside of the mask).

The costume – even as it combines different textiles and accessories that could stand as art objects or decorative items in their own right – is an extension of the mask and becomes organically part of the masked dancer. The costume reveals much about who the character is – not only whether it is, for example, a king or priest or warrior, but also about his or her inner character. For example, small batik patterns are signs of spiritual refinement and restraint, while larger, bolder patterns are appropriate for an extrovert, "macho" warrior. The batik pattern thus collaborates and resonates with other ways through which the character is expressed – the mask, the movements, the musical accompaniment. To fully feel the batik patterns at that moment, one has to feel them as part of this multisensory composition of forms, movements, and sounds.

Bodily movements and the sound of music are organically connected; music and movement follow and inspire each other, they give each other feeling, meaning, and expressive power, and they come together to create an experience that is indivisibly visual and aural.

Some performances actively engage the sense of smell. For example, jasmine flowers are placed in the folds of the batik cloth worn by the dancer in such a way that they are gradually scattered and their fragrance pervades the air. For sacred dances, small offerings with fragrant flowers and incense mark the limits of the dance space.

Javanese dance generally does not emphasize abstract visual patterns (formations, creating abstract shapes with the body, and so on) but instead focuses on the refinement of inner feelings, the control of bodily energies, and the correct and powerful expression of character. For example, in masked dance, the dancer's movements, together with the mask, represent the inner nature of a particular character. One does not just see such dance, but feels it inside one's body.

In the Mangkunegaran Palace, the oldest set of gamelan musical instruments is decorated with the same colors and patterns as the architecture – it is indivisibly part of it. One of the most striking aspects of performances in this large audience hall (*pendhapa*) is the exceptionally beautiful, almost otherwordly acoustics: even when each of the many musicians in the large ensemble plays very softly, one can hear each musical part distinctly yet at the same time they all come harmoniously together. The sound seems to be coming from no particular direction, filling the whole space with soft but physically sensuous sound

FIGURE 5-1 Performers of a sacred dance in the grand hall of the Mangkunegaran Palace in Solo, Java, wearing batik and other cloths, with fragrant jasmine flowers in their hair, accompanied by gamelan music. Photograph by the author.

matter. Like a gothic cathedral, at the same time that it defines space and helps to give it feeling and character, the architecture is essentially a giant musical instrument, with the gamelan set being part of it.

When I enjoy such an event, I do not look at it as something outside me, outside my space. Instead, I am immersed in it, I am situated within it – within the architecture (which is not built around the distinction between audience and performers, as is the case in the European proscenium stage), within the music. Seeing is not detached from what it sees nor from other senses, but it grows from the multisensory nature of the perceived world.

In many ways a museum experience is as multisensory as a performance: the smells, sounds, and touching (or not touching), the particular kind of silence of art galleries (the hushed voices, the irritated looks one gets when one raises one's voice or laughs) – all that is memorable, and essentially part of the modern art world. What may be different, however, is how everything in this particular kind of multisensory environment claims that sight is the only meaningful sense, and the other senses are only potential disturbances of visual apprehension. What is different, in other words, is how sight and perception are construed – not necessarily in verbal narratives about the experience, but in the experience itself. Art objects can be sensual and evoke all the senses but typically through the mediating sense of sight (as when one sees flowers or naked bodies in a painting).

Let us return to Southeast Asia. It is not only in performances that things such as masks, puppets, musical instruments, and textiles are more than simply visual. Let us think back to the batik cloth that we have encountered as part of the dancer's costume, but let us think beyond the performance, to batik cloth used in everyday life. In a batik market, one can see how women evaluate batik: they hold it and feel it with their hands to apprehend the quality of the cloth, they put it close to their faces to smell the wax which was used to decorate it, and of course they think of its use, how they are going to wear it, how it will feel and appear on their bodies, how it will make them appear, what will people – perhaps their neighbors, friends, men – think of them when they see them wearing the cloth. Even beyond a performance, people encounter the cloth in a way that is not limited to visual contemplation.

Let us consider another example, to which I will be returning throughout this essay: the keris, a dagger common in many parts of Indonesia and the Malay world. It has either a straight or "wavy" blade, and on the blade is visible the *pamor*, a pattern resulting from the blending of light and dark metals. While it is often exhibited in museums for its visual beauty and fine craftsmanship, its traditional meanings and functions are quite different from that of a typical art object. In Javanese culture, it is one of the five essential possessions of a man. Believed to have various magical powers, it can bring good or bad luck to its owner. There is a complex connoisseurship (oral and written discourse describing and categorizing kerises, and teaching how to evaluate them), as well as philosophical and mystical explanations that read the keris as an esoteric text about man and the world, and a sea of (hi)stories about various kerises. I will discuss

FIGURE 5-2 Four Javanese kerises without scabbards, showing the pamor patterns on the blades. Photograph by the author.

the keris in more detail in the next section, but here I want to focus on the multisensory character of people's encounter with it. Looking at the keris is an important way of studying and evaluating it, but it is merely one part of the perception of keris.

To start with, the keris is regularly cleaned with a traditional ointment, which brings out the pamor pattern and gives the keris its characteristic fragrant scent. This scent is an indivisible part of "looking" at a keris. Incense is sometimes burned and fragrant flowers are given as an offering to the keris, since fragrance attracts invisible beings and "facilitates the contact between a person and the keris."[2] In the mythological and magical world of stories about kerises – a world that is never entirely separate from the material world – scent also matters: for instance, the metals of certain magical kerises are said to be distinguished by particular fragrance (for example, "a sweet fragrance").

The process of examining a keris is governed by an etiquette which ensures that the keris as well as its owner are shown respect, that the people present show respect to each other, and that the keris is protected from physical and spiritual damage. The etiquette regulates ways of holding and handling the keris, and the ways one moves when handling a keris – that is, rules that concern not primarily visual perception, but bodily interaction with the thing. Texture and feel to the touch are also important: descriptions often say how a particular keris or type of iron feels to touch ("when it is touched").

As a part of the examination of the keris, one taps on the blade and listens to the sound. Treatises on keris include long lists of sounds, such as: "*mbrengengeng* [droning, buzzing, reverberating] like a bee"; "*drung*, long is its sound"; "*kung, 'mbrengengeng*"; "*ngong-ngong*, within the sound there is yet another sound, [a] long *ting ngong ngong*"; "*brengengeng*, quivering like from above"; "*nong nging brung*"; "*gung drung*"; "*ting ngeng*"; "*prung jung*, the sound/voice is trailing off." Magical kerises communicate by way of sound: a keris may shake in the scabbard and make a noise to alarm its owner when a thief enters the house. In some cases, the magical power of a keris is conceived as the maker's voice – magical formulas uttered by him – "recorded" (as modern texts describe it) on the keris.

Another traditional way to learn more about the keris is sleeping with it: the dreams that it generates help one understand the particular keris. We will discuss below what it is that one learns about the keris, but here the point is that the connoisseurship of keris, like the appreciation of the mask worn in a dance performance, goes well beyond looking. As we will see, one may look at a keris for its visual beauty, but traditionally it is more important to understand something else about the thing, something invisible and not simply aesthetic.

The Thing and the Invisible

The keris is a material, visible object, yet when one reads Javanese texts about kerises, the visible and otherwise perceptible aspects of the keris – the physical form and its details, the pamor, the sound, the feel to touch, and even the signs seen in dreams – are cues to understanding something else, something invisible and immaterial: the keris's individual character or nature (*watak*, *sifat*), power (*daya*), or content (*isi*). For traditional connoisseurs, it is ultimately this special character and the invisible power that is most important about a keris, and the examination of the visible material object is a means to understand the invisible and the immaterial.

In order to describe the workings of these invisible powers, analogies of electromagnetic waves and transmission are frequently used in modern texts. For example:

> According to the science of physics, sound and light are basically a kind of vibration. Attacks of sound can be heard by the human ear, while attacks of light can be seen by the human eye. But in the keris-science, the attacks of the content of the keris cannot be perceived by the tympanum of the ear or the retina of the eye, but by . . . *pangrasa*.[3]

The Javanese word *pangrasa* (very approximately: "feeling, sensing"; from the root *rasa*) means, the author says, "sensitivity of the heart," "inner sharpness," or "what people call the sixth sense."[4]

The "transmission" between a keris and a person is sometimes compared to the invisible workings of radio or television: a person is like a radio receiver and the keris like the radio broadcasting station.

> A radio receives vibration-signs from a broadcaster by way of air, too. However, in order that the reception is clearer, an additional tool/medium is needed, that is, an antenna. In the world of keris, fragrance functions as the antenna. From recording different experiences, we can say that it is true that fragrance indeed facilitates the contact [*kontak*] between a person and a keris. So, when we use the analogy of the mechanism of radio, keris is the object that broadcasts the vibration [*vibrasi*], and, with the help of the fragrance (as the antenna), the human can receive the vibration. At the same time, the human, a radio *receiver*, is also the broadcaster. That is because in a certain manner, the human can also broadcast vibration which can be recorded on the keris.[5]

It is not clear whether the waves are "longitudinal, or transversal, or perhaps [they are] other waves that are completely beyond the sphere of physics," so they are called the "luck-inducing vibration" (*getaran angsar*, *vibrasi angsar*), and the kind of waves in "the world of the keris should not be confused with the kind in physics."[6] Unlike the vibration in physics (such as light, sound, heat, or radio waves), detectable by one of the five senses (perhaps with the help of a radio and an antenna), the keris-vibration (as well as similar vibration generated by people) is subject to pangrasa.[7]

Pangrasa, also translated above as "inner acuteness/sharpness" is not a knowledge or skill that can be learned. "The soul of children and babies is still pure, and so their pangrasa is still sharp, in comparison to adults."[8] On the other hand, pangrasa can be cultivated by yoga-like practices such as breath exercises. Describing one variation of this science, Harsrinuksmo, a Javanese expert and the author of a number of books on the keris, refers to his gurus from the Yogyakarta palace, the late Widyosastrosetiko and Widyosudarmo.

> The science is called *ilmu tajeg*, and it is used for the detection [*mendeteksi*] of kerises in an esoteric manner. Basically, *ilmu tajeg* is a science of concentrating the sensitivity of one's feeling on the attacks of vibration or *vibrasi* which is generated by the keris or another *wesi aji* ["precious iron," a generic term for keris and other magically potent weapons]. Maybe the vibration or *vibrasi* which is generated is almost the same kind (or maybe even the same) as that what is called radiesthesia in the books written by the Westerners.[9]

In the quotations above, the "content" of the keris is described as a kind of power that produces vibrations. On other occasions, it is described in terms of invisible beings inhabiting the keris. These two are complementary conceptualizations.

A *lelembut*, *makhluk alus*, or *jin* can inhabit the keris. These are immaterial (*lembut*, *alus*), and under normal conditions invisible beings or spirits. One is

more likely to feel their presence through the sense of smell (fragrance without a visible source) or hearing (sounds and voices). They may be called in by the keris maker by means of magical formula (*mantra*), which may also "cause the jin to know his tasks . . . such as to safeguard the owner" of the keris in which the jin lives.[10]

> *Jins* and other immaterial creatures, like other God's creatures, including human beings, enjoy certain things. Generally, *jins* and other immaterial creatures like the fragrance of certain flowers, the scent of incense, and offerings of food. This is true about any object, including the keris; if it is regularly given . . . such offerings, a *jin* or another immaterial creature will come and inhabit it. They come because they are "served" offerings that they like. Since the spirit is regularly given food by the owner of the keris, he will respond in "good spirit" according to his abilities. . . . It can happen that the *jin* is one of the "naughty" ones, and s/he will disturb the owner.[11]

There are "good jins" as well as "bad jins," and "there are even jins that have a religion." Most people believe that the jin in their keris is a good one, "although there is no proof."[12]

According to Harsrinuksmo, there are three kinds of "content": the "blessing" (*berkah*), "immaterial beings" (*makhluk alus*), and "induction" (*induksi*), and all three of them generate radio-wave-like waves or vibration that can be detected [*dideteksi*] by pangrasa.[13] Another immaterial inhabitant of the keris may be an ancestor-spirit. Yet another popular opinion of what is the impalpable aspect of the keris holds that the *empu* (expert keris maker) stores powerful words within the pores of the iron. This, too, is expressed through a modern metaphor. The master keris maker, "records" his voice on the keris just as one records sound on a cassette tape or a picture by a camera. He is said to have a "magnetic power."[14]

A keris that contains the voice of the empu is called *tayuhan*, and the term is also more generally used to refer to any keris that has some kind of content. The verbal form of *tayuhan* (*nayuh*) denotes the act of perceiving the immaterial meanings of the keris. This includes methods that use meditation, but the most popular forms are those in which the keris is placed in a certain manner by or under one's body during the night. The dreams then become "the sources of meaning."[15] One thus comes closer to the invisible content precisely when one's eyes are shut and one is not conscious. However: "What appears in the dream of the *tayuh*-er is not the content of the keris, but a symbol of the character of the keris's content."[16] This suggests that both dreams and the waking world are merely covert signs or symbols of "characters" or "meanings" imperceptible by means other than signs or symbols.

It could be asked what role the metaphors of modern technology, magnetism, and the like play in the language of the keris. The "content" or the "power" (*daya*), or "power to influence" (*daya pangaribawa*) is often said to be "mysterious, inscrutable" (*gaib*, *ghaib*) and secret, and the inscrutability or inexplicability seems to be essential to its nature. It is not articulated except through

modern technological metaphors. The knowledge about the power is powerfully meaningful in its secrecy, in the way it cannot be easily seen and talked about. Harsrinuksmo, writing from the point of view of a researcher, has talked to several people "who are considered experts in the problem of *isoteri* of the keris":

> However, these discussions were not satisfactory, because, in general, the experts do not like to debate. In fact, when they are chased with a detailed question, they try to evade it. As if most of them were of the opinion that the content and the power of the keris is not to be talked about, let alone debated. There are also those who try to evade answering by talking in a rather diplomatic manner: the knowledge about the keris should be learned in order that one can benefit from it, but should not be discussed, let alone made into a material for research. Also, many have responded: "I am just learning about the benefits of the power of the keris. The question what in fact is the power was not taught to me by my guru."[17]

Another author writes: "The belief that the keris is a *pusaka* which has a mysterious power [*daya ghaib*] cannot be proved by means of the science(s)/knowledge of the external/material";[18] rather, the "belief is born of *rasa* [taste, feeling, the faculty with which one comprehends hidden meanings and truths; related to *pangrasa*]."[19] Similarly, texts about the symbolism of keris, which treat keris as a source of wisdom about life – as a kind of obscure philosophical text – interpret keris by means of rasa. What is perceived by rasa is the invisible, the immaterial, the implicit, the inner. The invisible, immaterial aspect of the keris perceivable only by means of "signs" – as interpreted by rasa or pangrasa (or an "old text," ultimately based on rasa) – is also the locus of its power and its meaning. Clifford Geertz writes:

> *Rasa* has two primary meanings: "feeling" and "meaning" . . . As "meaning," *rasa* is applied to the words in a letter, in a poem, or even in speech, to indicate the between-the-lines "looking north and hitting south" type of allusive suggestion that is so important in Javanese communication. And it is given the same application to external acts generally: to indicate the implicit import, the connotative "feeling" of dance movements, polite gestures, and so forth. But, in this second sense, it also means "ultimate significance" – the deepest meaning at which one arrives by dint of mystical effort and whose clarification resolves all ambiguities of mundane existence.[20]

The powers and meanings of keris are essentially inscrutable, invisible to the naked eye, and they cannot be proved in terms of rational thought or by science. In order to suggest that the powers of keris are not necessarily a superstition, modern Javanese authors turn to metaphors of modern technology, pointing out that even in the realm of modern technology and science, the invisible – such as radio waves – can be real.

We have seen that the visible, audible, and palpable aspects of a keris are signs to understanding inner, immaterial, invisible power and character. What and why

do people want to learn about the invisible? Each keris has specific powers – for example, protecting from particular kinds of harm, bringing a particular kind of good luck – and it is appropriate for one person but not another, to the extent that the same keris can bring good luck when matched with the right person but bad luck when owned by the wrong person. The connection between a man and a keris is thus very personal: the term for describing a good match between a person and a keris is the same as that used to describe the right match between a man and a woman (*jodho*). The transfer of a keris from one person to another is traditionally not thought about as sale, but as something more like a marriage, and the money paid is called the dowry. The keris' invisible, immaterial inner nature is thus at the heart of the connection between a person and the thing. Understanding the invisible – or misunderstanding it – has serious consequences for dealing with the keris, and for what the keris "does" to people, because it can benefit or harm them.

Perhaps any art work, or any object for that matter, is surrounded by, is seen through, the thickness of a tissue of words, conceptions, beliefs, and (hi)stories. The lore of legends surrounding kerises is rich and extensive, and the (hi)stories are an important part of the knowledge and discourse surrounding the things. As we try to think of different kinds of invisibility, we may note that one of the most common plots involves a keris mysteriously disappearing (magically flying away, stolen by a magically potent enemy). Some kerises have the power to become invisible or to make their owners invisible. But one can also ponder how many of the kerises "appearing" in the (hi)stories are invisible in actuality – no one has seen most of the most famous legendary kerises. At the same time, these stories of "invisible" kerises are part of the thinking and feeling with which one looks at and thinks about any keris. In some cases, legendary kerises (re)appear in the real world, even while doubts may remain whether a particular keris is truly a keris from a particular history/legend or not.[21]

The keris is only one of innumerable examples of things – things that are in many cases seen in museums and art books – which are more than simply visible, simply material objects. The conceptualizations vary widely – from things containing invisible powers, spirit beings, divine or ancestral presence, and so on – as do the ways in which these objects are treated and used, but generally they are shown respect, prayed to, given offerings, and believed to have the power to benefit or harm people, from individuals to whole villages or kingdoms. Aside from weapons, one can think of masks, puppets, sculptures and other images (often of gods or divine beings, from Thai Buddha to Filipino Santo Niño images), textiles, and musical instruments. Stanley O'Connor's pioneering essay on heirloom jars in Borneo provides a thorough reflection on one such kind of object and the "imaginative frameworks" through which they are perceived. Essentially the same kind of more-than-visible thing includes objects that are not man-made, such as stones, trees, and various features of the landscapes, like caves, lakes and mountains. Also charged with similar invisible, immaterial meanings and powers are sacred musical compositions, dances, and oral and written texts. The

things discussed here, such as the keris, share much with "things of nature" as well as with a variety of "things" that are not material objects. In all cases, the visual sense, and especially the kind of aesthetic contemplation associated with art objects, is not enough to apprehend them.

It is not enough to consider how the object looks and what it means; one has to start from what it is, how it is in the world and how people are with it. Earlier, we have seen that certain things are experienced very differently from the typical visual art object because of the multisensory and bodily nature of human involvement with them. Now, we see how things are not simply visible because of the being of the thing, because the thing has an invisible "content." Seeing visual objects such as the keris is not enough because they are not simply visual and not simply objects. A part of their significance or power is inner, invisible energy, or spirit, or particular "personality." The things may have their own will and agency, they influence people's lives, they are open to communication (they may reward offerings or other signs of respect, and so on), they may not be simply inanimate, and they may look back. Magically potent heirlooms (pusaka) – such as kerises and other weapons, gongs and gamelan sets, and so

FIGURE 5-3 Decoration from a royal boat, now at the Radya Pustaka Museum in Solo. Believed to be magically potent and potentially harmful, in the museum it is placed in an altar-like space and presented with flower offerings (visible in the photo) every Thursday evening. Photograph by the author.

on – have personal names, preceded by the honorific *Ki*, used also for revered persons. The visual sense is not enough to apprehend or evaluate such things in a world in which visible and invisible beings coexist, a world that is not fully visible. Seeing is often only one of the ways to access the invisible.

Let me conclude this section with one more example. We have mentioned musical instruments in the previous section because they are, in many cases, visually beautiful and richly decorated, yet they are also meant to produce sound and are typically experienced in multisensory events. In many Southeast Asian cultures musical instruments – some more than others – are venerated, given offerings, treated with respect, and believed to have sacred or magical powers or to be inhabited by spirits or divine beings, and their production may involve taboos and rituals. In Thailand and Cambodia, for instance, a particular kind of drum (*taphon*), but more generally other musical instruments as well, is sacred because it is believed to embody the divine teacher. For some, however, the instrument is not an embodiment but a place where the teacher's spirit dwells. Others believe that the instrument merely symbolizes the divine teacher, or symbolically comes from the teacher. Note here the variety of conceptualizations. The point I would like to make is that people often disagree conceptually about how something is sacred or what the nature of the invisible, immaterial power is, and even one person may offer multiple explanations (the same is true, for example, about the kerises); yet, they agree, without necessarily discussing it or even thinking about it, that the object must be shown respect, and that it may bring good or bad luck. People make gestures of respect (*wai*) before playing the instrument, people do not step over it or place it in a disrespectful location, and generally they feel the presence of something that demands reverence and care. Beyond conceptualizations, without necessarily thinking about it, people feel the presence of the invisible and respond to it through their behavior, with what they do and do not do. Even when the invisible is not thought about or consciously perceived, it is present for people.

Visual Images and the Invisible

Understanding art is about much more than visual images. It is also about the being of things, and various forms of the invisible. But visual representation is itself in various ways pervaded by the invisible, and cannot be fully understood without it.

Any visual image is involved with the invisible, it grows from invisibility: it makes the invisible visible. In many cases, the visible images refer to another invisible – human desires or virtues, abstract notions such as purity, and so on – when images and the stories they tell are interpreted symbolically or allegorically, as they often are in Southeast Asia. For example, the battle between a demon and the hero of a story may symbolize the struggle between self-control and desires within a human being.

A somewhat different kind of invisibility – the kind discussed in the previous section – is involved when a visual (or multisensory) representation is used as a means to evoke the invisible sacred or magical world. Visual images, as well as performances that work with visual images, often work in this way: they visualize the invisible (the divine, the spirit world), while often preserving the contradiction of this process (the visible image both is and is not the sacred invisible being; it is both magical and symbolic), and thus emphasize the presence of the invisible in the visible, or the invisible as an inspiration of the visible. The invisible always haunts the visible.

In some cases, the situation is reversed: rather than using the visible to invoke the invisible, the invisible is used to add value to the visible. People are fascinated by the invisible, the secret, the magic, by their own fears and uncertainties. This is true when, for example, an image or a show meant primarily for entertainment or amusement incorporates elements of magic or invisible powers, as is often the case in Southeast Asia. This is true, for instance, about Javanese *jaran kepang*, an entertainment in which dancers with hobby-horses are possessed (or "entered," as one would say in Javanese) by horse spirits, go into a trance and behave like horses. (This case could be compared to the masked dance discussed earlier: in both cases, the spirit of the thing enters the person in an uncanny way and transforms him or her.) In many cases, one event may function as entertainment as well as a ritual: the line between the two, like the border between the visible and the invisible, is not always very clear.

In short, to understand visual images in Southeast Asia, one needs to see how they are involved with the invisible. One may think of the importance and care that the eyes are given in South and Southeast Asia. In the Philippines, the Santo Niño (Christ Child) images are placed in such a way that their gaze is directed at a place that needs blessing (such as the cashier in a restaurant) or protection from evil spirits or elves (such as an old tree). In the case of objects such as certain kinds of (more or less sacred) sculptures, puppets, and masks, the eyes are made with the most care, after the object is otherwise finished, and this may be accompanied by a ritual of the "opening" of the eyes, the giving of the gift of sight, equated with life, to the image.[22] When things look back at us, in the case of these images, or otherwise communicate and live with us, we see them differently.

To Show or Not to Show

To display a Euro-American art object, to make it visible, is to let it be what it was meant to be. The greatest extant works of European art are permanently on display. This kind of visibility is part of the nature of the object, and it does not matter a great deal at what time of the day or on what day of the year one sees the work (if it does matter, it usually has something to do with visibility: when the light is best, when the museum is least crowded).

In Southeast Asia, the temporality of seeing art is often different, as is the way that an artwork works: it does not need to be visible for it to work. Some objects are never displayed, or they can be seen only on special occasions, such as during ceremonies or festivals. Temples and palaces come alive and become a spectacle during festivals but are quiet at other times. In many of these cases, even when the works can be seen, seeing them is not the only or primary reason for displaying them. Instead, the reason may be to pay respect to them and/or to take care of them (as in ritual cleansing of objects). When they are invisible, their presence or existence is still important. For example, magically potent objects – weapons, sculpted images, musical instruments, and so on – are kept in palaces, temples, monasteries, and traditional houses. They are not just stored for future use, but rather their active invisible presence is important for people's well-being. Seeing is thus not always essential to the working of art, and things may be seen only on particular occasions or in special contexts.

This makes the temporality of material art objects – which, we have learned previously, are not merely material – closer to forms of art such as music and dance, to performances. Seeing is a part of a multisensory, social, special event (special in the sense that it does not happen at any time). But even some Southeast Asian performances do not need to be seen, as audience may not be essential. Certain musical instruments are played, and musical compositions and dances are performed, only on very rare occasions (for specific rituals, or at times of disaster), and it is a taboo to play them at other times.

FIGURE 5-4 One of the most sacred objects in the Surakarta Royal Palace, this old cannon is revered but never seen: it is enclosed in a special structure within a larger pavilion. Photograph by the author.

In some cases, objects are forever hidden within larger works. In Thailand, sacred or magically potent objects, such as older and sometimes broken images, puppets, and musical instruments, are permanently "buried" within a new Buddha image.[23] Sacred and symbolic objects are ritually buried under Hindu temples. While these objects are meant to be permanently hidden from sight, they are still important elements within the larger sacred structures, they make them "work," rather like the hidden (and for me mysterious) workings of my computer.

A New Visibility

The "Southeast Asia" in the paragraphs above is, of course, a fiction. One way in which it is so is that, while many of the traditional attitudes to things and vision are very much alive today – often more than one might expect – I have nonetheless focused on these traditional ways and ignored newer ways of seeing and dealing with things, which we will call, to keep things simple, modern. These modern ways happen to be more or less closely related to those of modern art, with which I have been contrasting Southeast Asian ways of dealing with art. In this section, I would like to give a few glimpses of how traditional and modern ways coexist, mix, and/or conflict.

Let us look at the keris again. In most conventional understandings, an essential element of art is "beauty," or at least beauty and art are closely connected. Let us see how "beauty" figures in Javanese texts on the keris, such as a treatise by Ki Darmosoegito (1892–1972). I will focus in particular on the pamor, which, as we have seen before, is an important source of meanings and powers of the wesi aji. For him, the "beauty" of the keris is a quality conflicting with the more traditional (or as he puts it, "old people's") values. Or, if one considers the older meanings of wesi aji as the real ones, as Darmosoegito does, then considering wesi aji as beautiful is a fallacy of our times, and something originating from "the foreigners." "It is obvious that the pamor of the keris is not merely a beautification/ornament."[24] "*Pamor* is not a form of ornament, so that it would be beautiful or good to look at, but it is considered to have its own power."[25]

Relatively recently, instead of the meteoric material which used to be combined with the iron to create the pamor, nickel came to be used, in part because of an erroneous scientific analysis of older kerises. "Its appearance is really beautiful. But, when perceived with Javanese *rasa*, it cannot be categorized as *wesi aji*, it is just 'imitation of goodness.' "[26] Later, another investigation of the components of pamor was conducted, this time with more advanced technology.[27] The new conclusions "changed completely the picture" and titanium was found to be the dominant component.

> The Titanium metal is extremely powerful, resistant to heat and rust . . . [and] organic acids . . . In this modern century it is used for missiles and jets . . . We have to respect our ancestors who have chosen this metal for heirloom weapons.[28]

Before these new findings were published, however, nickel became *the* pamor – after all, it was proven by modern science that nickel *is* pamor. In addition to nickel, other metals came to be used as "pamor," including silver and gold. The appearance of the "pamor" was also often made more representational; for instance, a popular motif is an art-nouveau-like foliage. Darmosoegito says that this kind of pamor "looks 'very beautiful'"[29] (scare quotes in the original) and comments on the blade called *Gelap Tinandhing*, which employs the new pamor: "Its appearance is very beautiful and pleasing, but when it is considered from the 'place/function of *pamor* in [the world of] *wesi aji*,' it is without any meaning, it is just beautiful to look at."[30] Another Javanese author explains that "[t]he common nickel that can be purchased in stores does not have the cosmic vibration [*geteran kosmis*] because it does not contain any mysterious power."[31]

When Ki Darmosoegito writes about the beautiful new "pamor," he perceives it as something foreign:

> Its use is merely for serving the people from foreign countries who all want to buy souvenirs. So, they do not talk about whether the *wesi aji* is good or bad, but rather observe only and only the "*beauty of appearance*" [italics and quotation marks in the original].[32]
>
> . . . The newly made artefacts/weapons strive only for beauty of color/appearance, in order to attract the hearts of people who are absorbed by beauty, in order that they buy it for a high price; however, as a *wesi aji*, it is without meaning/*rasa*/value. Dozens of years ago, the Office of Industry Ngayogyakarta, because they found out from an examination in the *Laboratorium* of Bandung that the *pamor Prambanan* contains nickel, they begun to make various artefacts/weapons, such as: kerises, . . . and small knifes for opening letter envelopes, *pamor*-in them with nickel. These creations were very very beautiful, foreigners who all stop by in Ngayogyakarta are all buying it, since they consider them weird objects, and some of them think that the kerises, swords, and the other [products] in the cabinet in the Office of Industry, are the same as the sacred heirlooms that are revered by the Javanese people.[33]

For Darmosoegito, the way of thinking and looking which emphasizes the beauty of the keris, originates from foreigners. It is they who value what is beautiful, thinking that the beauty is what is "revered" by the Javanese. They also provide the economic stimulus for the production of very beautiful kerises that, however, are "without meaning/value" for the Javanese who understand what is (for Darmosoegito at least) the true being and value of the keris. This new, foreign way of seeing and valuing the keris, based on the foreigners' money-power, sense of beauty, and modern science (which was the original stimulus for the employment of the "pamor nikel"), for Darmosoegito conflicts with what for him is the true value of the keris. This Javanese truth is revealed through "Javanese *rasa*," the "old people," and the "old texts." (To understand the authority of these, one may remember that another word for keris commonly used in Javanese text is pusaka, or sacred heirloom: the respect for keris is also a respect for revered ancestors.)

The source of the bitterness that one may feel from Ki Darmosoegito's writing as well as other texts is not the production of the new "very beautiful" kerises for foreigners and for "those people whose hearts are absorbed by beauty." Rather, it is the fact that this production, as well as the new meaning and power of the kerises – as well as the concept of beauty itself – replaces (or has replaced) the old ways of creating and appreciating the keris. An appealing new visibility and focus on appearances replaces a way of being with things in which the invisible and immaterial were crucial. This replacement is a kind of disappearance of the keris – the disappearance of the invisible. It may remind us of the disappearances of the keris in Javanese (hi)stories, which typically make people "extremely sad."

Ki Darmosoegito's claims that the beauty of the keris is meaningless from the Javanese point of view are a reaction to the foreign view of the keris as exceedingly beautiful, and in that sense they are as contemporary as, say, the foreigners' influence. The clash between the "traditional" and "modern" is not a conflict of the past and the present, but rather a conflict of two present, living worlds.

Apart from the disappearance of the knowledge of how to make the "real" keris and the respect for the invisible and immaterial aspects of things, old kerises disappear from their old places when kerises are bought by foreigners and also when they move to museums. Let me quote a description of the disappearance(s) of wesi aji from the introduction to a Javanese book by Waluyodipuro.

> Strangely, since the Dutch period until now, very many foreign nationals have wished to purchase a keris for thousands, and in fact sometimes for tens of thousands of rupiah . . . In the past, Mr. *A. GALL* (a German) in Surabaya owned *pusaka*s, having bought hundreds of them. What would he need them for: just to make them into souvenirs when going back to his country. What nonsense! I do not understand these reasons! In foreign countries, people store *wesi aji* in museums or as a personal possession, [items] that were originally given as a present (souvenir) to foreign diplomats or that were bought. If this goes on, perhaps in the future in Indonesia good and superior *pusakas* will be depleted, and only the coarse and bad ones will remain. In the end, if our descendants would want to learn about good *wesi aji*, they will be forced to go to museums in foreign countries. Will not it be something to laugh at: the Javanese studying Javanese language in Leiden (Netherlands); and to study *wesi aji* they will have to go to Bremen, Moscow, San Francisco, Peking, or London.[34]

The Indonesian encyclopaedia of the keris has this motto: "Must our children and grand-children learn about the keris from foreigners?"[35] The fear that wesi aji would be taken away to museums in foreign countries is a reason for establishing "our own" museums. Museums in Indonesia, on the one hand, are intended to protect the old kerises (and other objects) from being carried out of the country. At the same time, however, the Indonesian museums – and the meanings with which they endow the keris – replace the "old" meanings and worlds of the keris. In many writings on the keris, there is a sense that museums are essentially foreign to the world of keris. In the *Encyclopaedia of National Culture: Kerises*

and Other Traditional Weapons the word "museum" is mentioned only once, under the entry: *larung*.[36] Larung refers to the act of getting rid of an evil keris, which has bad influence on the life of its owner. According to most texts, there are two ways to deal with such a keris. It should be "either stored in a museum or '*dilabuh*' ['anchored,' i.e., covered with white cloth and, accompanied by offerings, and thrown into the ocean, in a ritual evoking old Javanese burial practices] – as long as it is not used by people." Here the museum object is construed as something that is "not used by people," and the museum as a space in which the keris does not work, in which the meanings and powers of the keris are annihilated. In the index of the *Encyclopaedia*, "museum" is explained as "the place where ancient objects are stored."[37] In traditional texts one gets the sense that the keris is full of powers, it has its own will, personal character, and name, and some kerises can move and act on their own. However, in the museum the keris becomes something new, namely, an "ancient object" – and as such it figures in the modern world. Yet as we can see from the idea that the museum can be used to neutralize evil kerises, its world of beautiful objects does not entirely replace, but coexists and interacts with, the world in which kerises remain alive and powerful.

We should remember here that the keris is merely an example: many other kinds of objects have a similar fate, though each case may be different in details. Much of Southeast Asian art found inside museums, with the exception of modern and contemporary art, was not meant to be there, and in their previous lives, the objects were experienced and appreciated in essentially different ways than in the museum. One can think of, for example, images of the Buddha, one of the most common objects in museum collections of Southeast Asian art, available, when displayed in the museums, for close visual scrutiny and aesthetic contemplation, but with the fragrances, sounds, and human activity and religious feeling of a Buddhist temple taken away.

The Javanese ways of thinking critically of beauty (the kind valued by foreigners), of inappropriate emphasis on appearance, and of museums – all values and institutions new and foreign to the traditional world of kerises – should not make us assume that beauty, appearance, and institutions of collecting are not traditionally important in Southeast Asia. But they should make us realize that they are important in a variety of ways, that beauty and appearance are not always important, and that we have to learn to think about them ever anew.

In the case of kerises, we see that there is a change of emphasis from esoteric interpretation of hidden signs, meanings, and powers to appreciation of visual beauty; from mystical knowledge to visual appearance. This is a more general trend of modern times. Let us look at another example, the Javanese shadow puppet theater (*wayang*).

Javanese often emphasize that wayang stories and characters are essentially signs, and they are explained as analogies and metaphors with which people make sense of the world. According to Javanese interpretations, wayang contains hidden truths about human life and the world, rather like the keris or poetry. These truths, or

FIGURE 5-5 Shadows of Javanese wayang puppets as seen at a performance from behind the screen. Photograph by the author.

rather concealed, obscure cues (*sasmito*) to finding these truths, are searched for in the stories, in particular encounters between characters, in the medium itself (for example, the puppeteer as God, people as puppets), and in the often obscure, archaic, but richly evocative language of wayang. These interpretations are limited in how much they say about the multiple lives of wayang and especially the physical actuality and pleasures of performance events, but they are nonetheless an important and popular form of discourse surrounding wayang. The cue-like symbols of the shadow theater both reveal and conceal, like the shadow as conceived by Heidegger, "a manifest, though impenetrable, testimony to the concealed emitting of light."[38] Heidegger's description of artwork resonates with wayang and its "hidden cues" rather well: "the primal conflict between clearing and concealing . . . the work is the fighting of the battle in which the unconcealedness of beings as a whole, or truth, is won."[39] The medium of wayang – a play with puppets and shadows taking place in the darkness of the night, evoking invisible forces and beings – seems to encourage this understanding of wayang.

Over the last few decades, wayang performance has been changing and, as people often think of it, modernizing. Generally speaking, everything in wayang has become more clearly visible, and there has been increasing emphasis on pleasing appearances and spectacle. Visual representation has become more realistic and visually explicit: Javanese commentators say that realistic depiction is replacing imagination. In the past, the flickering flame of one oil lamp illuminated the

screen and the puppets. A few decades ago this was replaced by an electric lamp, and, more recently, halogen light, which provides increasingly stronger light and sharper shadows. Additional electric lights now illuminate the stage where musicians and singers sit, and, as everything is more visible, there is more attention to the appearance of the stage and the musicians: the tendency is toward a stage that is pleasing to the sight, neat, clean, and nicely decorated, musical instruments have to be polished, musicians wear neat uniforms, and beautiful and sexy woman singers are seated on an elevated platform so as to make them more visible. The wayang screen against which the puppets are shown has become spectacularly larger, and the puppets in larger performances tend to be gilded and visibly expensive. Stronger light (together with amplification) makes it possible for more people to watch, and some wayang performances have become massive entertainment spectacles watched by tens of thousands of spectators, and increasingly commercialized.

All this brings wayang closer to another entertainment medium, another cultural force in the contemporary Javanese world: television. As wayang enters the world of modern popular entertainment, it comes as no surprise that it has become a popular television program. Television, thus, makes wayang more visible in yet another way: visible beyond the place of the performance and on televisions across Indonesia.

If the truth, or revealing, of wayang is like a shadowy glittering of meaning that can be seen only in darkness, but one that stimulates imagination and philosophical thought, then television can be thought of as the technological embodiment of the representational conceptualization of modern objectivity, in which truth is understood as the correctness of representation, and involvement in the world is accessed through representations which are between us and the world. The representation of reality takes the place of reality; the processed, managed, controlled images of television, set before the subject, replace another way of relating to the world: being included in it. Because modern representation claims that it is not merely an image, but that it corresponds to reality in an objective way, it may, as in the case of much television and scientific instruments, conceal its nature as a man-mediated image, and claim that it is a way to objectively see (rather than represent) reality. The world becomes a world as objectively construed by human subjects, and thus humans are challenged to control and manage this represented world. In controlling and managing the world, the aim is to bring everything into the realm of the visible and the represented, thus subduing the world into surveyability and clarity, which becomes understood as knowledge. To be in the dark, to be hidden, to be obscure, to be outside of human control, becomes understood as not being in truth. To be immediately (through one's own body-mind) involved in the world, to be part of it (as one is part of the social gathering when watching wayang), to let one's imagination respond and be moved by its forces, becomes understood as not having an objective perspective. Wayang grows from darkness and its knowledge is obscure; television, like the Cartesian certainty that is truth-as-correctness, makes everything clear and visible. In becoming more like television, and in becoming

a television program, wayang enters the realm of a new visibility and a new attitude to the world.

Different and conflicting attitudes towards the visible and the invisible coexist and interact (or not) in contemporary Southeast Asia. This interaction plays itself out in areas such as the encounter between traditional arts and the modern media and entertainments, as in the example above, as well as in contemporary art. Many artists in Southeast Asia, even as they are part of the contemporary art world and share many of its values and ways of making and thinking about art, are to different degrees and in different ways inspired by local art and its world, including traditional visibilities. This can be seen on the popularity of performance art and other media that go beyond conventional framed painting, in some cases directly referring to traditional arts. For example, the Yogyanese artist Heri Dono has recreated wayang puppets and performance, and on one occasion he (with friends) painted on the wayang screen.[40] The process of painting, rather than leading to a finished product and a single visual image, became a multisensory performance, complete with traditional musical accompaniment, emphasizing the movements of the painters and the temporality and transience of visual imagery. One saw this painting through the thickness of the performance event, rather like when one watches a wayang performance. Even in apparently conventional Euro-American style paintings one often finds reflections on the visible. For example, in Lucia Hartini's *Spying Eyes*, disembodied eyes fly around in the air like tiny alien spaceships, attacking a sleeping, half-veiled woman with what appear like rays of light or perhaps laser weapons. Vision here is shown as an aggressive, violent force, detached from humans.[41] One may note that Southeast Asian artists are not alone in reacting to and often breaking away from established conventions of modern Euro-American art, as indeed this is one of the major concerns in contemporary art worldwide. The interaction between older and newer visibilities in Southeast Asia is thus also involved in the contemporary art world, and in the ways that artists reflect on its conventions and possibilities.

Conclusion

As one tries to understand Southeast Asian art, one is forced to rethink the nature and role of seeing. Much art is not simply visual, in that vision is only one of the senses through which it is perceived, in that the visible is only one of the cues about the invisible aspects of (animate) things, and in that the visible and physical are only one aspect of the world. I have introduced several examples of Southeast Asian art that challenge us to think about the (in)visible, but of course I have not tried – nor do I believe that it would be possible – to describe a uniquely "Southeast Asian" attitude to the visible and invisible. Nor do I mean to suggest that there is something uniquely Southeast Asian in the importance of invisibility. Rather, with the help of thinking of Southeast Asian cases, I have tried to raise certain questions about the visible and the invisible and to think towards an openness to the invisible.

Notes

1 See Mrázek and Pitelka, *What's the Use of Art?*; O'Connor, "Art Critics"; Taylor, *Studies in Southeast Asian Art*.
2 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 64–5.
3 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 63.
4 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 44.
5 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 64–5.
6 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 65.
7 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 63–6.
8 Darmosoegito, *Bab dhuwung*, 15. The same observation is made in Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 66.
9 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 41.
10 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 31.
11 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 60.
12 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 32.
13 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 53–62 ("*Hipotesis Isi Keris*") and *passim*.
14 Koesni, *Pakem pengetahuan tentang keris*, 6–8.
15 For detailed descriptions of different ways of *nayuh*-ing, see Koesni, *Pakem pengetahuan tentang keris*, 18–24, and Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, especially 78–83.
16 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 79–80.
17 Harsrinuksmo, *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris*, 31.
18 Hamzuri, "Sarasehan bab keris," 12.
19 Darmosoegito, *Bab dhuwung*, 10.
20 Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, 238–9.
21 Pedersen, "An Ancestral Keris," 214–38.
22 For a Southeast Asian example, see Mrázek, *Phenomenology of a Puppet Theatre*, 29–46; for Indian examples, see Eck, *Darsan*.
23 Thanks to Irving Chan Johnson for this example.
24 Darmosoegito, *Bab dhuwung*, 15.
25 Darmosoegito, *Bab dhuwung*, 17.
26 Darmosoegito, *Bab dhuwung*, 18.
27 For details, see Arumbinang, *Pakem padhuwungan*, 10–13.
28 Arumbinang, *Pakem padhuwungan*, 11.
29 Darmosoegito, *Bab dhuwung*, 20.
30 Darmosoegito, *Bab dhuwung* 20.
31 Soemodiningrat, "Kerisologi satleraman," 21.
32 Darmosoegito, *Bab dhuwung*, 20.
33 Darmosoegito, *Bab dhuwung*, 91.
34 Waluyodipuro, *Seserepan bab dhuwung*, iv–v.
35 Hasrinuksmo, *Ensiklopedi budaya nasional*, 4.
36 Harsrinuksmo, *Esiklopedi budaya nasional*, 98.
37 Harsrinuksmo, *Esiklopedi budaya nasional*, 229.
38 Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 154.
39 Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 55.

40 For images and discussion of this event, see Mrázek, "Heri Dono's Moving Pictures," 16–19.
41 Wright, *Soul, Spirit, and Mountain*, 134–5 and color plate 37.

References

Arumbinang, Haryono. *Pakem padhuwungan* [*Keris Treatise/Manual*]. Yogyakarta: Lembaga Javanologi, 1985.

Darmosoegito, Ki. *Bab dhuwung (winawas sawetawis)* [*About Keris: Some Observations*]. 2nd edn. Surabaya: Jayabaya, 1989.

Eck, Diana. *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. 3rd edn. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Religion of Java*. London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960.

Hamzuri. "Sarasehan bab keris: daja pangaribawaning pamor keris [Discussion About Keris: The Power of the Keris's Pamor]." *Kunthi* 1 no. 3 (1969): 12.

Harsrinuksmo, Bambang. *Ensiklopedi budaya nasional: keris dan senjata tradisional lainnya* [*Encyclopaedia of National Culture: Kerises and Other Traditional Weapons*]. Jakarta: Cipta Adi Pustaka, 1988.

Harsrinuksmo, Bambang. *Mengungkap rahasia isi keris* [*Revealing the Secret of the Keris's Content*]. Jakarta: Pustakakarya Grafikatama, 1990.

Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.

Heidegger, Martin. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.

Koesni. *Pakem pengetahuan tentang keris* [*Treatise of Knowledge about Keris*]. Semarang: Penerbit Aneka Ilmu, [1979].

Mrázek, Jan. "Heri Dono's Moving Pictures: Painting, Puppets, Performance." In *The Inoyama Donation: A Tale of Two Artists*, 12–19. Singapore: Singapore Art Museum, 2006.

Mrázek, Jan. *Phenomenology of a Puppet Theatre: Contemplations on the Art of Javanese Wayang Kulit*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2005.

Mrázek, Jan, and Morgan Pitelka, eds. *What's The Use of Art? Asian Visual and Material Culture in Context*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

O'Connor, Stanley J. "Art Critics, Connoisseurs, and Collectors in the Southeast Asian Rain Forest: A Study in Cross-Cultural Art Theory." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 14 no. 2 (1983): 400–8.

Pedersen, Lene. "An Ancestral Keris, Balinese Kingship, and a Modern Presidency." In *What's The Use of Art? Asian Visual and Material Culture in Context*, edited by Jan Mrázek and Morgan Pitelka, 214–38. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

Soemodiningrat, B. P. H. "Kerisologi satleraman [A Bit of Kerisology]." *Jaya Baya* (March 13, 1983): 21.

Taylor, Nora A., ed. *Studies in Southeast Asian Art: Essays in Honor of Stanley J. O'Connor*. Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2000.

Waluyodipuro, R. T. *Seserepan bab dhuwung tuwin ubarampe saha lalajenganipun* [*Knowledge About Keris and Its Accessories and Other Matters*]. No place: Pt. Inaltu, no date [1st edn 1959].

Wright, Astri. *Soul, Spirit and Mountain: Preoccupations of Contemporary Indonesian Painters*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Part III

Space

6

Building Beyond the Temple: Sacred Centers and Living Communities in Medieval Central India

Tamara I. Sears

In the early ninth century CE, a king named Avantivarman invited a Shaiva guru named Purandara to settle in his kingdom. The events surrounding the king's invitation, as told in a stone inscription from the village of Ranod (Shivpuri district, Madhya Pradesh), can be recounted as follows.[1] Purandara, who had achieved spiritual liberation by practicing ritual austerities atop a mountain, had become so famous that reports of his greatness circulated far and wide. It was thus that one day the following account came to court: "Oh King, a remarkable and venerable sage shines like the sun spreading spiritual light upon all who approach him." The king, hearing these words, was struck by a desire to bring Purandara to his kingdom and to receive initiation (*diksha*) into his religious tradition. Impressed by the king's devotion, Purandara agreed to the king's request and performed the necessary rituals. In exchange for initiation, and according to custom, the king offered Purandara "the best part of the wealth of his own kingdom as a Guru's fee (*gurudakshina*)." Purandara used this gift to build two dwellings in Avantivarman's kingdom. The first was a grand and prosperous monastery (*matha*) situated "in the glorious city named Mattamayura," a place that has been identified as the village of Kadwaha (Guna district, Madhya Pradesh). The second was built as "a forested retreat for austerities (*tapovanam*)" or "hermitage (*ashrama*)" at the site of the inscription. Once

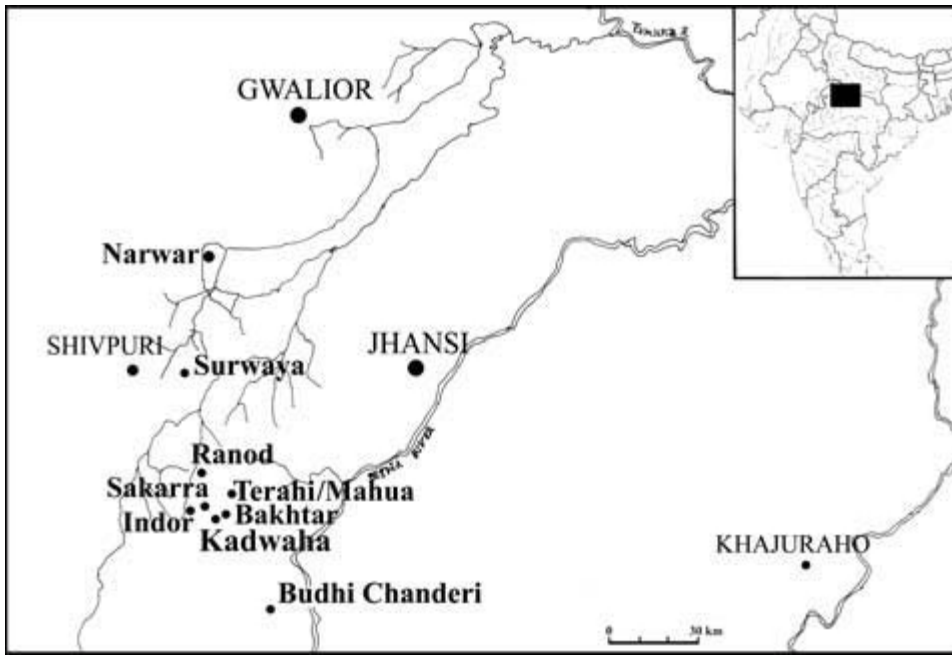

FIGURE 6-1 Selected monastery and temple sites in Central India. Map created by the author.

established, Purandara's spiritual successors became widely known as the Mattamayuras, who flourished through continued royal patronage and built many new temples to adorn their places of residence.

Taking this account of a guru, a king, and the making of new monasteries as a point of departure, this essay rethinks the role that ascetic religious communities played in the creation of sacred places in medieval central India. It focuses on Kadwaha (aka Mattamayura), the site of the first of Purandara's two dwellings and the "glorious city" that served as the namesake for his spiritual descendents (fig. 6-1). At the moment of Purandara's advent in the ninth century, Kadwaha was a relatively minor settlement, containing little other than his monastery and a small Shiva temple, now known as Chandal Math, located on the outskirts of the modern-day village, well over a kilometer away.[2] Within a few generations after its establishment, Kadwaha had grown to become a major political and religious center, containing no fewer than 15 temples radiating around a burgeoning residential settlement (fig. 6-2). At the center of the expanding town was the monastery with its accompanying monuments, which seem to have served as the nucleus for ritual activity and royal patronage at the site (fig. 6-3). The gurus who lived inside were frequently sought out by local kings who, like Avantivarman before them, desired religious initiation. And, as their reputation grew, they were recruited by kings from distant regions, who put them in charge of branches of new monasteries located hundreds of kilometers away. By the early

FIGURE 6-2 Shiva temples, Khirnivala group, Kadwaha, from the southeast, tenth century. Photograph by the author.

eleventh century, Mattamayura gurus, stemming in part from Purandara's monastery at Kadwaha, had become a well-known piece of a pan-Indic network of spiritual lineages belonging to a religious tradition known as Shaiva Siddhanta and spanning the subcontinent from Kashmir to Tamil Nadu.[3]

Unlike most studies of sacred centers, which focus on the *temple* as a mechanism for acculturation, political legitimation, and ritual performance,[4] this essay begins with the construction of the *monastery*, which not only preceded but also served as a stimulus for the development of a larger temple town. The emphasis on temples, to the frequent exclusion of most other monuments, has no doubt been fueled by the ubiquity of temples in architectural landscape, and by the relative paucity of other surviving monuments. Often compared in inscriptional sources to the famous mountainous abodes of the gods, temples were veritable triumphs of engineering and technological innovation; they towered high into the sky, and dazzled the viewer through their sheer mass and lavishly sculpted surfaces, populated by beautiful gods and celestial servants. As centers for worship, they also served as foci for ritual, economic, and social activity, as places where worshippers came to experience the living presence of gods, exchange goods in the outlying market, and gather during festivals. The development of temple centers has thus often been associated with the extension of royally sanctioned ritual activity and state institutions into newly developing urban centers and newly incorporated rural peripheries.[5]

Although temples certainly functioned as the hubs for ritual, political, and architectural activity, they were far from the only new monuments produced in early medieval India. Temples did not exist without the living religious communities that were responsible for their construction, maintenance, and administration. In some cases, temples were built in conjunction with the resettlement of high caste *brahmanas* into royally donated villages (*agraharas*). In others, they grew around communities of Shaiva, Vaishnava, or Jain religious practitioners who were increasingly challenging the authority of older brahmanical institutions. The growth of such religious communities was frequently noted in inscriptions and texts, which often record the construction of mathas, agraharas, ashramas, and other residences in conjunction with temples.[6] Yet very few such structures survive, and fewer than a dozen known monasteries can be located today.[7]

This state of affairs highlights the historical significance of the evidence provided at Kadwaha, where the matha that Purandara built still survives in a remarkable state of preservation. In focusing on the architectural imprint left by Purandara and his successors, this essay attempts to reinvest the communities that built, used, and inhabited medieval sites with a degree of individual and collective subjectivity that has historically been absent from the discussion of medieval Indian architecture.[8] In the case of Kadwaha, neither the monasteries nor the sacred spaces that grew around them simply or naturally evolved to meet the needs of changing demographics. They were consciously made, mythologized, and monumentalized by individual gurus, kings, and conquerors, who were actively involved in the process of negotiating their place in society, and whose interactions led to the careful redistribution of material and social resources. This essay takes a diachronic approach in examining the site, by tracing its changing histories over the course of five centuries, in order to displace the notion that relationships or identities were somehow stagnant, and to reveal the ways in which they were continually being remade in accordance with new circumstances. Sacred spaces, in sum, were not fixed commodities; they were invested with meaning and authority – both religious and political – by the individuals who built them, the communities that inhabited them, and finally by the archaeologists and historians who have studied and reconstructed the past.

A Sacred Site in the Geography of the Periphery

When approached today, the monuments at Kadwaha do not make for easy study. Scattered throughout the village, they have never been published as a cohesive group nor has a precise chronology been established for their relative construction.[9] The difficulty is not eased by Kadwaha's rather remote location in the rural periphery of the state of Madhya Pradesh. Although Kadwaha is only 85–90 kilometers away from Gwalior and 84 kilometers from Jhansi, it remains difficult to access by modern modes of transportation, and getting to Kadwaha can easily be a whole-day affair. The *kachcha* (unpaved) roads leading to the village wind circuitously through fields, and conditions are such that travel can often

proceed no faster than 10–15 kilometers an hour. The nearest major route runs through Isagarh, a former district headquarters of the Gwalior princely state, and currently a town with a population of just over 10,300. In comparison to Kadwaha, Isagarh is a virtual metropolis, as Kadwaha's population stands at just 3,830. Yet in comparison to its immediate neighbors – Bakhtar (pop. 667), Sakarra (pop. 860), Pacharai (pop. 761), Mahua (pop. 698), and Terahi (pop. 835) – Kadwaha stands out, visibly marked by a dense town center which houses the majority of the village's population.[10]

Although Kadwaha's inaccessibility may have contributed to its absence from comprehensive study, it certainly is helpful in re-envisioning the site as it may have existed when Purandara first encountered it over a thousand years ago. For example, Kadwaha's remoteness is not merely a factor of shifting demographics in a postcolonial world, but rather a reflection of the region's status in premodern India. Kadwaha has historically been located deep in the rural woodlands of Gopakshetra, an ancient central Indian region associated with political capital at Gwalior (ancient Gopadri).[11] Situated far in the southernmost part of Gopakshetra, Kadwaha fell within a self-contained and semi-autonomous geographical zone that has occasionally been dubbed the Mahua region.[12] Bounded by the Sindu and Betwa rivers, bisected by the Mahuar (ancient Madhumati) tributary, and surrounded by forested tracts, this zone may well have belonged to the wilderness (*aranya*) beyond the domain of either established villages (*grama*) or earlier historical states (*janapadas*).[13] Such wilderness areas were frequently conceptualized as both dangerous and immensely sacred; in texts, they served as the abodes of both ferocious, semi-divine demons and holy ascetics who, through the rigor of their austerities, accumulated powers that made them more potent than gods. In practical terms, wilderness areas often fell outside the purview of more centralized states, and they were generally populated by a range of itinerant communities, including autonomous tribal groups (*athavikas*), mercenaries, ascetics, and occasional parties of intrepid merchants who were not necessarily beholden to the authority of larger states.[14]

It is within this context that King Avantivarman came to recruit Purandara in the ninth century, and to convince him to establish a monastic network in his kingdom. The historical significance of this act should not go unnoticed, as it marks a moment of transition and an active attempt to establish both political and religious overlordship over a burgeoning group of settlements.[15] Avantivarman himself was a relatively obscure king, of questionable ancestry, who may have been seeking to consolidate his territory.[16] Similarly, although Purandara's lineage may have been rooted in the local area for over a century, Avantivarman's patronage was the first sign of substantive political or financial support.[17] The archaeological record confirms that prior to this date, only a handful of small temples stood in the broader Mahua river region. Among those were several seventh- and eighth-century temples at Mahua, Indor, and Baktar. The ninth and tenth centuries, by contrast, saw the establishment of at least seven additional temples in the villages of Sakarra, Terahi, Indor, and Mahua, and finally at Kadwaha, the vast majority of which were dedicated to Shiva, but a few of

which show evidence of both Shakta and Jain worship.[18] This architectural activity may indicate that a transition was afoot, and that the wilderness was effectively giving way to pockets of more settled communities. While the outgrowth and distribution of Shiva temples, in particular, suggest that Shaivism already had a strong foothold in the area, there may not have existed a substantial centralized institution through which Shaiva ritual knowledge could have been disseminated. The establishment of a major new monastery at Kadwaha, and an accompanying ritual retreat at Ranod, effectively consolidated religious authority in the hands of Mattamayura practitioners and created an environment conducive to the spread of Shaiva worship.

In patronizing a guru belonging to a Shaiva Siddhanta lineage, Avantivarman was allying himself with a prominent spiritual teacher who could effectively tie him to larger religious communities. This was a critical act in no small part because of the peripheral location of Avantivarman's kingdom, which was situated far from the purview of earlier states and the brahmanical ideology upon which they were based. Shaiva Siddhanta, translatable as "the fully completed Shaivism," fundamentally differed from earlier brahmanical traditions in that ritual status and the potential for spiritual liberation were not merited on the basis of birth or caste, but rather on levels of initiation. The ritual of initiation was understood as effecting a complete spiritual transformation that could fundamentally reshape the initiate's identity. It consisted of an elaborate ceremony performed by a guru that was designed to put the initiate on the path towards realizing the inherent "Shiva-ness" (*shivatva*) of the soul. During the course of the ritual, the guru, acting as Shiva, entered the body of the initiate in order to burn up the impurities that kept the individual soul (*pashu*) in perpetual spiritual bondage (*pasha*). Initiation, once performed, could ensure worldly successes and happy rebirths to kings and lay devotees. But, even more importantly, it could lead ascetic practitioners towards an ontological status that was like becoming fully divine.[19] Because of the regenerative potential of initiation, even individuals born in peripheral or tribal areas could be brought into the religious tradition and be given the opportunity to participate in some way. Thus a group like the Mattamayuras could effectively create cohesive political and religious communities in areas with few known links to earlier brahmanical traditions.[20]

The Mattamayuras' ability to confer or confirm caste and familial status may have been particularly crucial for kings who may not have been born into the *kshatriya*, or ruling, caste.[21] This was particularly the case in the tenth century, when a new king named Hariraja, ruling from his nearby capital at Budhi Chanderi, traveled to Kadwaha in order to request initiation (fig. 6-1).[22] Before the resident guru would perform the ritual, he asked the head attendant "Who is this long-lived king?" The attendant assured him that he was of royal stock, and more specifically linked firmly through blood to the famous imperial Gurjara Pratihara kings, overlords of vast territories across northern India in the late first millennium.[23] Whether or not these Pratiharas were indeed related by blood to the imperial rulers at Kanauj, or whether they merely descended from a

local family of tribal chiefs remains subject to debate. However, it was only upon hearing this story that the guru performed the appropriate Shaiva *diksha*, an act that effectively affirmed Hariraja's status as a member of the extended Gurjara Pratihara lineage.[24] The king, in turn, then provided the guru with an appropriate gift of land, and the guru sealed the exchange by bestowing a special blessing.

While the assimilative nature of the Shaiva Siddhanta, particularly in its earliest incarnations in the eighth and ninth centuries, may have been useful for wilderness communities seeking to form a burgeoning state, the wilderness environment may have provided a useful trope to religious communities seeking to maintain the mythos of asceticism. This point can be seen most clearly in the Mattamayuras' story of mythological origins, which ascribed their beginnings to an encounter between the gods Brahma and Shiva in the Daruvana, or the forest of pines. According to inscriptional accounts, Brahma approached Shiva full of devotion, and Shiva, thus pleased, granted him the grace (*anugraha*) of initiation, so beginning the longer lineage of sages into which Purandara and his successors arose.[25] The appropriateness of the Daruvana as a setting for the Mattamayuras should be readily apparent to anyone familiar with the religious traditions of southern Asia. It was the place where Shiva wandered performing penance as Bhikshatana, and where he encountered many humans, and most famously a group of sages, who, through their interactions with the god, learned to achieve liberation through the worship of Shiva.[26] As forest-dwelling practitioners in the process of becoming divine, the Mattamayuras lived austere and celibate lives and maintained their identity as ascetics. But like Shiva in the Daruvana forest, they were also coming into increasing contact with kings and agrarian communities who sought out their services as spiritual teachers and approached them with devotion.

The growth of a sacred center at Kadwaha was thus not merely an organic process that occurred as a passive outcome of slowly shifting demographics. It was engineered through carefully mediated transactions that effectively shaped the transformation of a peripheral geography. In patronizing the Mattamayuras, kings like Avantivarman and Hariraja were establishing tangible and material relationships with a religious community that was both locally rooted and transregionally connected to a larger Shaiva Siddhanta movement. As such, the Mattamayuras could assist them both in consolidating their authority over their immediate domains, and in realizing their aspirations to participate in a larger courtly religious culture which, unlike in past generations, was increasingly growing around devotion to Shaiva gurus.[27] The Mattamayura gurus, for their part, made the most of their wilderness environment, weaving the mythos of the Daruvana into their identity as wandering ascetics even as they were becoming institutionalized in monasteries. Their success in becoming spiritual "power brokers"[28] in their exchanges with royal patrons resulted in the exponential growth of the Mattamayura network. By the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Mattamayuras were actively functioning as personal Rajagurus, or royal religious preceptors, responsible for officiating over royal religious affairs and performing

rituals on behalf of the kingdom as a whole. By the end of the thirteenth century, gurus tracing their origins back to the Mahua river region resided in multiple regions spanning several hundred kilometers, ranging from famous holy pilgrimage cities such as Banaras and Ujjain, to more localized places scattered in at least a half dozen modern-day states, including Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.[29]

The Monastery as a Sacred Dwelling

Given the Mattamayuras' growing importance during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, it is easy to recognize that the monastery at Kadwaha must have operated as an important political and religious center, situated squarely in the middle of both a budding temple town and an expansive Shaiva network. It is perhaps less immediately clear how the building itself may have communicated the status of the overall site and facilitated the potent practices of a royally sponsored religious order. It might be tempting to dismiss the monastery as just a residential structure, meant merely to provide rudimentary shelter and accommodate the ascetic lives of those who lived within. Certainly at first glance, the monastery appears to be a large but unremarkable two-storied rectangular structure, constructed simply out of undressed masonry blocks fitted together without mortar (fig. 6-3). Its exterior surfaces are unadorned and unremitting,

FIGURE 6-3 Monastery and Shiva temple in the fortress at Kadwaha, from the northeast, *c.* ninth–tenth century. Photograph by the author.

punctuated only on the upper story by massive grilled windows whose form appears to have been determined by the necessity for ventilation rather than by the kind of symbolic or aesthetic consideration that drove the ornamentation of Kadwaha's many temples (fig. 6-2). Yet to take the building just at face value would be a mistake. When considered closely, the monastery's design reveals an architecture that was consciously created to project an institutional identity outwards while simultaneously maintaining the secrecy of the rituals conducted within.

The monastery's status as a sacred dwelling is most evident both in the careful planning of the building within its overall site, and in the underlying conception of the architecture. Today, the monastery sits within the walls of a larger fortress (*gadhi*) that was added in the thirteenth century facing northwards towards a small Shiva temple that was built in the tenth century, but that has long ago lost its superstructure (figs. 6-3 and 6-4). Sculptural fragments stored within the complex and built into later walls suggest that more temples may have been standing as early as the ninth century.[30] While the layered, and partially lost,

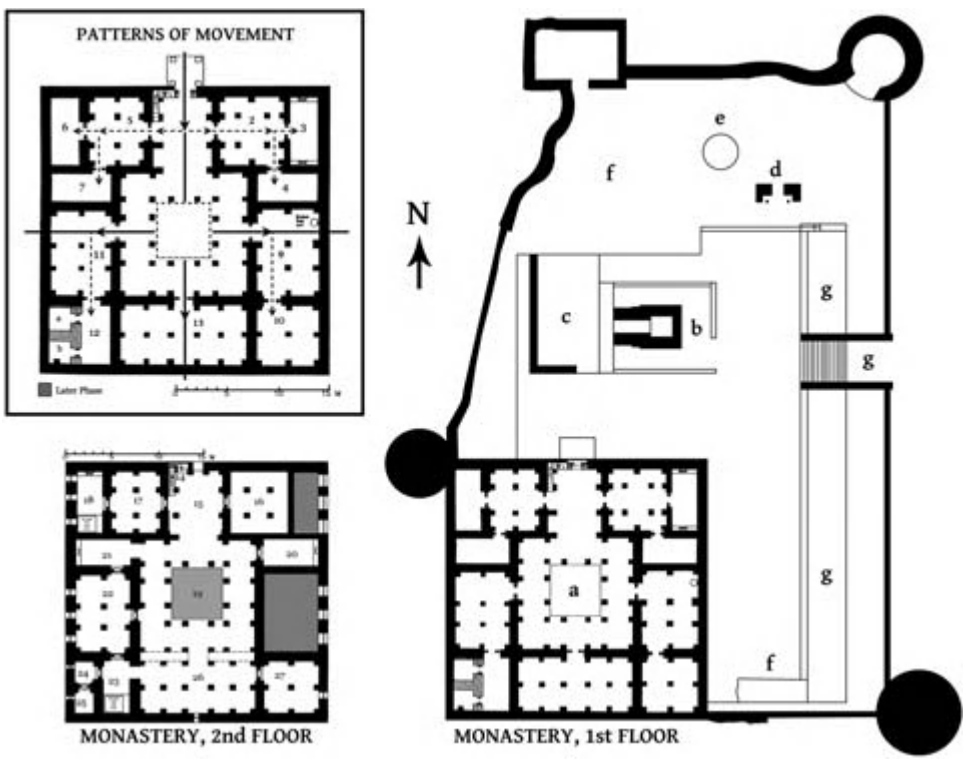

FIGURE 6-4 Site map of the fortress and plans of the monastery at Kadwaha. Original measurements and drawing by the author.
KEY: (a) = monastery, *c.* ninth century; (b) = temple, *c.* tenth century; (c) = platform containing remains of mihrab/mosque, *c.* early fourteenth century; (d) = remains of pavilion, *c.* fourteenth century; (e) = remains of well, period unknown; (f) = dirt and rubble; (g) = stepped terrace, *c.* 1940–1.

history of the site might make it difficult to establish fully how it may have looked at any given moment, it does not obscure the significance of the site's layout. For example, the site was designed so that the monastic residence could engage the main temple(s) standing outside its walls through proximity and orientation. The short portico and upper balcony marking the monastery's entrance, which survives now only through its foundation, once projected northwards towards the area where the temple now stands.[31] This directionality, which is repeated in nearly every known surviving Shaiva monastic site,[32] put the monastery in meaningful dialogue with the temple, which like the *matha*, was fundamentally understood as a sanctified house, designed to provide shelter to the god present inside.[33]

This last point is quite significant if we consider the fact that the guru heading the monastery at Kadwaha was considered "another Shiva on earth," and that his resident disciples were well on their way to becoming divine. The house in which they lived thus derived its sacrality in part through its function as an abode for a holy guru, whose status was often considered equivalent to a living god. This notion is not unusual in an Indic context, where monastic abodes may have been long considered sacred because of the potency of their holy residents. In a posthumously published essay, for example, Ananda Coomaraswamy drew links between early Buddhist *viharas* (monasteries), Hindu shrines, and the single-celled hermit's hut, which he saw as the seminal morphological unit underlying the development of sacred architecture.[34] The potency of the hut lay in its function as a shelter for the body of a hermit, who acted as a metaphor for spiritual potential and ultimate release.[35] What made the hermit's hut sacred was its status as an embodied architecture – in other words, as a building that derived its meaning from the body of the holy figure that dwelt within it. In the case of the Hindu temple, the body of the hermit was replaced by that of a divinity. In the Buddhist vihara, the single hermit's hut was replicated and rebuilt as a series of identical residential cells arranged around a courtyard.[36]

While the plan of the monastery offers a very different conception from either a single-celled shrine or a Buddhist vihara, the Shaiva monastery nonetheless may have drawn upon the notion of the hermit's hut. For example, the terminology that is most often used to describe such Shaiva monastic residences suggests an ideational link. Among the most common terms used in Mattamayura inscriptions are matha (monastery) and ashrama (hermitage). Whereas matha can be translated quite literally as a hut or cottage, a monastery (associated with an ascetic), a cloister, or a college, ashrama tends to denote a hermitage, an abode of ascetics, or the cell of a hermit or of retired saints or sage.[37] The conception underlying both is further connected to that of the *guru-kula*, or literally the "house of the guru" which served as the foundational model for Hindu religious schools from the first millennium BCE onwards.[38] Shaiva Siddhanta ritual texts also use the terms *dhaman*, meaning a dwelling place or house, and *guru-griha*, or the guru's house, to describe the residence that new initiates must share with their guru.[39] These latter terms suggest that the Shaiva monastery was particularly understood

FIGURE 6-5 Guru with disciples and attendants, detail from a basement molding, Lakshmana Temple, Khajuraho, *c.* 954 CE. Photograph by the author.

as the house of the guru, whose bodily presence imbued the space with spiritual significance and meaning. Like the hermit and the monk in earlier India, the medieval Shaiva guru represented the potential for spiritual realization, but he also functioned more specifically as a manifestation of god.

In addition to drawing meaning from the body of the guru, the sanctity of the monastic space grew out of the potency of the practices conducted within. But these too were derived from the guru's physical presence, both as a spiritual teacher and as an object for devotion. The importance of the guru within the context of larger temple sites can be seen in sculptural representations at sites such as Khajuraho from the tenth century onwards. In these, he often appears either as an icon of devotion or seated on an elevated surface, flanked by disciples who sit at his feet and looking upwards holding their hands in the gesture of devotion (*anjali mudra*).[40] The centrality of the guru within the monastic community is particularly well illustrated in a well-known tenth-century relief on the Lakshmana temple at Khajuraho (fig. 6-5). Although this relief is found on a Vaishnava monument, it provides the best surviving representation of its type from this period and is found at a site that is well known for Shaiva temples. In it, a guru sits enclosed in a four-pillared hall (*mandapa*) while demonstrating the correct performance of an intricate ritual. Participating in that ritual is a woman who holds an ornamental fan and has been identified variously as a dancing girl, temple courtesan, or female devotee.[41] The guru's proficiency at meditation is made particularly clear by the fullness of his belly, which is inflated with *prana*, or sacred breath. Facing him (to the left) are two rows of disciples, one seated

and one standing, while behind him (to the right) are three attendants holding ritual implements, which include a sack of supplies, a bowl, and a large flat object that may be either a base for a portable icon or a writing tablet.[42]

The details of this relief identify the monastery as a place that, first and foremost, fostered potent ritual practices and the transmission of powerful religious knowledge that emanated from the guru. If we take a closer look, we see that the guru holds up his right hand in the *dharmachakra mudra*, the hand gesture indicating that he is caught in the act of teaching, and that his disciples to the left reciprocate with a hand gesture indicating the wish for salvation. The disciples themselves are differentiated by coiffure and facial hair, possibly indicating hierarchies in initiatory status.[43] Those that are seated below are most like the guru; they wear their long matted hair tied back behind their heads, and their beards extend down to the upper portion of their chests. They are seated in exactly the same pose as their teacher, and may represent students who had received *nirvanadiksha*, or a level of initiation that would allow them to achieve liberation upon his death. The standing figures may represent newly initiated disciples or younger boys newly brought into the tradition, and are thus are portrayed clean shaven. They are led by a large bearded figure who holds a staff and sports a massive, *prana*-filled belly mirroring that of the guru. He may represent a practitioner initiated at the highest level, someone qualified to be selected as the next head of the monastery, whose status as such is emphasized through his bodily resemblance to the guru himself. The shifts in bodily representation are quite striking here – as the disciples move up the initiatory ladder and acquire higher ritual status, their bodies become more like that of their head teacher. This is not a surprising development when considering the larger ritual context. As textual scholars have shown, the relationship between guru and disciple – from the moment of initiation onwards – was rooted in rituals that were believed to effect metaphysical transformations in the body.[44]

The visual resonances between the guru and his disciples in the relief from Khajuraho foreground the importance of the guru's corporeal presence within medieval Indian monasteries in two specific ways. On the one hand, the relief emphasizes that the path to liberation lay in direct bodily imitation of the guru – in the absorption of teachings that were conveyed not only through oral discourses but also through repetition of physical action.[45] Although it is difficult to pinpoint the precise action depicted in the relief, inscriptions and Shaiva Siddhantha texts prescribe a variety of important rituals that were performed within such monasteries. For example, initiation was only the first step towards achieving liberation; in order to achieve it, one needed to practice both daily (*nitya*) and occasional (*naimittika*) rituals, and to become proficient at yoga meditation, in order to remove all spiritual impurities.[46] The daily principal rite, as described in ritual texts, required the initiate to first visualize and worship Shiva in the form of an earthen mound or image, then to silently recite a number of mantras, and to finish by making oblations into a consecrated fire. This rite was to be performed at one or more of the *samdhyas* (sunrise, midday, and sunset). Before

it could be performed, the initiate was required to perform ritual purification (i.e. bathing) in water, to offer libations, and possibly to take an "ash-bath," or smear ashes over his body, if he was an ascetic.[47] Mattamayura inscriptions seem to confirm that both this rite and meditation formed an important part of monastic life. Sages are described as proficient at *pranayama* mediation, yoga, sacred fire-rituals, *puja* (image worship), *abhisheka* (consecration or oblations), and *japa* (repetition of mantras).[48]

On the other hand, the relief situates the guru's body clearly within a hierarchized architectural space where the guru functioned clearly as a revered religious teacher. By far the largest figure in the group, the guru sits in a privileged position framed by four pillars within a sizable chamber, one that may possibly correspond with a special hall for discourse and learning described in textual sources as the *vidya-vyakhya-mandapa* (hall for knowledge and discourse).[49] The function of this kind of chamber can be deduced from Shaiva ritual sources, which prescribe that all members of the monastic community should attend the guru's daily discourse consisting of recitations and commentaries on sacred texts and ritual performance.[50] This daily instruction was a highly ritualized act that was required to take place in a suitable and secure place, a point that was rigidly enforced because the transmission of potent religious knowledge was strictly limited to those who were initiated within the guru's tradition.[51] Every day, disciples within the monastery would gather for this discourse, which would begin with the ritual worship of Shiva, Ganesha, and the guru.[52] This act of worship, directed towards both guru and gods, grew out of a larger tradition in which the guru was universally understood by all to be divine.[53] His discourses offered not merely paths to liberation, but words of embodied spiritual truth. And the rituals, meditations, and recitations of sacred mantras filled the spaces in which he and his initiates lived with a constant potential for spiritual transformation.

The Spatial Program of the Interior

The visual and textual sources just discussed suggest that, despite initial appearances, the monastery at Kadwaha was not ordinary architecture, but a monument built to enable the practice of potent rituals, to facilitate the transmission of religious knowledge, and most importantly to house a holy guru who was understood as a living manifestation of the god Shiva on earth. The significance of the monastery thus lay less in the exterior surfaces than in the complexity of the interior which, once breached, reveals a very different environment than may be inferred from the austerity of the exterior. From the moment of first entrance, the interior unfolds through a remarkably intricate program designed to create distinct spatial zones (fig. 6-4). These zones were carefully hierarchized through patterns of movement which drew the visitor through spaces in clearly designated sequences. For example, the entrance through the portico would have given way to a short hallway that led in many different directions. From here, the visitor

FIGURE 6-6 Courtyard of the monastery at Kadwaha, from the northeast. Photograph by the author.

could move to the east or west through a series of increasingly smaller rooms. Alternatively, he could turn and climb the steep and narrow staircase leading up to the second floor. But the most likely direction of movement would have been southwards towards the central courtyard, where the opening up of space and the dramatic light filtering in from above would have most readily drawn the eye (fig. 6-6).

This method of analyzing space is grounded in well-established methods of access analysis outlined originally in the 1980s and since employed frequently by social archaeologists. The idea driving this approach, as defined by its originators, is that the relationship between social life and architecture was fundamentally determined at the level of space, even more than at the level of physical appearance or architectural form.[54] The system it employs in analyzing the relationship between space and social life involves calculating levels of permeability and access from one room to another in order to determine the relative privacy or public nature of different spaces within buildings. Levels of access can be more specifically defined as the ease with which a space can be entered from the main areas of a building. Additional factors, such as room size, lighting, and ventilation, may further determine paths of movement. When nuanced by social theory, space can be understood as not only reflecting social relations but also shaping them, so that the conscious structuring of the spaces in a building can be seen as a mechanism for reinforcing hierarchies by shaping movement.[55] Thus rooms that were

most spatially accessible were likely to have been frequented by a wide variety of individuals, but those that were most sequestered down long, winding hallways or at the end of multiple rooms, were often reserved for more exclusive activity.

This method plays out well in the Kadwaha monastery, whose plan reveals nuanced and carefully layered paths to different spaces. For example, the small room numbered 6 in the northwest corner of the Kadwaha monastery's first floor would require the visitor to walk through multiple spaces in order to reach it (fig. 6-4). By contrast, the large and well-lit courtyard could be approached directly from the entrance hall, and thus, by the rules of access analysis, was a much more accessible space (fig. 6-6). The courtyard's accessibility was no mere accident, but a consciously mediated design that reinforced its fundamental function as a critical nexus in the larger spatial conception of the monastery's plan. When viewed from above, the courtyard forms a perfect square situated in the direct center of the building, and acts as the hub of bisecting north–south and east–west central axes that divide the plan into equally sized quadrants. The formation of these axes was not merely incidental to the courtyard's central location; rather the axes were distinctly created through the placement of the courtyard's pillars, which widened the space around the cardinal points. On a symbolic level, these features suggest that the courtyard may have functioned not unlike like the hearth in ancient Neolithic houses, which served as a type of *axis mundi*, or the axis marking the center of the world, "providing an external reference point from which all things and people take their position and orientation."[56] On a more practical level, the courtyard can be seen as an organizational center through which a visitor to the monastery must pass in order to move from the entrance to the largest and most prominent rooms on the first story. It was thus one of the most accessible spaces in the monastery, and the one most frequently encountered by both ascetics and those devotees who may have been allowed inside the building.

Because the rooms around the front hall and central courtyard could easily be accessed by all who entered the monastery, it may be safe to begin to speculate as to whether they might have been designed to facilitate a variety of devotional activities, possibly associated with the temples outside. In this, one can draw a loose distinction between the rooms to the north of the courtyard, and those to the east, west, and south. The latter were generally the largest and most prominent of the monastery's interior spaces and were easily traversed by all who entered the building. Among them, at least one room – room 9 – particularly suggests a space built specifically for large-scale, and possibly royal, ceremonial performances, such as may have been required of an order that was frequently visited by kingly patrons. Easily accessible, just east of the courtyard, room 9 was a large, double-storied space, spectacularly lit through massive windows lining its upper story (see fig. 6-7). Further features within the room, most notably the remains of a basin and an animal tie in the northeastern corner, suggest a ritual function that may have involved a cow or goat, possibly kept for its sacred milk. An inscription from another Mattamayura site includes an obscure mandate that villagers

FIGURE 6-7 Room 9 in the monastery at Kadwaha, from the north. Photograph by the author.

bring a wooden bull to the monastery for a special festival, which might further suggest that animals played an important role in larger ritual activities that might have involved lay communities.[57] A second, yet less accessible, room – room 3 – may have also been designed in service of a larger devotional community.

While the other rooms directly off the courtyard could have sheltered a significant audience, the smaller rooms grouped to the side of the monastery's northern entrance seem to have held more practical functions. Three of the four least accessible of all the rooms (rooms 4, 6, 7) were equipped with internal shelving and seem to have been designed primarily for storage. The fourth (room 3), by contrast, was double-storied in height and fully fitted with tall windows that provided light and ventilation. Its form particularly suggests a space for food preparation which, given an ascetic's meager diet, may have been more necessary for the maintenance of the temples appearing beyond the monastery's walls. It is well known, for example, that temples were heavily endowed through grants that specified the gifting of everything from livestock to cooking ingredients necessary for the daily feeding of the gods.[58] Yet the temple proper did not contain sufficient storage space for these goods. At Kadwaha, the monastery would have been the most likely location for both the cooking and the storage of ritual meals and implements. If this were indeed the case, the close proximity of these four rooms to the exterior of the building makes them likely candidates for the fulfillment of these functions.

Whereas the layout of the first story necessarily implies a level of permeability between the interior and exterior of the monastic residence, access to the second story appears to have been much more limited. Movement upwards was naturally restricted by the cramped and narrow staircase set unobtrusively, and almost out of sight, behind a pilaster. It may thus have been upstairs that the monastery's ascetic residents lived, and where they performed their most secretive rituals. The character of the rooms on the upper story reinforces such a notion; they are generally smaller and unfold more circuitously through increasingly sequestered spaces. In addition to two narrow storage rooms that are strikingly centrally located (rooms 20 and 21), there are at least two rooms containing drains for the daily ritual bathing required of Shaiva initiates (rooms 18 and 23), one of which is situated directly next to a set of two rooms that may have served as a private monastic shrine (rooms 24 and 25). Other rooms are roughly equivalent to those found below them, yet their degree of accessibility suggests a very different purpose. For example, room 26 retains the same placement and dimensions as the room directly below (room 13). But, whereas the courtyard on the first story provides easy access to room 13, on the second story it serves as a barrier, forcing the visitor to walk around its edges before finally reaching the entrance to room 26. This room is in fact one of the monastery's least accessible spaces, one that was probably frequented only by the initiates who dwelt within. It may well be the kind of space that could have functioned as a hall for ritual discourse, in which the transmission of potent and privileged knowledge, such as seen in the relief from Khajuraho (fig. 6-5), would be assured of remaining secret among those who were appropriately initiated. The advantage of the upper story spaces was thus that of limited access. If the monastery's first story contained rooms designed for large-scale ritual, then the second story appears to have formed a zone of more exclusive ritual and residential activity.

The relative accessibility of spaces and the creation of zones of relative exclusivity shed new light on the logic that may have driven the monastery's overall design. If the monastery was designed to shelter a royally sponsored religious order at an expanding sacred site, then it needed to express, in some way, the institutional status of the ascetics who lived within. This it did through the massiveness of the building, which both overpowered and engaged the smaller temples that stood by its side, and effectively made the living Shaiva guru and his disciples a visible presence at the site (fig. 6-3). But at the same time the monastery's austere exterior would have projected, and even protected, the ascetic identity of the monastic community that resided within. Indeed, Mattamayura monasteries have been usefully described as "like 'fortresses' with surrounding walls and battlements,"[59] whose high windows, positioned exclusively on the upper story, would have prevented visual access from vantage points outside, or, in other words, would have made the ritual activity occurring in the interior virtually invisible from the exterior. Once the walls were breached, however, the complex patterns in interior space, created through multiple passages and gradations in lightness and darkness, would have revealed the richness of the ritual life that

animated the spaces within. The play between interior and exterior, and among varying degrees of accessibility, may have provided one solution to what architectural historian Kazi Ashraf has described as the "fundamental human aporia" associated with ascetic architecture, or the seemingly contradictory need for renunciation and collective living, and for engagement and removal from society as a whole.[60]

Afterlives, Archaeology, and the Recovery of History

The monastery at Kadwaha remained a center for Mattamayura Shaivism well through the tenth and eleventh centuries, during which time it continued to attract the attention of royal patrons. But near the end of this period, a significant shift occurred at the site. The ambitious architectural activity which brought about the construction of Kadwaha's 15 temples (fig. 6-2) came to a halt. At the same time, inscriptions mentioning the Pratihara kings of Budhi Chanderi stopped appearing with great frequency. It is unlikely that the dynasty simply disintegrated; it may be, rather, that attention shifted elsewhere. A thirteenth-century inscription recording the construction of a *kirtisagara* (artificial lake), *kirtidurga* (fortress), and *kirtimandira* (temple) at the capital of Budhi Chanderi provides evidence that they remained active in the area.[61] What is more probable is that the royal family continued to patronize ritual activities at Kadwaha and other sites nearby without necessarily initiating new building projects. The construction of a monastery at Budhi Chanderi by a guru from Kadwaha in 1042–3 CE may have additionally shifted the Mattamayura's main residence closer to the capital.

Despite the hiatus in construction, the monastery continued to be populated by Shaiva sages who continued to play a critical role in Kadwaha's religious life. By the thirteenth century, they may have begun to attract the attention of the Yajvapala kings who came to power at Narwar fort, located approximately 120 kilometers to the north.[62] The importance of the monastery and its associated temples was particularly highlighted at this time, when they were incorporated into the nucleus of a new *gadhi* (fortress) (figs. 6-3 and 6-4). The fortress was most likely established in response to military campaigns undertaken by the new rulers of the Delhi Sultanate against Narwar and Chanderi, first under Balban in 1251, and again during the reign of Ala al-Din Khalji (r. 1296–1316) at the turn of the fourteenth century.[63] Whereas the former campaign seems not to have affected Kadwaha in any major way, the latter may have significantly upset the structure of the monastic site. An inscription of 1309–10 found on the temple accompanying the monastery, for example, tells of a sage named Bhuteshvara who performed special worship of the Shiva *linga* enshrined in the temple at a time when *mlecchas* (barbarians) had overrun the earth.[64] These mlecchas were apparently Khalji forces that had led an attack against the fort at Kadwaha resulting in damage to a *jaladhara* (artificial lake or water tank) which had been

built next to the temple. In addition to donating a new tank, Bhuteshvara practiced severe austerities, most likely as an attempt to prevent further incursions by hostile forces at the site.

Bhuteshvara's penance appears to have been unsuccessful in preventing either further conquest or incursion at the site. Not long afterwards, Ala al-Din Khalji set up a governorship at Chanderi, and Kadwaha appears to have been incorporated as a key frontier outpost in the intermediary region between Chanderi and Narwar.[65] As in earlier periods, this transition in local and regional power left a significant architectural imprint on the monastery, which retained its status as the political and religious center of its region. This time, however, the imprint came not in the form of new temples or greater support for the monastic community, but in a complete transformation of the monastic site. Most visibly, the temple accompanying the matha was buried under a platform upon which was erected a new, fourteenth-century mosque (figs. 6-3 and 6-4). And while the monastery most likely retained its function as a residential structure, the Shaiva monastic residents were probably replaced by local administrators for the new Chanderi regime. Additional buildings were constructed within the enclosure, but only a few fragments remain today, giving us the sense that the site's function was expanded to meet the needs of its new patrons.[66]

What this architectural evidence ultimately suggests is that the monastery and its surrounding fortress were effectively converted into an Islamic *ribat*, or an institution that served as a defensible outpost and which was frequently stationed at the far boundaries of established rule. As is well known among historians of Islamic architecture, ribats functioned in a variety of ways – as caravanserais, or stopping points for travelers, and, in urban contexts, they could function variously as gathering places for sufis (Islamic mystics) or buildings used for commercial purposes. On the frontier they represented a well-established type built both to protect holdings and to house spiritual warriors who fought for the faith.[67] Although it might be tempting to read these later transformations as yet another incidence of Islamic iconoclasm, it would be a mistake to do so without considering the broader context. As Richard Eaton has cautioned, the desecration of religious sites was rarely undertaken merely as an iconoclastic gesture. Rather sites were selected because they were closely connected with political authority, and the act of desecration was undertaken in order to dismantle institutions which reinforced the royal authority of earlier dynasties.[68]

The architectural conversion of the monastery at Kadwaha was thus not merely incidental; it most likely reflected a conscious reworking of a pre-existing, important site. At the time of the conquest, the monastery at Kadwaha was situated in the heart of the local fortress and was likely the site of the final battles. The new Islamic residents thus made effective use of the pre-existing space, modifying it so that it would both functionally suit their needs, and symbolically retain its significance as a political and religious center. Practically speaking, the walls of the earlier fortress could become the walls of the new ribat, and the monastery's residential spaces were easily reused. Symbolically, it could have drawn both broadly

on the site's connection with earlier forms of authority, but also more specifically on its earlier function as the abode of powerful and potentially militant Shaiva ascetics responsible for administering the surrounding lands.[69]

Despite the changes made to the former monastic site, Kadwaha did not become a predominantly Muslim center; its previous traditions were not fully supplanted by the advent of Islam. The other temples continued to flourish around the town, and continued to attract Shaiva, Vaishnava, and Jain pilgrims through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[70] Gifts continued to be made to Shaiva *panditas* and brahmanas even as the Kadwaha was conquered again by Dilavar Khan of Mandu (r. 1390–1405 CE) during the final years of the Tughluq state in Delhi.[71] And yet it also drew Muslim travelers, possibly the most famous of whom was Ibn Battuta, who visited it while traveling between Narwar and Chanderi in 1342 and named it Kajarra (or Kajwara).[72] Although Ibn Battuta most likely stayed in the vicinity of the ribat, he wandered freely through the village and took particular note of a community of ascetics who continued to make Kadwaha their primary home. He wrote: "At this place resides a tribe of Jogees, with long and clotted hair. Their color inclines to yellow, which arises from their fasting. Many of the Moslems of these parts attend on them, and learn (magic) from them."[73] The fact that Muslims sought out the services of Hindu holy men was not unusual in this period, when boundaries between religious communities were much more permeable and fluid than is commonly understood today.[74]

Very little of definitive value is known about the history of the monastic site, or even Kadwaha, after this point in the fourteenth century. It seems that the ribat, as it developed under the Khaljis, may have passed on into the hands of new regional rulers, the Sultans of Malwa, who took over Kadwaha in the fifteenth century, and who may have added a third story to the building.[75] It may have continued to act as a fortification for a long period thereafter, functioning as a political outpost on the Indo-Islamic frontier. By the nineteenth century it had passed out of use and into obscurity. It was finally rediscovered and recognized as a Mattamayura monastery in 1892 by the epigrapher who first published the Ranod inscription detailing the story of King Avantivarman and the guru Purundara.[76] Thus in modern-day historiography, the identity of the complex has been primarily tied to the ninth and tenth century, to the moment of its Shaiva origins, and the development of the larger temple town.

What is known has been in no small part determined by archaeologists, whose conservation efforts in 1939, 1940, and 1941 were focused primarily on uncovering the monastery and its Shaiva past.[77] The "debris of later buildings of the Muhammadan fort," which was frequently considered of lesser cultural and aesthetic value, was completely removed, the third story of the monastery was dismantled, and the temple, which had been buried under "accretions of earth and debris of later structures," was fully excavated. The decision to focus on the matha and its temple may have been partially decided because of the dilapidated condition of the mosque, which may have been well beyond saving. It is also very possible that the archaeological officials working at the site in that era did not

recognize the significance of the early Sultanate history preserved in Kadwaha's monuments; after all, early Sultanate history remains a newly emerging field.[78] Nonetheless, their efforts were consistent with an embedded colonialist ideology that deliberately sought to classify sites by dominant religious affiliations and that would have privileged the earlier, "authentic," Hindu history at Kadwaha over what might have been seen as less significant Sultanate moments. The sculpted façade of the temple and the rarity of the monastery may have additionally endowed the earlier tenth-century monument with greater aesthetic value than the comparatively less well-preserved vestiges of the later medieval fortress.

* * *

The extensive reuse and diverse afterlives of the monastery at Kadwaha, in its incarnations both as a Shaiva residence and as a later fortress, reinforce the building's fundamental importance as a powerful and sacred site, established first under King Avantivarman and the guru Purandra, and maintained through the activities of its occupants. In each successive moment, the monument was carefully reworked to meet the symbolic and practical needs of new occupants who sought to draw on its status as the political and religious center of a major temple town. And yet, despite the extent of the Mattamayura lineage in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, and Kadwaha's continued function both as regional capital and a major pilgrimage place for many eras after, Kadwaha is by no means a well-known or widely studied place, even among specialists in the field.[79] This relative obscurity is certainly not due to a late or recent discovery, as Kadwaha has been known to archaeologists for over 120 years. Rather, Kadwaha's comparative anonymity is most likely due to the fact that it does not fit easily into categories of dynastic patronage or regional kingdoms that generally form the basis for art historical work. Similarly, Kadwaha's location in the rural periphery has made it difficult to study and easy to ignore by all but the most intrepid of scholars and government officials.

Yet it is precisely because Kadwaha eludes more traditional approaches that it remains absolutely essential for further study. While major sacred sites like Khajuraho may provide significant insight into the relationship between royal power and religious practice at the center of state society, it was at smaller places like Kadwaha that the majority of India's sacred centers were initially formed. Initially established by living religious ascetics in the forests of southern Gopakshetra, the monastic site at Kadwaha derived its importance because it played a vital role not only in the religious life of its inhabitants but in the administration of lands far beyond state control. It was in areas such as these that the majority of ancient Indian settlements thrived. And it was at such places that monasteries, and the living communities that populated them, may have held significant autonomy over the production of sacred space.

Kadwaha in the twenty-first century is an agrarian village largely surrounded by fertile fields. Yet it also thrives as a hub for commerce because it remains the

most important religious center in the Mahua river region. The Shaiva matha has been supplanted by a modern-day temple dedicated to the goddess Bijasen-Devi, to which merchants and devotees flock, along with their goods, to attend a bi-weekly religious festival and regional market. Political authority has passed into the hands of the local police chief who oversees disputes and resolves differences for the entire surrounding area. Yet the fundamental structure of the village and its relationship to its broader community owe much to the history of the matha and ribat. Without the sustenance of the institutions around which it was built, Kadwaha might have become just another abandoned settlement in the rural periphery of Madhya Pradesh. Instead, it is a fortuitous survival, one that can shed tremendous light on the role that living communities played in the formation of sacred spaces.

Acknowledgments

This article could not have been written without the support and assistance of many people. The author would like to particularly thank the editors of this volume, Rebecca Brown and Deborah Hutton, for their careful reading and comments, and Michael W. Meister and Darielle Mason for vetting much earlier versions of my work on this material. Additional gratitude goes to Dr. B. D. Chattopadhyaya and Dr. R. N. Misra for graciously sharing their work and expertise; Mr. S. B. Ota, and Shri N. Taher of the Archaeological Survey of India; Ramkishore Singh and Ram Barosi Sharma for their assistance in Kadwaha; and the Yadav family for their hospitality in Isagarh.

Notes

1 The story stems from a close reading of the Sanskrit edition of the Ranod inscription, verses 11–15, provided in Kielhorn, "A Stone Inscription." An additional translation has been published by Davis, "Praises," 138–9. On the ninth-century date and the identification of the principal sites, I concur with V. V. Mirashi, "The Śaiva."

2 Dhaky and Meister, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture* (hereafter cited as *EITA*) 2.1, 158–60.

3 For example, see Davis, "Aghoraśiva's Background"; Davis, *Ritual*, 14–19; Desai, *Religious Imagery*, 57–60, 149–74.

4 Some key publications include: Dehejia, *Royal Patrons*; Willis, *Temples*. An exception is Willis, *Archaeology*, which deals extensively with religious practitioners.

5 See, for example, Kulke, "Royal Temple Policy"; Stein, *Peasant*; Chattopadhyaya, "Historiography"; Appadurai and Breckenridge, "The South Indian Temple"; Heitzman, *Gifts of Power*; Talbot, *Precolonial India*, 87–125.

6 For example, the *Garuda-Purana* (*c.* tenth century) states that "at a little distance (from the temple) the monastery should be built for those who reside there." See Acarya, *Dictionary*, 464.

7 For notes on survival, see Sears, "Constructing the Guru," 28, n. 8.
8 For recent efforts to rectify this problem in textual studies, see Inden *et al.*, *Querying the Medieval*; Ali, *Courtly Culture*; Pollock, *The Language of the Gods.*
9 Even the most comprehensive overview of the temples, given by Krishna Deva in Dhaky, ed., *EITA* 2.3, 21–7, does not give a more precise dating than "tenth century." See also Willis, *Temples*, 80.
10 Population numbers taken from http://ourvillageindia.org/Index.aspx accessed June 1, 2009, which, in turn, appears to have taken its data from the 2001 Census of India. The only village that comes near it in size is Indor (pop. 2,789), a village a few kilometers to the west.
11 Willis, *Inscriptions*, 16–31.
12 Willis, *Temples,* 105, map 4.
13 Gopakshetra's historical function as a peripheral, wilderness zone has most recently been suggested by R. N. Misra who has, over the course of several decades of fieldwork, linked his observation of abandoned villages in the archaeological record to the relative itinerancy of the region's population in antiquity, "Religion," 72, note 11.
14 See Chattopadhyaya, "Historiography," 37–8.
15 For other such examples, see Sharma, "Negotiating Identity," 216; Chattopadhyaya, "Historiography"; Willis, "Religious and Royal Patronage."
16 Avantivarman's royal affiliation is never directly mentioned, and it was only through careful deduction that V. V. Mirashi was able to identify his possible Shulki, or Chaulukya, connections. Mirashi, "The Śaiva," 8. The difficulty in locating Avantivarman's dynastic affiliation suggests that it may have originally been quite tenuous.
17 The question of the origins of the Mattamayura sect has been the subject of debate for over half a century. Some scholars have argued that they emigrated from far away to settle in Avantivarman's kingdom (see Mirashi, *Inscriptions*; Pathak, *History of Śaiva Cults*). Others have more convincingly suggested that they originated locally as early as the eighth century (see Kielhorn, "A Stone Inscription"; Misra, "The Śaivite Monasteries").
18 The monuments that have been published can be found in Dhaky and Meister, eds., *EITA* 2.2, 3–61; Trivedi, *Temples of the Pratīhāra Period*, 67–70, 95–6, 121–5; Willis, *Temples*, 36–41, 59–60, 68, 73, 79–81, pls. 8–12, 93–6, 100–3, 118–19, 141–2.
19 Gavin Flood usefully describes the process as a ritual mapping of the Shaiva Siddhanta cosmos onto the initiate's self. See Flood, *The Tantric Body*, 135–8; see also Davis, *Ritual*, 92–101.
20 See Flood, *The Tantric Body*, 131.
21 Such was the case with Bappaka, the famous founder of the Rajput Guhila dynasty, who became a Rajput through his interaction with a Shaiva sage. See Chattopadhyaya, "Historiography," 40.
22 This story is told in a fragmentary inscription from the matha at Kadwaha, published in Mirashi and Shastri, "A Fragmentary Stone Inscription," verses 22–33.
23 The imperial Gurjara Pratiharas are thought to have retained their strength until the middle of the tenth century, through the reign of Devapala, after which their influence over their subsidiaries waned and regional kings, like the Pratiharas of Budhi Chanderi, began to consolidate territory into their own autonomous kingdoms. Trivedi, *Temples of the Pratīhāra Period*, 12; Sharma, "Negotiating Identity."

24 Interestingly, Hariraja did not claim mere affiliation with the Gurjjara Pratiharas as a feudatory, but rather declared himself to be a fully independent *nripacha-kravartti*, or "emperor among kings," a title that seems to imply imperial rulership. Mirashi and Shastri, "A Fragmentary Stone Inscription," 118.
25 This story can be found in two inscriptions, one from Ranod and another that is currently in the Archaeological Museum, Gwalior. See Kielhorn, "A Stone Inscription"; Davis, "Praises," 138–9.
26 Summaries of the various versions of this story can be found in Donaldson, "Bhiksātanamūrti Images," 51–5; Kramrisch, *Presence*, 259–65; Handelman and Shulman, *Śiva in the Forest*.
27 See, for example, Chattopdhayaya, "Historiography," 41; Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age"; Davis, *Ritual*, 4–9.
28 I borrow this term from White, *The Alchemical Body*, 27, 31.
29 See Mirashi, "The Śaiva"; Mirashi, *Inscriptions*, cli–clviii; Davis, "Aghoraśiva's Background," 375–6; Davis, "Praises," 134; Talbot, *Precolonial India*, 89, 133.
30 These fragments are easy to spot on site but have yet to be published.
31 Examples of such porticos can be seen at other sites, including Terahi, Surwaya, Chandrehe, and Menal; See Dhaky, ed. *EITA* 2.3, pl. 163; Sears, "Śaiva Monastic Complexes," 108, 117–19; Sears, "Constructing the Guru," 10, 17.
32 Sears, "Constructing the Guru," 10, 29, n. 44; see also Dubey, *Aparājitapṛccha*, 188.
33 See, for example, Kramrisch, *Hindu Temple*; Meister, "The Hindu Temple."
34 Coomaraswamy, "Early Indian Architecture."
35 See also Meister and Rykwert, "Adam's House," 125, 127; Meister, "Asceticism."
36 Meister usefully described this idea as follows: "the hut of the solitary ascetic collectively becomes the form for the monastery, that the monastery is a collection of individual ascetics in their separate cells which then, arranged around a courtyard becomes the model for the Indian monastery." Meister and Rykwert, "Adam's House," 128.
37 Translations from Monier Williams's *Sanskrit–English Dictionary*, online edition, accessed at http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/monier/
38 Acarya, *Dictionary*, 72–3, 463–7; Mlecko, "Guru," 34–5, 44.
39 Gengnagel, "The Śaiva Siddhānta," 82. See also *Caryāpāda* 1.67, 1.73ab of the *Mrgendrāgama*, translated from Sanskrit into French by Brunner-Lachaux, *Mrgendratantra*, 378–81.
40 For example, see Desai, *Religious Imagery,* 79–80; Donaldson, "Lakulīśa."
41 Although this relief has been frequently published, including in Desai, *Religious Imagery*, 202 and Willis, "Religious and Royal Patronage," 152, it has rarely been discussed at length. Desai interpreted it as "A dancer converses with a religious *acharya* seated beneath a canopy," and Willis as a "Relief in the temple platform showing a Saiva *acharya* with disciples and attendants." Here I offer an original interpretation of the depicted event.
42 The latter was suggested to me by Devangana Desai in a personal communication.
43 On levels of initiation, see Davis, *Ritual*, 83–104; Gengnagel, "The Śaiva Siddhānta," 81.
44 For example, see Flood, *The Tantric Body*; White, *The Alchemical Body*; Davis, *Ritual*, esp. 103–4.

45 This idea finds expression in a Mattamayura inscription from Chandrehe, in which the Guru Prabodhasiva is extolled for having "realized God by activities including the study of scripture and the performance of religious austerities and meditation that he learned by imitating his own Guru." See Mirashi, *Inscriptions*, 203, verse 11.
46 Sanderson, "Śaivism," 159–60; Davis, *Ritual*, 36–8.
47 Sanderson, "Meaning," 28.
48 See Jain and Trivedi, "Budhi Chanderi," verses 5, 9, 17; Mirashi, *Inscriptions*, 232, verse 15, and 220–1, verse 53; Mirashi and Shastri, "A Fragmentary Stone Inscription," verse 10.
49 Dubey, *Aparājitapṛcchа*, 188.
50 For example, see *Caryāpāda* 1.29–33 of the *Mṛgendrāgama*; Brunner-Lachaux, *Mṛgendratantra*, 360–1.
51 Ritual knowledge was considered the absolute key to liberation and was often considered "true knowledge" or even "liberating knowledge." See Padoux, "The Tantric Guru," Sanderson, "Meaning," 23, 38–47; Davis, *Ritual*, ix, 34–5, 72–4.
52 Gengnagel, "The Śaiva Siddhānta," 84.
53 Padoux, "The Tantric Guru," 41–2.
54 Hillier and Hansen, *Social Logic of Space*.
55 See, for example, Pearson and Richards, *Architecture and Order*; Samson, *Social Archaeology*.
56 See Pearson and Richards, *Architecture and Order*, 116.
57 Mirashi, *Inscriptions*, 224, verses 83–4.
58 See, for example, Davis, *Ritual*, 4–6.
59 Misra, "The Śaivite," 108.
60 Ashraf, "The Hermit's Hut," 179–83, 198–9; Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History*, 56–93.
61 Jain and Trivedi, "Budhi Chanderi."
62 Willis, *Inscriptions*, 14, 17, 21–2; Trivedi, *Inscriptions*, 561–603.
63 See Wink, *Al Hind*, 158; Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, 144.
64 Willis, *Inscriptions*, 22.
65 Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, 197–9; Asher and Talbot, *India Before Europe*, 35–41.
66 A full assessment of this material is given in Sears, "Fortified *Mathas*."
67 Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*; Grabar, "Architecture of Power," 70; Edwards, "*Ribāt*."
68 Eaton, "Temple Desecration."
69 A fragmentary inscription found in the monastery at Kadwaha cites an instance when the sage at the head of the monastery rose up, using "a bow obtained by his might and with arrows," to dispel his enemies, who had presumably caused misfortune at the monastery. See Mirashi and Shastri, "A Fragmentary Stone Inscription," verses 14–18.
70 See, for example, Willis, *Inscriptions*, 27–31, 39, 45.
71 See Fussman *et al.*, *Naissance*, 300; Brand, "The Sultanate of Malwa." On the appearance of the Tughluqs in Kadwaha inscriptions, see Willis, *Inscriptions*, 24, 25, 26, 27.
72 This site has frequently been identified as Khajuraho on the basis of very tenuous evidence. For a reassessment of the evidence, see Sears, "Fortified *Mathas*," 25–6.

73 Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, 162.
74 For example, the power to administer land in fourteenth-century Kadwaha was not the exclusive right of Muslims, but also of devout Hindus who were by no means excluded from new local administrations. See Willis, *Inscriptions*, 26.
75 Inscriptions found on the one surviving third-story room primarily date between 1409/10 and 1447 CE, and three of the latest specifically mention the reign of Sultan Mahmud Khalji (r. 1436–69), the ruler of Malwa who was seated at Mandu. See Willis, *Inscriptions*, 27–8, 29, 30–1, 113.
76 Kielhorn, "A Stone Inscription."
77 These activities are recorded in the annual reports of the Archaeological Department of Gwalior State for the years 1939–40 and 1941.
78 See Finbarr Barry Flood's essay in this volume (chapter 15). Other important recent publications include: Patel, *Building Communities*; Patel and Lambha, *Architecture of the Indian Sultanates*; Flood, "Pillars"; Flood, *Objects of Translation*; Meister, "Crossing Lines"; Hasan, *Sultans and Mosques.*
79 See above, note 9. The few exceptions include Misra, "The Śaivite Monasteries"; Misra, "Religion in a Disorganized Milieu," and possibly Trivedi, *Temples of the Pratīhāra Period.*

References

Acarya, Prasanna Kumar. *A Dictionary of Hindu Architecture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927.

Ali, Daud. *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Appadurai, Arjun, and Carol Breckenridge. "The South Indian Temple: Authority, Honour and Redistribution." *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 10, no. 2 (1976): 187–211.

Asher, Catherine B., and Cynthia Talbot. *India Before Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Ashraf, Kazi. "The Hermit's Hut: A Study in Asceticism and Architecture." Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2002.

Brand, Michael. "The Sultanate of Malwa." In *The Architecture of the Indian Sultanates*, edited by Abha Narain Lambah and Alka Patel, 81–91. Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2006.

Brunner-Lachaux, Helene, trans. *Mrgendratantra: Section des rites et section du comportement.* Pondichery: Institut Français d'Indologie, 1985.

Chattopadhyaya, B. D. "Historiography, History, and Religious Centers: Early Medieval North India, Circa AD 700–1200." In *Gods, Guardians, and Lovers: Temple Sculptures from North India, AD 700–1200*, edited by Vishakha Desai and Darielle Mason, 34–46. New York: The Asia Society Galleries, 1993.

Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. "Early Indian Architecture: IV. Huts and Related Temple Types." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 15 (Spring, 1988): 5–26.

Davis, Richard. "Aghoraśiva's Background." *Journal of Oriental Research (Dr S. S. Janaki Felicitation Volume)* 56–62 (1992): 367–78.

Davis, Richard. "Praises of the Drunken Peacocks." In *Tantra in Practice*, edited by David Gordon White, 131–45. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Davis, Richard. *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe: Worshipping Śiva in Medieval India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Dehejia, Vidya, ed. *Royal Patrons and Great Temple Art*. Bombay: Marg Publications, 1988.

Desai, Devangana. *Religious Imagery of Khajuraho*. Mumbai: Project for Indian Cultural Studies, 1996.

Dhaky, M. A., ed. *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture (EITA)*, vol. 2, pt. 3: *North India: Beginnings of Medieval Idiom, c. AD 900–1000*. Delhi: American Institute of Indian Studies, 1998.

Dhaky, M. A., and Michael W. Meister, eds. *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture (EITA)*, vol. 2, pt 1: *North India: Foundations of North Indian Style, c. 250 BC–AD 1100*. Delhi: American Institute of Indian Studies, 1991.

Dhaky, M. A., and Michael W. Meister, eds. *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture (EITA)*, vol. 2, pt. 2: *North India: Period of Early Maturity, c. AD 700–900*. Delhi: American Institute of Indian Studies, 1991.

Donaldson, Thomas. "Bhiksātanamūrti Images from Orissa." *Artibus Asiae* 47, no. 1 (1986): 51–5.

Donaldson, Thomas. "Lakulīśa to Rājaguru: Metamorphosis of the 'Teacher' in the Iconographic Program of the Orissan Temple." In *Studies in Hindu and Buddhist Art*, edited by P. K. Mishra, 129–53. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1999.

Dubey, L. *Aparājitapṛccha – A Critical Study*. Allahabad: Lakshmi Publications, 1987.

Eaton, Richard. "Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States." In *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia*, edited by David Gilmartin and Bruce B. Lawrence, 246–81. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000.

Edwards, Holly. "The *Ribāt* of 'Alā b. Karmākh." *Iran* 29 (1991): 85–94.

Flood, Finbarr Barry. *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu–Muslim" Encounter*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Flood, Finbarr Barry. "Pillars, Palimpsests, and Princely Practices: Translating the Past in Sultanate Delhi." *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (2003): 95–116.

Flood, Gavin. *The Tantric Body*. London: I. B. Taurus, 2006.

Fussman, Gérard, Denis Maitrange, Eric Ollivier, and Françoise Pirot. *Naissance et déclin d'une qasba: Chanderi du Xe au XVIIIe siècle* [*Birth and Decline of a Qasba: Chanderi from the 10th through the 18th Century*], vol. 2. Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 2003.

Gengnagel, Jorg. "The Śaiva Siddhānta Ācarya as Mediator of Religious Identity." In *Charisma and Canon: Essays on the Religious History of the Indian Subcontinent*, edited by Vasudha Dalmia, Angelika Malinar, and Martin Christof, 77–92. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Grabar, Oleg. "Architecture of Power: Palaces, Citadels and Fortifications." In *Architecture of the Islamic World*, edited by George Michell, 65–79. London: Thames and Hudson, 1978.

Handelman, Don, and David Shulman. *Śiva in the Forest of Pines*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Hasan, Perween. *Sultans and Mosques*. London: I. B. Taurus, 2007.

Hausner, Sondra. *Wandering with Sadhus: Ascetics in the Hindu Himalayas*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.

Heitzman, James. *Gifts of Power: Lordship in an Early Indian State*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Hillenbrand, Robert. *Islamic Architecture*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
Hillier, Bill, and Julienne Hansen. *Social Logic of Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
Ibn Battuta. *Travels of Ibn Battuta in the Near East, Asia and Africa*. Translated and edited by Samuel Lee. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2004 [1829].
Inden, Ronald, Jonathan Walters, and Daud Ali. *Querying the Medieval: Texts and the History of Practices in South Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
Jackson, Peter. *The Delhi Sultanate*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
Jain, Balchandra, and Chandra Bhushan Trivedi. "Budhi Chanderi Inscription of the Time of Ranapāladeva." *Journal of the Oriental Institute Baroda* 26, no. 1 (1976): 87–90.
Kielhorn, F. "A Stone Inscription from Ranod." *Epigraphia Indica* 1 (1892): 351–61.
Kramrisch, Stella. *The Hindu Temple*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1946.
Kramrisch, Stella. *Presence of Śiva*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981.
Kulke, Hermann. "Royal Temple Policy and the Structure of Medieval Hindu Kingdoms." In *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, edited by Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke, and Gaya Charan Tripathi, 125–50. New Delhi: South Asia Institute, 1978.
Meister, Michael W. "Asceticism and Monasticism as Reflected in Indian Art." In *Monastic Life in the Christian and Hindu Traditions*, edited by A. Creel and V. Narayanan, 219–44. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990.
Meister, Michael W. "Crossing Lines: Architecture in Early Islamic South Asia." *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (2003): 117–30.
Meister, Michael W. "The Hindu Temple: Axis of Access." In *Concepts of Space*, edited by Kapila Vatsyayan, 269–80. Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1991.
Meister, Michael, and Joseph Rykwert. "Afterword: Adam's House and Hermits' Huts: A Conversation." *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 15 (Spring, 1988): 27–33
Mirashi, V. V. *Inscriptions of the Kalachuri-Chedi Era*, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol. 4, pt. 1. Ootacamund: Government Epigraphist for India, 1955.
Mirashi, V. V. "The Śaiva Ācāryas of the Mattamayūra Clan." *Indian Historical Quarterly* 26 (1950): 1–16.
Mirashi, V. V., and Ajay Mitra Shastri. "A Fragmentary Stone Inscription from Kadwaha." *Epigraphia Indica* 37 (1967): 117–24.
Misra, R. N. "Religion in a Disorganized Milieu: Shaiva Siddhanta's Institutionalization in the Gopadri Region." In *Organizational and Institutional Aspects of Indian Religion*, edited by Joseph T. O'Connell, 59–78. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1999.
Misra, R. N. "The Śaivite Monasteries, Pontiffs and Patronage in Central India." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay*, 64–6 (1993): 108–24.
Mlecko, Joel D. "The Guru in Hindu Tradition." *Numen* 29, no. 1 (1982): 33–6.
Padoux, André. "The Tantric Guru." In *Tantra in Practice*, edited by David Gordon White, 41–51. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.
Patel, Alka. *Building Communities in Gujarat: Architecture and Society during the Twelfth through Fourteenth Centuries*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
Patel, Alka, and Abha Narain Lambha, eds. *The Architecture of the Indian Sultanates*. Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2006.
Pathak, V. S. *History of Śaiva Cults in Northern India*. Allahabad: Abinash Prakashan, 1980.

Pearson, Michael Parker, and Colin Richards, eds. *Architecture and Order*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Pollock, Sheldon. *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

Samson, Ross, ed. *The Social Archaeology of Houses*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990.

Sanderson, Alexis. "Meaning in Tantric Ritual." In *Essais sur le ritual III*, edited by Anne-Marie Blondeau and Kristofer Schippers, 15–95. Louvain and Paris: Peeters, 1995.

Sanderson, Alexis. "The Śaiva Age: The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism during the Early Medieval Period." In *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, edited by Shingo Einoo, 41–350. Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, 2009.

Sanderson, Alexis. "Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions." In *The World's Religions*, edited by Alexis Sanderson, Stewart Sutherland, and Peter Clarke, 660–704. London: Routledge, 1988.

Sears, Tamara I. "Constructing the Guru: Ritual Authority and Architectural Space in Medieval India." *Art Bulletin* 90, no. 1 (March 2008): 7–31.

Sears, Tamara I. "Fortified *Mathas* and Fortress Mosques: The Reuse of Hindu Monastic Sites in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries." *Archives of Asian Art* 59 (2009): 7–31.

Sears, Tamara I. "Śaiva Monastic Complexes in Twelfth-Century Rajasthan." *South Asian Studies* 23 (2007): 107–26.

Sharma, Sanjay. "Negotiating Identity and Status: Legitimation and Patronage Under the Gurjara Pratīhāras of Kanauj." *Studies in History* 22, no. 2 (2006): 181–220.

Stein, Burton. *Peasant, State and Society in Medieval South India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Talbot, Cynthia. *Precolonial India in Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Thapar, Romila. *Ancient Indian Social History*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1978.

Trivedi, Harihar Vitthal. *Inscriptions of the Paramāras, Chandellas, Kachchhapaghātas and Two Minor Dynasties*, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol. 7, pt. 3. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1989.

Trivedi, R. D. *Temples of the Pratīhāra Period in Central India*. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1990.

White, David Gordon. *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Willis, Michael D. *The Archaeology of Hindu Ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Willis, Michael D. *Inscriptions of Gopaksetra: Materials for the History of Central India*. London: British Museum Press, 1996.

Willis, Michael D. "Religious and Royal Patronage in North India." In *Gods, Guardians, and Lovers: Temple Sculptures from North India, AD 700–1200*, edited by Vishakha Desai and Darielle Mason, 49–65. New York: The Asia Society Galleries, 1993.

Willis, Michael D. *Temples of Gopaksetra: A Regional History of Architecture and Sculpture in Central India, AD 600–900*. London: British Museum Press, 1997.

Wink, André. *Al Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, vol. 2: *The Slave Kings and Islamic Conquest in the 11th–13th Centuries*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

Further Reading

Chattopadhyaya, B. D. *Studying Early India: Archaeology, Texts and Historical Issues.* London: Anthem Press, 2006.

Desai, Vishakha N., and Darielle Mason, eds. *Gods, Guardians, and Lovers: Temple Sculptures from North India, AD 700–1200.* New York: The Asia Society Galleries, 1993.

Flood, Gavin. *The Ascetic Self: Subjectivity, Memory and Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Gross, Robert Lewis. *The Sādhus of India: A Study of Hindu Asceticism.* Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1992.

Inden, Ronald. *Text and Practice.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Kulke, Hermann. *Kings and Cults: State Formation and Legitimation in India and Southeast Asia.* New Delhi: Manohar, 1993.

Lorenzen, David N. *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas: Two Lost Śaivite Sects.* New Delhi: Thomason Press, 1972.

Misra, R. N. "Pontiffs' Empowerment in Central Indian Śaivite Monachism." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay* 72 (1997): 72–86.

Singh, A. K., "A Śaiva Monastic Complex of the Kalachuris at Chunari in Central India." *South Asian Studies* 18 (2002): 47–52.

Thapar, Romila. *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Van Troy, J. "The Social Structure of the Śaiva-Siddhāntika Ascetics (700–1300 AD)." *Indica* 2, no. 2 (1974): 77–86.

7

Urban Space and Visual Culture: The Transformation of Seoul in the Twentieth Century

Kim Youngna

Urban life is one of the definitive characteristics of modern society; the city is a symbol of modernity. The late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century was a period of transition in Korea as the country shifted from an agricultural to an industrial society. As people migrated from rural to urban areas, the physical infrastructure of cities grew to accommodate the growing population. A new railroad system enabled travel, and the spatial environment of public offices and residential areas began to be transformed. Along with these changes and the development of cities, the concept of the individual in the cities also changed. No longer a member of a traditional community, the individual had to rediscover him- or herself as a part of the urban masses and, instead of valuing the stability of the past, learn to valorize the dynamic yet complex lifestyle of the city. While urban life was perceived as the source of limitless possibilities, it was also the cause of social anxieties and cultural conflicts.

The visual culture of the city needs to be situated within this historical and social context. With modernity, cities in Korea changed, specifically in relation to visual culture. The traditional thatched-roof houses were dismantled; European-style residences, churches, museums, and department stores rose in their place and the city became the center of religion, culture, and mass consumption. Newspapers, magazines, advertisements and other photographic images became part and parcel of everyday life. From the 1930s, department stores and

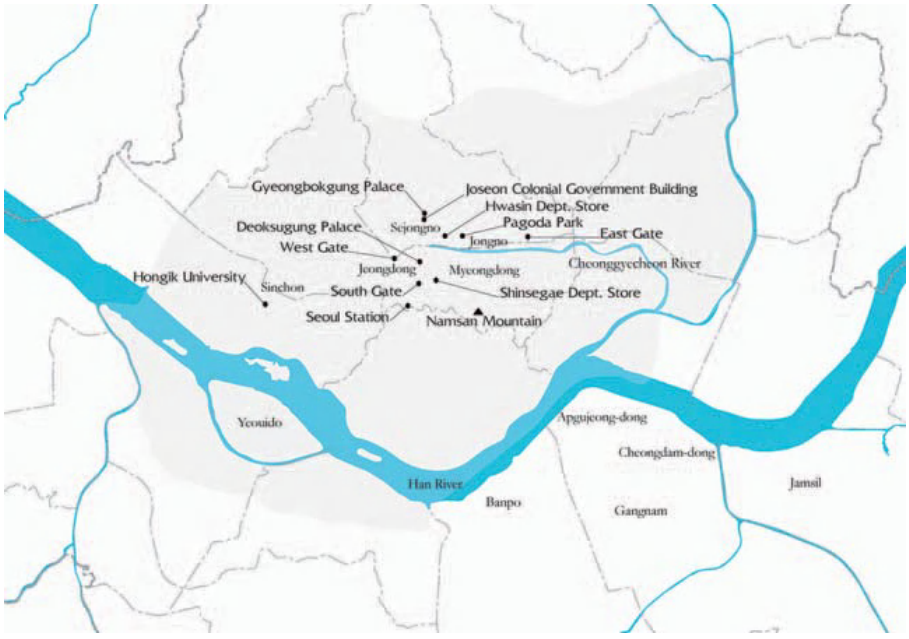

FIGURE 7-1 Map of Seoul.

shops lined the streets and the new cityscape was spectacularly embellished with window displays, neon signs, and other advertisements.

After the liberation of Korea in 1945, modernist high-rises rapidly cropped up amidst colonial architecture, and the city became a space in which memories of diverse histories, politics, cultures were densely interwoven. Beginning in the 1970s President Park Chung-hee's economic development plans reshaped the general cityscape with the building of apartment complexes; the apartment not only met the demand for a rise in the standard of living but also became an object of consumption and investment. Furthermore, the parks as well as the monuments and outdoor sculptures installed in public spaces functioned as focal points for the masses to consolidate the memory of the past and articulate common values as well as a vision for the future.

This essay addresses the experience of modernity through a century of Korea's urbanization, focusing on Seoul and particularly the change in the visual culture of the city from the late nineteenth century to the present day (fig. 7-1). The city's original name in the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910) was Hanseong; it was changed to Gyeongseong during the colonial period (1910–45), and changed again to Seoul after liberation.

The Transition to Modernity

In the second half of the nineteenth century, after the material and technological development of the Industrial Revolution, Euro-American countries sought to establish trade contacts with Asia. Foreign ships began to appear at the ports of Joseon Korea. The American trading ship *General Sherman* arrived on the Daedong River near Pyongyang in 1866. When the crew seized local officers, the ship was burned by locals in response. The invasion of Ganghwa island by a French squadron in the same year, and the United States' retaliation with five warships in 1871, met with strong resistance from the Koreans and both the French and the US withdrew. Daewongun, the father of 12-year-old King Gojong, virtually ruled the Joseon government at the time; he resisted these forces and further strengthened his closed-door policies against the foreign "barbarians." However, the family of Queen Myeongseong subsequently rose to power and revised the international policies of the Joseon Dynasty. Despite numerous internal conflicts and struggles, Joseon opened its doors to a global economy on account of the trade treaties established with Japan in 1876, and subsequently with the United States in 1882. King Gojong sent his delegates to Japan, China, and the United States to acquire knowledge of western technology and science. A transition from feudalism to modernity was enacted through reformation of class relations and privatization of landed property, and Euro-American influence flooded every sector of society. In the visual sphere, the influence was initially perceived in the transformations of the cityscape.

Hanseong (present-day Seoul) widened its streets, restructured its commercial sector, opened public spaces such as the Pagoda Park, and in 1899, established

public transportation in the form of a tramline. However, the most significant change in the modern cityscape was the appropriation of European architecture in public buildings and the subsequent transformation not only in the structure and material of housing, but also in the very concept of the residence. From 1882, foreigners were permitted to live in Hanseong and they began to introduce their own architectural styles. Engineers from each country were brought into the city to construct buildings such as the neo-classical Russian embassy (1895) and the five-story French embassy with its slanted roof (1892).

The Jonghyeon Catholic Church (1898, today the Myeongdong Cathedral) is the most significant European-style building frequented by Koreans. Built on a hill overlooking the city, it was the tallest building in Hanseong. Designed by the French priest Father Eugène Jean Georges Coste (1842–96), it is pseudo-Gothic in style. It was constructed with bricks of various sizes and bears an unorthodox cross-vault, although such Gothic features as pointed arches and clerestory windows were also used.

Another European-designed architectural monument from the late nineteenth century is the Seokjojeon (Hall of Stone) at Deoksugung Palace. Designed by British architect G. R. Harding, who came to Seoul from Hong Kong, the Seokjojeon was completed in 1910 in neoclassical style in the Ionic order, and embellished with balconies. It also reveals Korean variation in the pediment with plum blossom patterns: the plum blossom was the symbol of the Yi royal family. The first floor was the servant's quarters, the second floor was the hall, and the third floor was the king and the queen's private quarters. Jeonggwanheon (Retreat of Quiet Contemplation) is another European-inspired building in Deoksugung Palace. The king hosted parties amidst furniture imported from France, England, China, and Japan.

However, by the beginning of the twentieth century, Korea was unable to hold its own in the power struggle between the great powers of the US and Europe along with neighboring countries. In 1910, Joseon Korea was annexed by Japan, and colonial rule continued until 1945. By erecting new administrative buildings along the main road through the South Gate, the Japanese sought to construct and command the space of the city as a symbol of imperialism. Various buildings such as the city hall (the current Shinsegae department store), the court, the main post office, and the banks all adopted the style of British or French colonial architecture. Most of the buildings are in a neoclassical style with a dome or a tower in the center as a focal point in the baroque manner. With immense scale and height, the new architecture presented a sharp contrast to traditional single-story Korean-style individual residences; furthermore, colonial architecture achieved hegemony over space through not simply a modern, but specifically an authoritative imperial presence.

Above all, it is the Joseon Colonial Government Building (Joseon Chongdokbu, destroyed in 1995) that spectacularly symbolizes Japan's policy of cultural imperialism (fig. 7-2). The Japanese initially planned to construct the building in the place of Gyeongbokgung Palace, the very heart of the Joseon Dynasty.

FIGURE 7-2 Joseon Colonial Government Building, photographed in 1951. Gyeongbokgung.

The Department of Civil Engineering was established and German architect George de Lalande (1872–1914) was invited to design the building in 1912.[1] However, Lalande died in 1914 without having completed even a blueprint for the building. Subsequently, the architect Nomura Ichiro, along with Kunieda Hiro from the colonial government and Park Gil-Yong, the first Korean architect to graduate from the Gyeonseong Professional School of Engineering, completed the building in October 1923. The building stood on the site of a significant section of Gyeongbokgung Palace; the main entrance and many other structures from the grounds of Gyeongbokgung Palace had to be dismantled. The Joseon Colonial Government building was an imposing four-story concrete building with a dome (14 m in diameter, 8.7 m in height). Based on an infrastructure of steel and concrete and further supported by a stone wall 12 centimeters thick, finished with marble, the building used the most expensive materials available at that time.

In addition to these architectural changes, Gyeongseong became a city with wide and straight streets. Although the city was initially arranged around an east–west axis, after the move of the city hall, a north–south axis was set up in 1926. Consequently, the city became a dual structure with the Japanese residential district in the south and the Korean in the north, split by the Cheonggyechoen River (Clean Stream). Almost 90 percent of the southern section was inhabited by the Japanese – from the Namsan Mountain to the South Gate, including Chungmuro, Myeongdong, Toegyero, and Pildong. Koreans lived in the northern section around Jongno; Europeans and Americans settled

around Jeongdong. The area around the South Gate was the center of Japanese power, money, and culture, and from the 1920s, it became a dazzlingly neon-lit quarter, remaining to this day a section of the city that never sleeps. The northern section included Hwasin department store (the only department store owned by a Korean), the YMCA, and Pagoda Park.

After restrictions against foreign businesses were lifted in 1920, Japanese capital promptly entered the Joseon economy. Moving beyond the government buildings that were built in the previous decade, commercial or business buildings such as department stores, theaters, business offices, and domiciles were now constructed. Private Japanese or Korean architecture firms put up most of these buildings; from 1910 to 1930, the number of firms rose from a mere three to a total of 24. Some of these buildings began to show the influence of modernists such as Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959) or Bruno Taut (1880–1938) who were introduced to Korea by way of Japan. The most significant change was the shift in material from bricks to steel and concrete; consequently, the buildings became lighter with large windows and tiles, and it was possible to incorporate large, open spaces into the interior.

There was also a noticeable transformation in the residential district. Domiciles and stores started to incorporate Euro-American architectural style with balconies and a fusion of glass and ceramic tiles. A contemporary commentator notes:

> The first thing one sees is that there is a sudden appearance of numerous garages; unsightly signs are replaced by much more artistic billboards; there is an increase in the so-called modern Western-style brick houses. Furthermore, people no longer get on and get off the trams in a haphazard manner, but there is a rule to embark in the back and disembark in the front; no one runs off with your fare, but you receive a ticket or a transfer ticket in return. If all this is change, we have changed; if all this is progress, we have progressed. Of course, I only speak of the superficial. However, we still see primitive huts underneath splendidly artistic signs; we see long-bearded men with their hair turned up in traditional headdress, chewing on their pipes with arms crossed, sitting in modern homes.[2]

He further went on to say that the brick houses, trams, and cars in a country with no ideals can only be like the house built on sand, conveying a sense of skepticism about the material changes and so-called "progress" brought about by Japanese colonization.

Beginning in the 1920s, so-called "culture houses" appeared. The term originally came from Japan and referred to houses boasting colorful tile roofs, painted walls, glass windows and terraces; the interiors were equipped with living rooms and kitchens suited to the use of chairs, then decorated with wisteria furniture and lace curtains. Discussed in many magazines, culture houses actively incorporated a Euro-American or fusion style of living. The culture house was also seen as a symbol of those who have, and became the object of envy for those who have not. To the majority of the people, it remained a dream house.

The Print and the Photograph

The influence of print culture was unprecedented with respect to the sheer scale of mass reproduction and circulation of texts, pictures, illustrations, and photographs. The publication of textbooks also played an important role in expanding the printing medium. Formal educational institutions were first initiated by the foreign missionaries who opened Baejae High School (1885) and Ewha High School (1886); it was not until 1895 that the government officially started to operate elementary schools. This institutionalization of education required textbooks through which modern knowledge, ways of life, and values were circulated. From 1895 to 1899, the government published about 30 textbooks for the elementary school. Since there were no specialists in Korea at the time, the Japanese were consulted, thus many texts and the illustrations followed Japanese models.

According to a 1911 statistic, there were about 38,000 male students and 3,100 female students in elementary school. However, in 1921, the figure rose to about 160,000 total, with 140,000 male students and 20,000 female students; 20 years later, in 1942, student numbers had swelled to over 1,700,000 with 1,200,000 male students and 530,000 female students.[3] Such an exponential increase in the literate population opened up a market for newspapers, magazines, and novels. In 1917, Yi Kwang-su's (1892–1950) story *Mujeong* (*Heartless*), was serially published in the daily papers; the following year, it was published as a novel with 10,000 copies in circulation. In 1908, with the publication of a magazine for teenagers, *Sonyeon* (*The Boy*), the market for magazines steadily grew.

The publication of magazines and novels established a discursive space for intellectuals as well as the general public. In this period, all editorial staff was male except a very few women. These editors, contributors and illustrators acted as spokespeople for modern cultural intellectuals. For intellectuals, it was an immense privilege to contribute to a magazine, for it allowed them to voice their opinions about modern life and its values. During the 1920s, Korea experienced what could be called a renaissance of magazine culture, with approximately 170 different magazines in circulation including a variety of women's magazines. Addressing women with a certain level of literacy, these magazines published enlightening articles proposing that women ought to guide the modernization of family and society through a modernized lifestyle which, filtered through Japan, was itself imported from a European model. The articles addressed matters of hygiene, health, beauty, cooking, childrearing, sewing and so forth. One of the heated debates of the time was "short-cut" hair, because it challenged the traditional distinction between female and male, and young woman (with long braid) and married woman (with bun). Educator Kim Whallan, in her essay "Are You For or Against Women's 'Short-Cut' Hair?" encouraged women to adopt the "short-cut," seeing it as hygienic, pretty, economical, liberating, and in line with worldly trends.[4]

Through an insistence on the role of women in the home, these magazines guided the modern lifestyle for women. If male architects designed modern houses, female homemakers were to introduce culture and a certain level of sophistication into these homes.

After the introduction of modern printing technology such as offset and gravure printing, magazines could incorporate illustrations, photographs, and advertisements. Not only were these images a medium for the dissemination of information, but they also initiated the development of a visual culture. At first, advertisements displayed lithographic illustrations; after the advancement of photography, photographs were incorporated into advertisements with much acclaim.

When photography was introduced to Korea in the 1880s, it took the place of traditional portraits of individuals; by the 1920s, however, photographs soon became an indispensable part of periodicals. Circulating images of modern life, from political events to the quotidian, mass-media photography had a crucial role in the construction of a new culture. Photojournalism was particularly attractive in its ability to increase dynamically the scope of the visual. The capacity of the camera was especially pronounced in the newspapers. Photographs used high angles, low angles, and oblique angles to offer a new vision of the city and to claim it as the most modern of all media. With close-ups and other manipulation of camera angles as well as editing, photographs allowed for a new vitality of vision.

After the 1930s, with the growing accessibility of portable cameras, amateur photographers participated actively in the new visual culture. These photographers tried to distinguish themselves from professionals who ran photo shops as a business; amateurs, on the other hand, collaborated in amateur photography societies and public exhibitions. Subsequently, a new concept of photography as art was established. Amateur photography tended to follow the trend of "pictorialism," a Euro-American movement from the 1880s to the 1910s that sought to produce photographs that emulated painting and printmaking imagery, thereby allowing photographers, like other artists, to express themselves more directly in their work. It was translated as "art photography" in Japan, and subsequently transmitted to Korea. Art photographers were especially interested in the artistry of developing photographs; they used softer focuses to blur details, and changed contrasts and tones to accentuate a pictorial effect, particularly in landscape photography.

Modernity in the Streets

By the mid-1930s, Gyeongseong had transformed into a modern city full of high-rise buildings. In 1920, the population of the city was 300,000; in 1935, 400,000; and by the 1940s, 1,000,000. Once a curiosity in 1899, the tram had become a major means of public transportation; in 1928, it was supplemented by a public bus system. The streets were lined with modern-style buildings such as

department stores, shops, banks, hotels, and cafés. The individual's experience amidst the masses was depicted in Park Tae Won's novel, *A Day in the Life of the Novelist Mr. Gu Bo* (1934). The protagonist Mr. Gu Bo is a *flâneur*, or a strolling, observing urban gentleman, who leaves his house at noon, takes the tram at Jongno, travels aimlessly from the Joseon Bank to city hall, to the gate of Deoksugung Palace, to the South Gate, to Gyeongseong station, then back to the Joseon Bank, to a café, and then to a bar in Jongno, until it is time to return home at 2 a.m. Akin to the *flâneur* of nineteenth-century Paris, he experiences the rapid transformation of the city and the advent of modernity in the passing glimpses of the everyday. Stripped of any sense of stability in a colonized life, the intellectual, the artist and the unemployed sat in cafés or roamed the streets without purpose. The café was not only a forum for intellectual and artistic discourse. The French term "café" underscores the exoticism of such places: a place to escape from the dreariness of the day to day into a "modern" atmosphere. In the Jongno district there were more than ten cafés with hundreds of waitresses who became the focus of the *flâneur*'s gaze. Consequently, the café was also a place for the modernized masses to share their curiosity about and desires for the other sex.

The city also offered many sights to see. If a *flâneur* sees the ephemerality of urban life, the city was also a space of cultural spectacle to the people from rural areas, particularly during the international exhibitions. The Gyeongseong Fair in 1907 was the first, modeled after the World's Expositions in Europe and America to garner a general interest in industrialization. Although attendance was initially low, it rose to almost 2,800 visitors each day after rumors of the fair's many wonders started to spread.[5]

At Joseon Products Fair Commemorating the Fifth Anniversary of Japanese Governance at Gyeongbokgung Palace in 1915, over one million people came in approximately 50 days. Advertisements were circulated three months prior to the event, and the opening night at this fair rivaled any world's exposition with a dazzlingly lit spectacle. The fair also marked the beginning of art exhibitions in Korea. There was a traditional art exhibition in the main building, and contemporary art exhibitions in the auxiliary buildings, including both Japanese and Korean artists. Those with artwork on view included traditional ink painters such as An Jung-sik (1861–1919) and Jo Seok-jin (1853–1920) but also painters such as Ko Hi-dong (1886–1965), the first Korean oil painter to have studied at the Tokyo School of Fine Art.

To indulge in such spectatorship as a form of leisure was one of the distinctive features of modern life. The public already had access to museums such as the Yi Royal Family Museum in 1911 or the Joseon Colonial Government Museum in 1915. The Changgyeonggung Palace, the former private palace of the Joseon Dynasty, became public gardens with a zoo in 1910. The Japanese transformed it even further by planting over 200 cherry trees, the Japanese national tree, on the former palace grounds; every April, the grounds became another spectacle of blossoms and lights, along with large-scale stage productions amidst the trees.

By the 1930s, mass consumption had also acquired a routine in modern life. As a staple of the visual culture of the city, the streets were adorned with colorful advertisements. With the first neon-lit sign in 1932, the streets became even more extravagant, underscored by the appearance of the department store as the new center of mass consumption. The first department store in Gyeongseong was the Mitsukoshi department store in 1906; it began as a Gyeongseong branch of the Mitsukoshi clothing store in the Myeongdong district. After its move to a new building in 1930, it became the foremost department store for the Japanese living in Korea. Other such Japanese department stores include the Hirada (1926), Minakai (1922), and Jojiya (1929, now the Lotte Young Plaza). Beyond the Cheonggyecheon River, in the Korean residential district, there was the Hwasin department store. Opened by the affluent Korean, Park Heung-sik, in 1932, the three-story store was renovated into a five-story store after a fire in 1935, then supplemented with a new building in 1937 (destroyed in 1988). According to a contemporary account of the Hwasin department store in 1935:

> There is a red flag displaying the name "Hwasin" on top of the five-story store, and there are two huge bunches of flowers on the façade of the new building. The store grabs the attention of all people, neatly dressed and out on the streets, even in the early morning. Caught in the middle of the crowd at the door, I am also swept into the store. There is not only a crowd outside the store, but also a larger crowd inside the store. The department store is packed with people, probably entire families on a trip.[6]

After the renovation, Hwasin was fitted with elevators and escalators. The store had seven levels with food on the basement level, stores on the first floor to the fourth floor, and a restaurant and gallery on the fifth floor. On the sixth floor a grand hall could be used for various purposes, but functioned most frequently as a movie theater.

As the cultural historian Tony Bennett points out, the department store is not merely a space of consumption, but also a space for multiple cultural purposes.[7] The store catered to consumers as well as to people spending their leisure time looking at the spectacular sights of consumption. Bennett compares the department store to the museum, a modern cultural space from the nineteenth century; he underscores how both spaces are similar in that they transform habits as well as disseminate new rules and values to an ever more expansive society. Koreans also learned and dreamed of modern life from the displays at the Hwasin department store, such as the spectacular windows on the streets with their mannequins dressed in the latest fashions.

The primary protagonists of the dynamism of urban life were the so-called *modern boy* and *modern girl*. Rather than the *modern boy* with his glasses, suit, briefcase and modern education, the public focused on the figure of the *modern girl*.[8] In the 1920s people were especially curious about the fantasy of the *new woman*, a new form of femininity represented by public figures such

as the artist Na Hye-seok (1896–1946), the magazine editor Kim Won-ju (1896–1971), and the opera singer Yoon Sim-deok (1897–1926). However, the 1930s turned to the *modern girl*. The *modern girl* (fig. 7-3) differed from the *new woman* in that the category not only included female students and professionals, but also women without education or work; all women who dressed in the modern style might be included. In the 1920s, the *new woman* wore a modernized version of the traditional attire, *hanbok*, with shorter skirts and longer tops along with turned-up hair and high heels; in the 1930s, the *modern girl* cut her hair into a bob and wore clothes and makeup accentuating a feminine silhouette and features.

This attention to the *modern girl* is related to the process of urbanization and the rise of working women at the offices, cafés, department stores, beauty salons, and other public places. Along with a certain economic independence, women wore European-style clothes and had much more contact with men. In contrast to the *new woman* who had a progressive image, the *modern girl* was primarily perceived as a fashion-conscious and materialistic consumer, and even in some cases a woman of loose morals. This negative image of the *modern girl* is related to the negative perspectives on the city. Underneath the spectacular shell of the city lay the poverty of the working class as well as the self-indulgence, even decadence, of the wealthy. The artist Kim Yong-jun (1904–67) describes this negative image of the city as "coal gas, gasoline, silk dresses, sharply turned heels, worldliness without hope, an ignorance of natural beauty."[9]

The symbolic figure of the modern woman changed again on account of the second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. With slogans stating that the battlefield is everywhere, in each and every place of work, in each and every house, the role of women was to protect the home and raise children to be strong citizens of the Japanese empire. The covers of magazines displayed images of boys in uniforms, workers in overalls, and mothers sending their sons to the front, along with military nurses and other such images of strong female figures. From the beginning of the Pacific War in 1940, cultural activity was severely restrained, with many newspapers and magazines censored or canceled. Consequently, images of the politicized body dominated posters, magazines and newspapers, and this situation persisted until the end of World War II with the defeat of Japan and the liberation of Korea.

The Post-War City and Its Architecture

Even after the end of World War II with the defeat of Japan and the liberation of Korea, post-war Korea was not a peaceful space of freedom and independence. From 1945 to 1948, Korea had to experience the ideological differences of American and Soviet governance as it split into the South and the North, a split that became permanent in 1953 after three years of the Korean War. After the ceasefire it was difficult to restore stability to a situation of utter destruction.

FIGURE 7-3 "Guide Girl, Bus Girl, Ticket Girl," illustration from *Yeoseong*, March, 1938.

In Gyeongseong, now known as Seoul, shantytowns cropped up everywhere; residents had no proper water or electricity services.

Noteworthy is the increased visibility of the female labor force at this time. The poverty of post-war Korea compelled many women to leave their traditional sphere of the home to earn money along with the men in the public sphere. The artist Park Soo-geun (1914–65) was one of the most attentive to the scenes of the streets. He depicted the desolation of common life, with people wearily sitting in the streets or women burdened with work. His roads are populated with women selling their small wares or walking, heaving loads on top of their heads, a child in tow, or old men, squatting, chewing their pipes. Park Re-hyun (1920–70), who was originally trained in *nihonga* (Japanese-style painting) in Japan during the colonial period, won the presidential prize in the National Art Exhibition for her painting *Street Stall* (1956, fig. 7-4). In contrast to Park Soo-geun, Park Re-hyun was more interested in stylistic experiment than representing the difficulty of the day to day. With the city as the background, her female figures are analyzed in a Cubist style. Park Re-hyun's adoption of Cubism could also be understood as an example of the shift away from the Japanese cultural model to that of Europe and the United States.

As it was felt that all aspects of post-war Korean society trailed behind Euro-American modernity, it was only natural to accept new trends and international currents. Thus, the cultural discourse was one of internationalization. The interest in international trends was also prominent in architecture. Although modernist architecture had been introduced during the 1920s, it was the "international style" that became the trend in the 1960s. Often exemplified by the Bauhaus in Europe and America, the international style is characterized by a box-like structure of white walls and glass windows. Kim Jung-eop (1922–88), who had returned to Korea in 1957 after being trained at the office of Le Corbusier (1887–1965), won the competition for the French embassy building in Seoul. His building was noted for dynamically adapting the curvature of the traditional Korean roofs into the functionalism and rationalism of Le Corbusier. However, the building that best represents Kim Jung-eop's international style is the Samilro building of 1966, modeled after the Seagram building in Chicago. One of the tallest in Seoul at this time, the building has 31 floors and exhibits the international style of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969); pure and simple, it is a large steel-and-glass structure without any ornamentation. Subsequently, the international style was adopted for all the skyscrapers that arose all over the city, and thereby the skylines of cities such as Seoul were changed.

The international style is informed by a futuristic vision of the city based on technology and rationalism. However, as a style that divests itself of the history and tradition of individual cities, it does not address the spirit of any particular period. Soon there was a shift of interest when former military general Park Chung-hee became the president, after the *coup d'état* of 1961. With President Park, post-war society ended and Korea entered a new era of industrialization. During Park's 19 years of power, he attempted to modernize the country

FIGURE 7-4 Park Re-hyun, *Street Stall*, 1956, color on paper, 137 × 122 cm. National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea, courtesy of Woonbo Foundation of Culture.

through economic development with an emphasis on international trade. Nationalism, in contrast, dominated the cultural sphere, and there was a new interest in tradition. Park sought to legitimate nationalism by advocating a return to the past and an assertion of a cultural identity uncontaminated by Euro-American culture. In architecture too, there was a general critique of how Korean architecture seemed to be chasing after foreign trends. State-funded projects especially witness a demand for a creative revival of tradition and a specifically Korean architecture. The National Museum of Korea in Seoul (the current National Folk Museum) by Kang Bong-jin (1917–98), winner of the 1966 design competition, exemplifies an architecture that meets the demand for a nationalistic flavor. It is a cement building that borrows stylistic elements from seventeenth-century monuments including Beobjusa temple's five-story pagoda, the Geumsansa temple's three-story Mireukjeon building, and the sixth century Bulguksa temple's foundation. There was controversy over the building amidst the criticism that it was not a contemporary re-evaluation of tradition but a mere copy of bits and pieces of the past. On the one hand, some argued for a specifically nationalist sensibility; on the other hand, some were wary that stressing "Korean-ness" too strenuously could retard the development of contemporary art and architecture. The conflict between traditional or an expression of Korean-ness and contemporary culture would become one of the prominent terms of the cultural debate in the 1960s.

In the case of individual domiciles, although traditional Korean houses continued to exist into the 1960s, most new homes took on Euro-American styles in brick, tile, and cement due to the limited supply of timber. Alongside the importation of foreign elements, the floors and the rooms surrounding the living room often had heated floors, a traditional feature of Korean houses. In other words, the individual domicile became a fitting fusion of Korean living style and tastes into the structure of the Euro-American style home.

As the scale of the cities exponentially increased from the late 1960s, Seoul's inner city also experienced massive transformations. The road from Gimpo airport through Mapo to Sejongno via the West Gate was important as an entrance for foreign guests to Seoul. In consideration of its televised image, this area was redeveloped with a series of high-rises and skyscrapers. Such transformations were not restricted to the gateway to the city. The banks of the Han River were redeveloped, and bridges were built across the central stretch of the river, such as the Yanghwa bridge, Hannam bridge, and Mapo bridge. The population of Seoul exploded from three million in 1963, to eight and a half million in 1981, and then to over ten million in 2000. The government attempted to solve the resulting housing crisis by redeveloping south of the Han River with huge apartment complexes, beginning in areas from Yeouido to Gangnam and Jamsil.

These apartments began with a model block built in Yeouido in 1971. With the enhancements in technology developed while participating in the construction boom in the Middle East from 1976, Korean construction companies met the domestic demand for a higher quality of living by investing immense

FIGURE 7-5 Jung Yeondoo, *Evergreen Tower*, 2001, C-print, 28 × 36 cm each, 32 works. Photograph courtesy of Jung Yeondoo.

resources into redevelopment; the apartment complexes became the center of the Korean economy. Apartments in Mokdong in the 1980s were followed by new towns such as Ilsan and Bundang that emerged as the redeveloped satellite cities of Seoul. All other Korean cities adhered to the model of Seoul and by the 1990s more than half of all Koreans lived in standardized apartment blocks covering vast areas of cities. The apartments also created a new form of class hierarchy between the rich and the poor, all dependent upon the location and size of one's apartment. The apartment was not only a place to live, but also a means of investment and a marker of class.

The apartment culture also encouraged the art market to move from East Asian-style painting to European-style painting. The wide expanse of wall was much more suitable for easel paintings rather than the lengthy horizontals or verticals of a scroll. Jung Yeondoo's (b. 1967) *Evergreen Tower* of 2001 (fig. 7-5) captures a portrait of Korea's current apartment culture. The photographs are portraits of young families, normally of a couple with two or three children, all shot from the same angle. Jung Yeondoo pieces together 32 shots of the living rooms of these families, and positions the spectator as if he or she were peering into one of these rooms. Within the anonymous homogeneity of these spaces, we glimpse the individual tastes, values, and desires of these families in their significantly different poses or their various arrangements of furniture, televisions, air conditioners, and pictures on the wall.

In 1993, after many years of military governments, the first civilian government of President Kim Young-sam opened diplomatic relations with China and the eastern European bloc, allowing for a greater sense of freedom in Korean politics, society, and culture. Seoul became a global city in an era of globalization. Foreign workers came to Korea to work in domestic companies. Although there were still strong chauvinistic sentiments, there was a general awareness of the necessity to learn and live amongst different cultures. In Seoul, a city of over ten million, it became increasingly difficult to discover a common sense of belonging. Rather, we see much more distinctive divisions according to class, age, region, and so forth. For example, north of the Han River, Sejongno became the government administration center, while Sinchon and Myeongdong each turned into centers of consumerism. If Myeongdong had been the leader of fashion and consumerism from the Japanese colonial period, now it was reduced to a space almost exclusively for young people, with the Hongik University area as a space for college and university students. The Hannamdong, Yitaewon, and Banpo's Seorae town became spaces for foreign residents. Each area had its own specific identity. With sophisticated buildings lining its wide streets and convenient transportation services, Gangnam (south of Han River) has become the vanguard of fashion and consumerism; there are multiple cafés, beauty salons, and clinics for plastic surgery. As the Apgujeong-dong area asserted itself as a hub for the wealthy, the poet and filmmaker Yu Ha used the neighborhood as a muse, publishing *On a Windy Day, We Must Go To Apgujeong-dong*. The term "orange" was used to designate men who drive through the Gangnam area around

Apgujeong-dong in expensive foreign cars and spend their days seducing young women; the term compares them to oranges, that is, imported fruit, and refers to a new generation more concerned about sensuality and a free lifestyle rather than good sense and deeper thoughts about life. However, since 2000, Apgujeong-dong has ceded its fame to its neighbor Cheondam-dong, now the new front of fashion and consumerism; these changes underscore the rapid mobility of commercial centers.

Because of the swift transformation of Seoul, urban life has become ever more complicated on account of the lack of organization in city planning and bureaucracy, in addition to the ever-increasing population. The vast ten-lane highways are always teeming with traffic, and almost all Korean cities are covered with apartment complexes. The roads are so dense and constantly changing that it is almost impossible to find one's place with a simple address. Historical sites are disappearing one after another; even the new architecture is swathed in gigantic advertisements and billboards.

The Crowd and the Public Space

The urban experience in Seoul since 1950s is basically one of crowds. The attempt to forge a significant relationship amidst the constant collision of anonymous people is a daily feature of urban life. Most people spend much more time in the public sphere than in the private sphere. The term public sphere, in contrast to the individual's space of the private sphere, not only refers to physical spaces such as streets full of people, but also social spaces such as workplaces and discursive spaces such as newspapers, magazines, and even the internet. In a traditional Confucian society where men and women are separated from the age of seven, the public sphere was predominately the space of men. However, the public sphere has become a much more complex space in contemporary Korean society, variously divided according to class, gender, profession, and other criteria.

The streets are normally considered to be a primary example of the physical public sphere. In the 1950s, the most distinctive visual cultural forms in such spaces were monuments and public sculptures. In times of economic hardship, public art commissions proved to be a limited but welcome relief for artists. Whether an image of a specific person or an ideal, public art serves to memorialize a common past and to symbolize the beliefs, desires, and values of a certain community. Post-war public art addressed the social atmosphere of patriotism and anti-communism; there were war memorials and sculptures of historical figures such as wise kings and patriots. In hindsight, most of the public art in the 1950s and 1960s was restricted to stereotypes of heroism.

Public art often reflects the politics of those in power. In 1956, the government demolished the Shinto shrine in Namsan mountain set up by the Japanese during the colonial period and in its place put up a statue of President Rhee Syngman in traditional Korean attire. Another statue of the president, this time

in European attire, stood in Pagoda Park, at the site of the declaration of independence of the 1919 March First Movement against Japanese rule. Of course, a statue symbolizing the power and strength of a single leader loses its efficacy once that leader loses all authority. When student demonstrations in April of 1960 forced Rhee out of office, the statue in Pagoda Park suffered the ignominy of being toppled by the students and the one in Namsan was taken down by the city.[10]

One of the most important instances of Korean public art is the statue of Admiral Yi Sun-shin in the main intersection of the Sejongno area. The Committee for Erecting Patriotic Forefathers was formed in 1966, and dedicated itself to public art. It proclaimed, "we will continue the legacy of the heroes and patriots of Korean history by commemorating them and offering them as models for the future." Admiral Yi Sun-shin was the first of ten figures selected by the committee after a survey of all sectors of Korean society. The sculptor Kim Sechoong (1928–86) completed the statue in 1968; it is approximately 6.4 meters high and stands on top of an 18-meter pedestal, and was the largest standing figure in Asia at the time (fig. 7-6). With the Gyeongbokgung Palace in the background, surrounded by various government buildings, the statue stands in what could be called the heart of the Korean government, Sejongno. Admiral Yi Sun-shin was the hero of President Park Chung-hee, a choice that speaks to the president's own military past. Beyond such personal reasons, however, the figure of the Admiral Yi in full armor explicitly exemplifies the character of the military government. Although there has been controversy about the necessity for its demolition, the statue still stands today. With its striking posture, the statue of Admiral Yi Sun-sin has come to be understood as an image of Korea's greatest hero.

From 1982, with the passing of the Law for Art and Culture Promotion, public artworks sprang up in the interior or exterior of public buildings. The law was modeled after European and American "percent for art" programs in which 1 percent (give or take, depending on the program) of the building's cost is reserved for the funding of artworks; subsequently the law underwent many revisions and transformations. The law was meant not only to gentrify the urban environment but also to educate the general public and to support artists; however, as is almost always the case with such programs, there have been many errors and problems in the application of this law.

One of the issues is the establishment of a relationship between the art and the spectators. In museums, there is a presupposition that the visitors have a certain interest in art. In public spaces, however, since the audiences are the anonymous masses, the general public might have no appreciation for the art and even might be hostile to a piece. One such controversy is the case of the American artist Frank Stella's (b. 1936) sculpture, *Structure Where Flower Is Blooming, Amabel* (1997) in front of the Posco Center in the Gangnam area. It is a stainless steel sculpture of 11 meters by 5 meters by 11 meters, constructed out of scraps of machinery and other metal welded together. The Posco Steel

FIGURE 7-6 Kim Sechoong, *Admiral Yi Sun-shin*, 1968, bronze, height 6.4 m. Sejongno, Seoul. Photograph courtesy of Ian Muttoo.

and Iron Company bought the piece for the extraordinary sum of 1.8 million dollars and installed it in front of its building. Soon after the work was installed, it became the target of the media which criticized the acquisition of such costly foreign art. This led to a public debate. Arguments against the piece varied from complaints about the ugliness of this lump of steel to charges that its abstraction and obscurity did not suit the Korean sensibility, to questions about what the title of *Amabel* had to do with the image of a steel and iron company. Counter-arguments criticized the backwardness of complaints about abstraction and obscurity or asserted that the piece was in harmony with the glass and steel structure of the Posco Center. There were many proposals for a solution. None of these was pursued and the sculpture still stands in its initial space as the controversy has subsided with time. Such public debates brought to the fore the issue of defining "the public," identifying the decision-makers, and locating the responsibility of the artist and the importance of artistic freedom. It became evident that art works in public spaces can no longer be admired as "art" but must be much more readily accessible to a wide and diverse public and must engage the audience.

Mass Media and Consumer Culture

The most significant change in twentieth-century culture is the development of mass media, and its influence in technological advancements and the circulation of information. In the first half of the twentieth century, Korean newspapers and magazines functioned as the media of modernity and significantly contributed to the increase of knowledge; however, such media were still restricted to the educated few and limited in their accessibility to a certain level of literate elite. With the advent of audio-visual media such as radio and television, the accessibility of mass media increased to a more extended public.

The most notable medium in the second half of the twentieth century was television. Television had speed and immediacy, the ability to cover all of politics, culture, and entertainment. Consequently, television became *the* mass medium of contemporary society. From the 1970s, as Koreans grew prosperous due to the remarkable economic growth guided by an aggressive reform program under President Park, a television became a must-have item for all Korean families. With only two channels available and with the news often repeating the standard government message, television's popularity lay in weekly soap operas and entertainment shows. After the 1990s, with the advent of cable television and multiple channels, television became a space capable of addressing the diverse perspectives of all sectors of society. In contrast to older media, the capacity to broadcast in real time to millions makes television the most significant medium for contemporary visual culture. For example, during the 2002 World Cup in Seoul, the stations broadcast both the surprising success of the Korean soccer team *and* the image of over one million people crowded in front of city

hall to support their team. Watching such images on television, people donned red t-shirts and rushed to city hall to clap and applaud in this spontaneous festival in front of the electronic billboards.

Television can barely exist without advertisements. Therefore advertisements are one of the most important parts of managing a capitalist economy. Medicine and cosmetics commonly appeared in newspaper advertisements during the colonial period. Most often these ads emphasized the popularity of their products in Tokyo or Osaka. The rise in newspaper and magazine advertisements during the 1950s could be attributed to an absolute faith in American products and an envy of the apparent prosperity and stability of the American way of life. The "Made in the USA" label that followed the arrival of UN troops and the flood of American culture was understood to be a guarantee of quality. For example, a 1955 Lucky Toothpaste newspaper advertisement describes its product as "just like an American toothpaste (American material, American formula)," tapping into the general trust of American products. The earliest broadcasts fed Korean fantasies about American mass culture. Popular shows such as "I Love Lucy" or "The Fugitive" offered an enviable portrayal of the prosperous American middle class. Such post-war fantasies about America have since been cast aside on account of the prosperity and stability of Korean society.

Advertisements were aggressively developed during the rapid industrialization of the Korean economy in the 1970s. From household products to makeup and drinks, products were advertised via newspapers, radio songs, and television with the aim of stimulating consumerism. Advertisers sought to feed viewers with fantasies of a complete life only through the consumption of such products. With the advent of color television in the 1980s, advertisements became much more spectacular and diverse. It is also at this time that we see a rise in the quality of domestic products and a subsequent rise in advertisements speaking to Korean tastes, Korean values, and Korean merchandise. This coincides with the nationalist mood of the society in the 1980s that sought to "recover our cultural identity." Nationalism spurred political activists who accused the newly elected President Chun Doo-whan, a former military general, of brutal repression of the citizens' uprising in Gwangju in 1980. They also saw Korea's military, economic, and cultural dependence on the United States as a new kind of imperialism. It was only with the Seoul Olympics in 1988 and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe that Korea moved away from these ideological issues.

If the advertisements of the 1980s accentuated Korean sensibilities and an advanced image of Korean society, the advertisements of the 1990s focused on teenagers, the young people born and raised in a period of economic prosperity. The younger generation had not experienced the economic deprivation of the older generations. Unlike the generation that came of age during the student demonstrations of the 1980s, the youth of the 1990s swiftly adapted themselves, easily absorbing foreign cultures: these were the children of MTV and the internet.

Nike's advertising campaign characterized the way businesses targeted Korean adolescents in the 1980s. While Nike had been immensely influential in the United States with the basketball star Michael Jordan as its advertisement model, in Korea, the model was the world record marathon runner Alberto Salazar. Attuned to the desires and habits of the new generation, the Nike campaign focused on sophisticated visuals rather than information about their products. Nike sneakers were more than sneakers; adolescents sought them as a brand, even committing crimes to buy the sneakers. The image of the brand constituted a sense of community for the younger generation: the possession of the Nike product became a matter of identity and an issue of inclusion or exclusion. Shot in various angles with swiftly changing scenes, these advertisements were works of art as well as tools of industry.

In the 2000s, the Nike approach was replaced by the promotion of a lifestyle centered on high-speed internet and cell phones. As Korean companies such as Samsung and LG electronic companies produced new computer or cell phone models every six months, Korea became the most wired country in the world and at forefront of the new technology. Information is circulated at ever-increasing speed and the border between cities and rural areas seems to have disappeared.

There is also a change in the conceptualization of art and entertainment. Although scholarship has focused on the influence of Hollywood on Korean culture, recently the explosive international popularity of Korean soap operas shows how the culture of one society creates a new interpretive context in another. Korean dramas such as *Winter Sonata* or *Janggeum* are very popular not only across Asia but also in Latin America; such interest has spread to an eagerness to learn Korean language and culture and therefore, is an example of how mass culture leads the culture industry.

The city has changed over the last hundred years, transforming its name from Hanseong to Gyeonseong to Seoul, along with advancements in architecture, prints and photographs, public art, and mass media. Modern countries sought to modernize, industrialize, and urbanize in anticipation of a progressive future. However, in Korea, the process was fraught with tension due to the difficulty of adapting to the all-too-rapid sociocultural transformations. Many traditional buildings were pulled down and in the process of constant reconstruction, Seoul has become a city without memory and history. There are precious few places for people to recollect their own experiences or remember a national past. Thankfully, along with the current interest in historical artifacts, there is a renewed interest in designating and preserving modern artifacts; this could be seen as one lesson of recent history.

The contemporary city has experienced an exponential increase, both materially and visually, to the point where it is almost impossible to compare it to the modern city of the twentieth century. In the early twentieth century, Korea's urbanization began as modern concepts were slowly transplanted into the lives of Koreans via Japan. As the city developed, the opportunities arose to see fairs, exhibitions, and show windows of the department stores. The modern wave of

influence from Europe and America changed Korea's consumer and residential habits and greatly influenced interpersonal relationships. As the *new woman* and *modern girl* evolved and became more active in society, male–female relationships and the meaning of family were necessarily redefined.

If in modernity, photography and print were as significant as architecture in providing a discursive space for intellectuals as well as the general public, today we confront a diverse visual culture via movies, advertisements, videos, and electronics in private and public spaces, all accessible even without any literacy. Advertisements and photographs have overcome the limitations of the print medium and infiltrated the city through large-scale billboards and televisions. The internet has the powerful potential to transcend local and national borders and to create a global culture. These circumstances are not limited to Korea and, therefore, could be recognized as a characteristic of a global age. However, a local vernacular coexists in Korean visual culture, to be found in the specificity of Korean history, society, and culture.

Notes

1 George de Lalande was a German national who had lived and worked in Japan and China since 1901. He was also an architect of the Office of the German Consulate and the Chosun Hotel in Seoul.
2 Chu Ho, "Seoul Jabgam [Several thoughts on Seoul]," *Seoul* (April, 1920), quoted from Kim Jin-song, *Seoul e ddance hall ul heohara*, 55.
3 Kim Yunsu *et al.*, *Hanguk misul 100 nyeon*, 162–3.
4 Kim Whallan, "Yeoja danbal."
5 Hamilton *et al.*, *Korea*, 293.
6 "Saero nakseong deon Hwashin."
7 Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 29–33.
8 Kim Youngna, "Modernity in Debate, Representing New Woman and Modern Girl," in her *Twentieth Century Korean Art*, 64–87.
9 Kim Yong-jun, "Seoul saram."
10 Cho Eun-jung, "Daehan minguk."

References

Bennett, Tony. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics.* London: Routledge, 1995.

Cho Eun-jung. "Daehan minguk je il gonghwaguk ui gweolleok gwa misul ui gwange e gwanhan yeongu [A Study on the Relationship of Power under the First Regime of Korea and Art]." PhD diss. Ewha Woman's University, 2004.

Hamilton, Angus, Major Herbert H. Austin, and Viscount Masatake Terauchi. *Korea: Its History, Its People, and Its Commerce.* Oriental Series, vol. XIII. Boston and Tokyo: J. B. Millet & Co., 1910.

Kim Jin-song. *Seoul e ddance hall ul heohara* [*Permit Dance Hall in Seoul*]. Seoul: Hyeonsil Munhwa Yeongu, 1999.
Kim Whallan. "Yeoja danbal i gahanga buhanga [Are You For or Against Women's Short-Cut Hair?]." *Beolgeongon* (Jan. 1929): 128–9.
Kim Yong-jun. "Seoul saram, sigol saram [Seoulite, Country People]." *Jogwang* (Jan. 1936): 335–6.
Kim Youngna. *Twentieth Century Korean Art*. London: Laurence King, 2005.
Kim Yunsu. *Hanguk misul 100 nyeon* [*Korean Art 100 Years*]. Seoul: Hangilsa, 2006.
"Saero nakseong deon Hwashin baekhwajeom gugyeonggi [Review After Seeing the Newly Opened Hwashin Department Store]." *Samcheolli* 9 no. 7 (Oct. 1935): 142–4.

Further Reading

Choi In-jin. *Hanguk Sajinsa 1631–1945* [*A History of Korean Photography 1631–1945*]. Seoul: Nunbit, 1999.
Eckert, Carter J., Ki-Baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner. *Korea Old and New: A History*. Seoul: Ilchokak, 1990.
Hong Seon-pyo. *Gundae ui cheot gyeongheom* [*The First Experience of Modern*]. Seoul: Ewha Woman's University Press, 2006.
Kim Youngna. *20segi ui hanguk misul 2: byeonhwa was dojeon ui sigi* [*Twentieth Century Korean Art II: A Century of Changes and Challenges*]. Seoul: Yekyong, 2010.
Kim Youngna. *Tradition, Modernity and Identity, Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea*. Seoul: Hollym, 2005.
Lee Gu-yeol. *Geundae hanguk misulsa ui yeongu* [*Studies in Modern Korean Art History*]. Seoul: Mijinsa, 1992.
Son Jeong-mok. *Ilje gangjeomgi doshihwa gwajeong yeongu* [*The Study of Urbanization during the Japanese Colonial Period*]. Seoul: Iljisa, 1996.

8

Unexpected Spaces at the Shwedagon

Elizabeth Howard Moore

Introduction

Pictures of the Shwedagon pagoda in Myanmar set against the tropical sky are seen on scores of book covers, postcards and websites. The beauty of these images is undeniable but the golden silhouette of the Buddhist stupa is only one side of the extraordinary experience of the pagoda.[1] People are meditating, chanting, and quietly talking at the Shwedagon space at all times of the day and late into the night. Pilgrims move around the bright wide pathway around the central stupa and walk, sit, and kneel in front of and inside more than a hundred shrines on the huge pagoda platform. These include stupas, pavilions (*tazaung*) with images of the Buddha and other venerated figures, and tall prayer posts (*dagon-daing*, 6–24 meters high). Visitors see sparkling neon lights around the head of an image of the Buddha and make offerings of flowers, candles, incense, coconuts, bananas, and small plastic cups of water. There is a huge gap between the golden postcard image of the Shwedagon and the wonderland of people and places of the pagoda. The connection between icon and experience comes though the people who animate the pagoda spaces. Where do they go and what do they do?

The striking form of the Shwedagon is itself an object of veneration and meditation (fig. 8-1). Each night, a floodlit picture of the tall stupa (97.8 meters, 326 feet) set against the night sky opens the evening news on national television. Set within 46.13 hectares (114 acres) in the center of Yangon (also known as Rangoon), the Shwedagon can be seen from all directions: taxi drivers often bring their hands together in momentary prayer when it comes into view. The shrines on the pagoda platform generate further opportunities for offering and

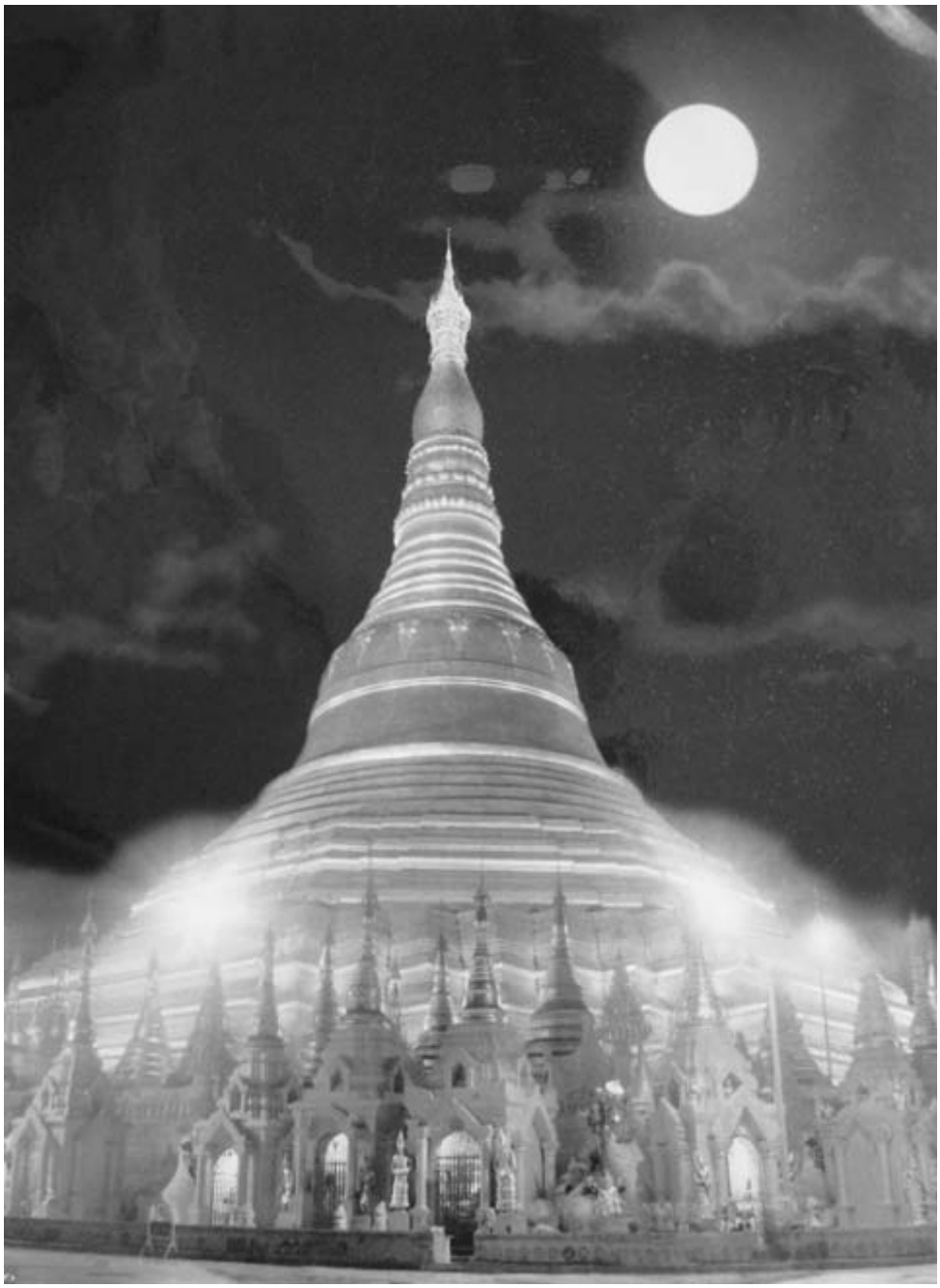

FIGURE 8-1 Popular poster of the Shwedagon (40 × 30 cm). Posters of the Shwedagon come in all sizes and are sold on the approaches to the pagoda. All are laminated in plastic, the smaller ones to put on a shrine or carry in a man's shirt pocket and the large ones with a hole punched on the top rim to hang in a room or shrine.

prayer that vitalize the spaces. The rituals are private but the place is public, open to all. The experience of these ritual spaces offers a local lens through which to understand the Buddhist culture of Myanmar. Rather than take up the detached gaze of the anthropologist, art historian, or historian, I instead seek out the reality of the social space through the eyes and experiences of the local pilgrims.

In order to understand this local gaze, brief introductions are given below of the social role of the Shwedagon, the form and architecture of the stupa, and its traditional founding and historical significance in relation to British India. These sections are followed by more detailed descriptions of typical ritual pathways at the pagoda, group ceremonies and relics, the relationship of chronicles, history and images and patronage of the pagoda. The conclusion brings the preceding sections together to show how the new ways of reading the experience of the Shwedagon as "unexpected spaces" explain the physical and ritual logic of the pagoda.

The Social Role of the Shwedagon

The Shwedagon stupa sits on top of a hill ringed with monasteries in the middle of the city of Yangon. It is the most venerated stupa in the country as it possesses eight hairs of the Buddha Gotama given during his lifetime plus relics of the three previous buddhas of our era.[2] The Shwedagon is also pre-eminent due to its place in Myanmar history. The images, shrines, and meeting pavilions have been the site of key events in the royal history of the country and then in its late nineteenth- to mid-twentieth-century struggle for independence. Myanmar today is more than 90 percent Buddhist and renowned for its active Buddhist culture. There are active pagodas in cities all over the country but the Shwedagon is unrivalled in the number of pilgrims, wealth of shrines, and rich ambiance.

In India and Sri Lanka, a stupa is defined as a mound or tumulus erected over sacred relics. In Myanmar, relics are a vital part of every stupa but its form is compared to the world mountain and *axis mundi* rather than a tumulus.[3] Stupas and surrounding structures are located within a compound surrounded by glebe lands. The combined architecture and lands make up a religious landscape. The closest English term for this landscape is perhaps the "habitus," a physical and social space, communally coordinated but not systematically created to facilitate the maintenance of locally acceptable practice.[4] Many accepted practices, mechanisms, and activities sustain the physical and social spaces of the Shwedagon and its glebe lands.

The physical setting begins with the hill. Four long covered stairways lead to the summit of Singuttara hill (96 meters, 320 feet) upon which the Shwedagon stands (fig. 8-2). On the lower levels of Singuttara hill are monasteries to house the large monastic community (*sangha*).[5] On each staircase there are deep red columns, gilded floral woodcarvings, and paintings of the life of the Buddha and the pagoda history. There are stalls to leave one's shoes or buy a small bag to

FIGURE 8-2 The southern staircase of the Shwedagon with small stalls selling books and images of the Buddha. On the sides of the wide marble staircase are tall columns and carved painted panels of Buddhist themes above. Photograph by the author.

carry them in the sanctified area. The staircases are cool and shady on a hot day and a dry haven during the rainy season. Small shops line both sides of the stairs, selling requisites for monks, images of the Buddha and other venerated figures, posters and prayer cards, books and children's toys. Near the top are more stalls selling flowers, *tha-bye* (victory) leaves, and small paper umbrellas to offer to the pagoda. The broad entryway at the top provides a place to pause and adjust one's eyes to the bright sunlight or open an umbrella. From the entryway, the encircling passageway (45 meters, 150 feet wide) opens out to enable a walk around the stupa, a visit to a favorite shrine, an encounter with friends, or participation in a group ceremony (fig. 8-3). The ambiance of the Shwedagon comes from the presence of all these activities.

Colonial Artists, History, and British India

The Shwedagon platform and stupa were popular subjects for picturesque artists and photographers during the 1824–1958 British colonial era. Their romantic images epitomize imperial notions of a culture ripe for inclusion within the larger

FIGURE 8-3 The wide white-tiled passageway around the main stupa on the northwest part of the platform. In the distance is a replica of the Mahabodhi pagoda in India. Photograph by the author.

context of colonial India. For many years, the British considered Myanmar as part of India with existing policies applied to this very different culture. Myanmar was the last territory to be occupied by the British in Southeast Asia and the first to be decolonized, with efforts towards independence taking the better part of the nineteenth century. The independence movement strengthened by the 1920s, commemorated in a pillar on the Shwedagon platform dedicated to the students who campaigned for the creation of a university free from the oversight of the one in Calcutta. The early twentieth century was also a time of artistic renovation of the Shwedagon, as newly wealthy merchants of Rangoon patronized the pagoda. These new networks of donors were vital particularly following the exile of King Thibaw to India in 1885 as the end of the monarchy meant the dissolution of the donor networks supporting monks, monasteries, and stupas.

The active Buddhist practice in nineteenth-century Burma was new for the British coming from India where stupas such as Sanchi had long fallen into disuse. The decaying stupas of India fit well with the growing interest in antiquities in Europe at this time so British officers and civil servants took many of the ancient Burmese images of the Buddha for their own collections. Today the images are protected from looting by the Pagoda trustees, who preserve the Shwedagon's material and textual history with a museum and archives.

Pathways at the Shwedagon

Each visitor goes to different stupas, tazaung, and images on the Shwedagon platform. The path of each "walker" creates a personal narrative in the physical and "poetic" space of the pagoda; each use marks out a changing narrative and fresh rhetoric.[6] The pilgrim is free to pick his or her route and there are many choices. Four routes are most typical: (1) circumambulation, (2) veneration of one of the four buddhas of the current era, (3) wish-offering before planetary shrines, and (4) obeisance to cult images. These four illustrate the mixture of canonical teachings and meditation, popular cults, and astrology on the Shwedagon platform.

The tall central stupa is the focal point of the platform and each part of the stupa has a traditional name and meaning. The lower, middle, and upper levels are sometimes described as the Buddha, the teachings (*dhamma*) and the monkhood (sangha). Others see the 4.9 meter (16 foot 3 inch) umbrella (*hti*) as the head of the Buddha and the entire stupa as the seated Buddha.[7] In both views, the Shwedagon (and all stupas) are the living presence of the Buddha. The rectangular Shwedagon platform is 5.66 hectares (14 acres) with the perimeter of the central stupa measuring 432.4 meters (1,420 feet). The wide walkway around the main stupa creates a tangible space that defines the central stupa in relation to other parts of the platform and also separates it from the surrounding spatial envelope.[8]

The outer rim of the platform houses over a hundred structures and many sacred trees. On the northwest edge of the platform is a chute where cleaners throw away the old flower offerings. The flowers fall to the middle level of the 96-meter (320-foot) Singuttara hill where laymen of the flower-pounding *dhammayon* or community hall crush and store them to make images of the Buddha sold in aid of the pagoda. This dhammayon is one of many that, along with monasteries, line the paved walkway around the middle level of the hill.[9] More monasteries and dhammayon are seen on the walkway around the lower level of the hill.

The many different structures on all levels of the hill provide spaces for various ritual practices. The monks and laymen of the middle and lower levels live in quarters attached to the structures with sermons given to the public at the larger monasteries. The main area of public ritual, however, is on the platform where sermons are also given. There are, in addition, many secluded places for practicing concentration and insight meditation. Some monks include concentration exercises such as the recitation of beads in the attainment of insight wisdom and one hears group chanting emanating from the pavilions of these sects. Others focus on mental awareness carried out in silent meditation often using texts of the Pali canon. One such text is the *Dhatuvibhanga Sutta*, a sermon in the *Uparipannasa Pali* that describes the dependence of the four basic elements upon the varied spaces (*akasa*) that arise in the conscious mind. As this example shows, concepts of space are not only part of the physical structure and places

of practice at the Shwedagon but also part of insight meditation practice. Buddhist teachings say the ideal place for such exercises is alone in the forest seated beneath a tree. Many pagodas in Myanmar offer quiet pockets in busy urban environments for pilgrims to carry out abstract mental exercises such these; the sparkling golden Shwedagon, towering above the bustle of Yangon, however, is unmatched anywhere else in the country.

While both concentration and insight practices sustain the scriptures of the Pali canon, the concentration practices are also part of wish-making verse recitations. Many who come to the Shwedagon also seek out the places of popular practice: shrines dedicated to monks adept at the occult arts (*weiza*), images of spirits (*nats*), and planetary posts at the cardinal and sub-cardinal points around the base of the main Shwedagon stupa. Many of the practices relate to the occult arts; nats and planetary posts derive from Brahmanic astrological manuals of India that have been locally elaborated over the last 2,000 years. Monks or lay practitioners in Myanmar recognize the Indian origins but situate themselves within indigenous custom.

Devotees walking around the main stupa mingle with kneeling figures. Homage is made by prostrating three times in the five-fold manner of contact: touching with the forehead, palms, knees, and feet.[10] This is combined with verbal and mental prayers and making offerings before an image of the Buddha or wishing for good fortune at one's planetary post. Another popular action is pulling a thick rope to make a broad fan swing above the head of the nine-meter (30-foot) high image of the Buddha in the Great Hall of Prosperity on the northwest of the pagoda platform. Opportunities for physical, bodily offerings such as prostration, fan-pulling, and circumambulation are an important attraction for pilgrims. Circumambulation frequently starts at the east devotional pavilion and proceeds clockwise around the pagoda. A stop may be made to pay homage to the main stupa at the Victory Ground (*Aung-mye*), a broad open area of the platform on the northwest side with a clear view of the towering stupa. Pilgrims can be seen prostrating here even in the heat of the midday sun for it is the most auspicious ground of the pagoda. Many enter one of the Devotional Pavilions such as that dedicated to Kakusandha on the east and Gotama on the north. Others pause to make an offering at a planetary shrine or to one of the popular cult images.

The devotional pavilions, cult images, and planet posts are part of the physical circumambulation but each refers to a different temporal span. These less tangible routes may not be a conscious part of the pilgrim's visit but contribute to the complex conceptual meaning of the pagoda. For example, the Buddha Gotama lived in the sixth century BCE and had a lifespan of eighty years but Kakusandha, the first buddha of our era (*Bhadrakalpa*) had a lifespan of 32,000 years and lived at an incalculable time in the past.[11] Many cult figures are of historical origin, such as the nineteenth-century monk Bo Bo Aung described below. The planetary posts are linked to the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Saturn, Jupiter, and the mythical planet Rahu. Each figuratively draws the powers and

qualities of the planet to the platform. Numbers written on the planetary posts refer to the rotation period of the planet that equals the duration of its influence on earth.

A Sunday-born person who goes to the Sunday post on the northeast side of the main stupa finds a simple wooden pillar about three meters high (fig. 8-4).[12] A painted and gilded signboard on the top displays the day's name (*Taninganwei*) and the number six, the years of the Sun's influence. Each planet is also associated with a second number from one to eight with planets, constellations, and numbers used in many forms of numerology and astrological calculations. At the middle of the planet post is an image of the Buddha with offerings of tha-bye leaves, incense, flowers, and water. Small cups of water are poured over the image of the Buddha, the number of cups often indicate the age of the devotee plus one more for good luck. A small image of a *galon* (*garuda*, or mythical bird) at the base of the Sunday post marks the animal vehicle associated with the planet. Table 8-1 lists the planets, days of the week, directions, number, vehicle and planetary influence.

Another very small popular shrine on the northeast houses an image of the nineteenth-century monk Bo Bo Aung, a *weiza* or adept in the occult arts (fig. 8-5). The monk is said to have obtained a manuscript that gave him supernatural powers. King Bodawpaya (r. 1782–1819) tried to have him executed but Bo Bo Aung confounded the king with a display of his magical powers. At present, devotees are always seen at the small Bo Bo Aung image, said to comfort devout Buddhists.[13] Other pilgrims may make an offering to the king of the nats, Thagyarmin (Indra) or one of the dagon-daing topped with the figure of a Brahminy duck (*hintha* or *hamsa*).[14] Visitors to the Shwedagon also commonly meet up with monks, friends, or family for teaching, socializing, or a picnic lunch in one of the pavilions.

Table 8-1

Planet	*Day*	*Direction*	*Number*	*Vehicle*	*Influence*
Sun	Sunday	northeast	1	Garuda (Galon)	6
Moon	Monday	east	2	tiger	15
Mars	Tuesday	southeast	3	lion	8
Mercury	Wednesday (forenoon)	south	4	tusked elephant	17
Saturn	Saturday	southwest	7	Naga (serpent)	10
Jupiter	Thursday	west	5	rat	19
Rahu	Wednesday (evening)	northwest	8	tuskless elephant	12
Venus	Friday	north	6	guinea pig	21

FIGURE 8-4 The Sunday planetary shrine on the pagoda platform showing devotees pouring water over the image of the Buddha. On the signboard is the name of the day and the number 6 indicating the duration of its influence. At the bottom is the figure of a *galon* (*garuda*). Photograph by the author.

FIGURE 8-5 Hermit meditating at the Bo Bo Aung shrine. The signboard above the entry to the small structure housing the image says "Bo Bo Aung wish fulfilling shrine." Photograph by the author.

Group Ceremonies and Relics

In addition to the individual actions, there are larger ceremonies at the Shwedagon on full moon days marking important Buddhist events. Often these include a group circumambulation around the main stupa. At certain times of the year, there are family *shin-byu* ceremonies when a young man is temporarily ordained into the monkhood. These groups also make processions around the main stupa with the novice-to-be carried on his father or uncle's shoulders. Many youths return home after a brief period as a novice or *koyin*, but virtually all young men from Buddhist families enter a monastery for at least a short stay. Some remain in the monastery and become fully ordained within the sangha. While full moon and shin-byu ceremonies are seen throughout the country, they are at their most elaborate at the Shwedagon.

There are also ceremonies to demarcate and sanctify the area of a new religious structure. Two important steps in the process of building a stupa are the demarcating (*pannet*) and relic (*htarpanar*) ceremonies. In the pannet ceremony, stakes are pounded into the ground, one at the center and eight at the cardinal and intercardinal points of the structure to be erected. The presiding *sayadaw* or senior monk blesses relics buried where the central post of the stupa or the image will be set. The relics (htarpanar), donated by elite and lay patrons, mix worldly and religious objects such as personal jewelry and images of the Buddha. After the stakes are set and the relics are embedded in the ground, gems are sprinkled in a lotus pattern. The space is then blessed by the presiding monk and construction can begin. The nine points of the pannet are sometimes called the nine supreme virtues of the Buddha and at other times are called the governing planetary aspects of the directions.[15] This twofold meaning underlines the common synthesis of canonical Buddhism and planetary veneration described earlier in relation to the pagoda platform.

Once a stupa has been built many other htarpanar may be enshrined. At the Shwedagon, for example, relics of the Mon Queen Shin Saw Bu (Bana Thau, r. 1453–72) were unearthed on the southeast slope of the Shwedagon hill by Lieutenant Fraser in 1855 during the clearance of monasteries and trees under British occupation.[16] The deposit contained three golden reliquaries, one containing bones and ash. There was a golden bowl and a scroll inscribed with Pali text and also more worldly objects including a gold belt and the jeweled helmet of Shin Saw Bu, known by her Mon title as "Mistress of the White Elephant."[17]

Queen Shin Saw Bu's donation illustrates the close historical relationship between consecrated lands and political suzerainty. This link is also seen at present in, for example, the administration of religious lands, monks, and donations by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The ministry offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in canonical texts for monks through the Paryiyatti University in Yangon and Mandalay. Seven levels of monastic examination conducted annually include written and oral tests on over 9,000 pages of texts, commentaries,

and sub-commentaries. The 62nd annual competition, the Sacred Tipitakadara Tipitakakovida administered in Yangon over a period of 33 days in December 2009 was reported on national television and in newspapers.[18] As seen in the traditional and historical accounts below, royal and state patronage has been significant to the Shwedagon from the time of its founding.

Chronicles, History, and Images

The history recorded in indigenous chronicles contains many temporal allusions in contrast to the chronological events that structure European disciplines of history, art, or archaeology.[19] An example of the indigenous structuring of time was seen above in the description of the 32,000-year life span of the Kakusandha Buddha in the east devotional pavilion of the Shwedagon. In a related framing of the past, chronicles of the Shwedagon include enshrinement of sacred hairs of the Buddha in a jeweled ship in a chamber deep within Singuttara hill. Events such as this are often dismissed as legend but this "putative ahistoricality" distances a foreign viewer from understanding the religious spaces of the Shwedagon.[20] The descriptions of shrines, rituals, and chronicles in this essay attempt to let the places and ritual actions create their own text and thus construct an alternative understanding of the past that tallies with local perceptions.

The most complete chronicles of the Shwedagon were compiled by Mon peoples concentrated today to the east and south of the Shwedagon. These recount the story of two merchant brothers, Taphussa and Bhallika, who travelled to India with 500 ox-carts. They visited the Buddha on the 49th day after his Enlightenment and offered him honey cakes. When the two brothers requested a token of remembrance from the Buddha, He gave them eight sacred hairs and uttered a prophecy that they would be placed at Singuttara hill. The location of the hill was not known but soon found with the help of four powerful tutelary nats of other pagodas around Yangon. The assistance of Thagyarmin was obtained and Singuttara hill was magically made level overnight. During the leveling the relics of the three previous buddhas of the current era were found: the walking stick of the Buddha Kakusandha, the water dipper of the Buddha Konagamana and the robe of the Buddha Kassapa.[21] The Shwedagon's possession of these relics is and has been a vital part of the pagoda's sacral, royal, and national significance. For example, a pagoda being erected in the new capital of Nay Pyi Taw continues the tradition in being officially documented as one foot lower than the height of the Shwedagon.[22]

After the arrival of the sacred hairs to the Shwedagon, a chamber 19.8 meters (66 feet) in length, breadth, and height was dug to house the relics. The chamber was then filled with gems upon which the jeweled ship with the sacred hairs was placed.[23] The chamber was covered with a stone slab and then gold. A 19.8-meter (66-foot) high stupa was erected on the slab and then covered with gold. This stupa was then encased in six more stupas made of silver, then

gold and copper alloy, bronze, iron, marble, and brick.[24] The authenticity of the tale of the merchants Taphussa and Bhallika is queried by scholars as it originally drew upon Sri Lankan texts such as the *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa*. However, the story of the merchants is in Myanmar inscriptions dated to the fifteenth century and part of a chronicle compiled by a Royal Commission in the 1830s.[25] Given the local textual framework for over 500 years, it is important to understand the Shwedagon heritage in relation to both indigenous chronicles and historical events. The Sri Lankan historical relationship is part of Myanmar's history and also its religious legacy. The incorporation of these associations is part of the indigenous context, not an indicator that these local frameworks are derivative or clones of Sri Lanka.

Until the donation of a bell in 1613 by the Inwa (Ava) ruler King Anaukhpetlun in upper Myanmar near Mandalay, the Shwedagon was primarily sustained by Mon patronage of lower Myanmar. The earliest recorded donor to the Shwedagon was the Mon king Banya Oo of Hanthawaddy who, in 1372, raised the height of the stupa to 18 meters (60 feet).[26] Its height was again raised, to 90.6 meters (302 feet) by several Mon rulers in the fifteenth century. The most well known was the Queen Shin Saw Bu who is said to have donated her weight in gold to the Shwedagon and whose popular shrine on the northwest of the pagoda platform is frequented by many devotees praying with a rosary or in silent meditation. In 1476, the son-in-law of Queen Shin Saw Bu, King Dhammazeidi cast a bell of approximately 300 tons for the pagoda and in 1485 donated three massive, inscribed stone slabs in Mon, Pali, and Burmese (Myanmar). Both the bell and the inscriptions record the Shwedagon history of the merchant brothers, the Sacred Hairs of the Buddha Gotama, and the relics of the three previous buddhas.

Despite the many colorful descriptions of the merchants and the sacred hairs, the Shwedagon is not depicted on ancient terracotta votive tablets or mural paintings. The fame of the hill was kept alive (many have argued it was invented) by royal patronage dating to the fifteenth century. Singuttara hill (46.9 meters, 125 feet above mean sea level) is not notably high but it is the southern tip of a lateritic mountain range and so is a high point in the alluvial delta around Yangon. Since the hill has been the center of active veneration for centuries, no excavation has ever taken place. The first known European account of the Shwedagon is that of Gasparo Balbi, an Italian merchant, who visited the pagoda in 1583 and described the Dhammazeidi bell near the eastern stairway. The earliest surviving drawing of the pagoda is probably a 1744 drawing by Alexander Hamilton that depicts a concave cone-like structure with little relationship to the bell-shaped curves of the stupa.[27]

The pagoda quickly became a popular subject for European artists and, after the 1840s, for photographic postcards. The cards were bought by Europeans to send to relatives or assemble in a souvenir album of their time in British Burma. A set of lithographs – a copy by E. Billon of J. Grierson's 1825 *Twelve Select Views of the Seat of War* – show the formal qualities of the structure but little of

the activity at the Shwedagon in the midst of the 1824–6 war.[28] This first war was followed by a second in 1852–3 when the Shwedagon was occupied by British troops and a third in 1885 when Mandalay was taken and King Thibaw was exiled to India. The 1852–5 interregnum was a particularly tense time when Burmese forces were posted along the border above British-occupied towns north of Rangoon. While the king held Mandalay, the British controlled all maritime access.[29] Myanmar remained part of British India until independence was granted in 1948. Control of the Shwedagon was returned to Burmese hands only in 1929, nearly 80 years after its occupation, with a celebration held in March 1930 at the western staircase.[30]

Thirty years after Grierson's lithographs of the war, Henry Yule's 1855 aquatints of the Shwedagon, done while visiting Inwa in the company of the photographer Linneaeus Tripe, offer a picturesque image of the pagoda.[31] In a common practice of this time, many of Tripe's photographs were reworked as color illustrations. These softly colored aquatints, like most from the colonial era, depict a pastoral civilization.[32] The Shwedagon is generally shown amidst carefully arranged shrubs alongside palm trees depicted with an exotic Orientalism and with European officers observing the scenery. William Daniell's watercolors of Borobudur are in the same genre, made from drawings of H. C. Cornelius who accompanied Raffles' early nineteenth-century mission to Java. The paintings recall those of the Shwedagon as they too are reworked from earlier illustrations and focused on Borobudur's axial qualities.[33] European architectural representations became imaginative blends of the observed world with the artist's idea of how to depict the unfamiliar landscape they encountered in Myanmar.[34] The solution was often to insert new elements, so that in one drawing the *chinthe* or guardian lion takes on the appearance of an Egyptian sphinx with British soldiers parading on the approach to the pagoda. In another, a pair of soldiers survey a landscape of gently rolling hills, each topped by a stupa and tidy vegetation more like the English countryside than the tropical landscape.

Local artists began to incorporate European perspective in mural paintings and folding paper manuscripts or *parabaik*. One parabaik commemorates donations of King Pagan Min (r. 1846–53) in upper Myanmar and includes a scene of the Htupayon stupa in Sagaing.[35] The few objects in the pagoda compound and the sparseness of the surrounding landscape foliage highlight the detailed tiers of the white stupa. As with colonial drawings of the Shwedagon, the composition is focused on the vertical spire. The scene is divided at mid-ground, asymmetric in composition, incorporating rough elements in the near ground.[36] The perspective in the Htupayon manuscript painting blends a single point perspective of the stupa with an angled view of the pagoda compound. This bird's-eye perspective was common in earlier murals where the view from above let the artist include several parts of a narrative within a single picture frame.[37] This allowed a single image to show many episodes of a story. This is not the case in single-point linear perspective where one moment of a story is highlighted and the viewer

must have background knowledge of the other events in the narrative to which it refers.

Local artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries used the single-point perspective to highlight the form of the stupa and often to depict a landscape receding to the horizon. When figures were included, they were not rendered three-dimensionally but were drawn in the traditional profile view. In some painted manuscripts, images of pagoda celebrations emphasized a sense of activity by depicting many figures arranged in groups or rows. The European and European-influenced pictures provide a valuable technical record of slowly changing artistic techniques but, as with the iconic golden silhouette of the stupa today, all of these representations are far from the spatial dynamic of the main ritual pathways on the pagoda platform discussed above.

Romantic colonial views and changing local styles also illustrate the contradictions of the colonial era. On the one hand, British soldiers described the beauty of the golden spires of the Shwedagon but at the same time they looted every stupa on the platform after the first Anglo-Burmese War in 1826. After taking Rangoon, the British retained the pagoda but then returned it to a newly created Mayor of Rangoon in 1826. King Tharawaddy came from Mandalay to Yangon in 1841, founding a new town that included the Shwedagon. He regilded the pagoda and made other donations including a large bell, which today is enshrined in a pavilion on the platform.[38] The pagoda again fell to the British 11 years later when the Shwedagon was the main target for the British troops landing at Rangoon on April 1, 1852. The Shwedagon platform was taken by the middle of April with an attempt by local troops to recapture it on November 22–23, 1853. The plan was discovered and a formal decision to retain the Shwedagon was issued by the British in December 1853 stating "that in every ground, political and military, the great pagoda ought to be retained as a fortified position."[39]

In the early twentieth century, the Shwedagon was a common meeting-place for groups of the growing independence movement. In 1920, a university boycott was planned in a rest house at the foot of the east side of the Shwedagon and on an unofficially proclaimed national day, large groups climbed to the northwest corner of the platform for prayers to complete commemorative ceremonies. In 1927, continuing the anti-British protests, the monk U Wisara refused to eat until his monastic robe was returned to him in prison. He was strapped to his cot and forcibly fed intravenously.[40] U Wisara died in prison on September 19, 1929 after 166 days of fasting against British rule. He was cremated on the grounds of the Shwedagon. His remains were soon deposited in a shrine on the south of the Shwedagon platform but mysteriously disappeared.[41] In 1946, a crowd of more than 100,000 gathered at the foot of the western stairway for ceremonies that included speeches by the architect of the 1948 independence agreement, General Aung San.[42]

The incongruities of the colonial era are seen not only in their difference from the placid paintings of this era but also in the structures of the Shwedagon

platform. During the years of protests for independence, newly wealthy local merchants profiting from the expanded economy of British Burma donated many pavilions to the Shwedagon. The new architecture never mimicked European structures formally but rapidly took up European technical aspects to construct innovative architectural and decorative elements. Photographs of the south gate from the 1850s show simply decorated structural elements, but by the end of the century, the gate has higher tiered roofing, extensive woodcarving, and large chinthe flanking the entry to the covered staircase going up to the pagoda platform. While there have been changes to some of the ornament and roofing, the traditional structures have been maintained on the platform. They have been periodically refurbished and embellished but the tall roofs with "gingerbread" fretted bargeboards – hallmarks of these early twentieth-century innovations – are an important part of the pagoda's character today.[43]

Patronage of the Shwedagon

The maintenance of religious spaces and communities such as the Shwedagon took many forms. Basic needs included the provision of canonical texts and daily necessities to the monastic community. The tradition of giving sets of religious texts goes back to the fifth to seventh centuries when inscribed gold plates were donated to a pagoda north of Yangon. Manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries record gifts of land, villages, food, and oil lamps.[44] All these were an essential part of the sustenance of Buddhism at the Shwedagon and pagodas all over the country that continued throughout the colonial period of the nineteenth to twentieth centuries.

A particular feature of changes made in the early twentieth century was the construction of new tiered pavilions on the Shwedagon platform. A major decorative change came with an increased use of large and small glass mosaic work.[45] Long-standing trade between Mandalay and northern Thailand brought glass artisans from Ayutthaya, fortuitously combining with the arrival of European implements for cutting glass. Mosaics also often used white glass hemispheres mounted on top of a green, blue, yellow, or deep blood red mirror glass popular at the time.[46] The different colors are widely seen in northern Thailand where the mosaics are called "Ava mirror."[47] The mosaics were also favored in Bangkok during the reign of King Rama III (r. 1824–51), illustrating an artistic interchange between Thailand and Myanmar that continued into the twentieth century.

Other new types of architecture, sculpture, woodcarving, and painting as well as silverwork, lacquer ware, and manuscripts date to the early twentieth century in Myanmar. Particularly popular at the Shwedagon were rectangular painted panels and wooden reliefs. These were hung along staircases, on the interior and exterior of pavilions, and around doorways of buildings. While most paintings have been whitewashed and painted with new scenes, many of the wood

carvings have been well preserved with periodic painting and gilding. Chan Mah Pee's Hall (1898), the northern Devotional Hall donated by Sir Po Tha (late 1920s) and U Po Thaung's Hall (1923) retain notable examples of a skillful balance between the detail of floral designs and depth of the carvings.[48] The reliefs and paintings of these and other pavilions depict events of the Buddha's life, *jatakas* (stories of his past lives), and Myanmar traditional stories, and in 15 carved panels in U Po Thaung's Hall, Ashoka's propagation of Buddhist teachings.[49] Many of these were put in local contexts, so that one scene depicting the arrival of Mahinda shows him hovering above the venerated Mt Popa southeast of Bagan. Donors continue to give today: on the northeast edge of the platform is a series of paintings of the Patthana, one of the texts of the third book of the Pali canon, painted by Kyaw Nyunt and donated in late 2007–8.[50]

Conclusion: The Logic of the Shwedagon Space

The structures at the Shwedagon seem to defy logic and even have been called "a confusion of buildings jumbled pell-mell."[51] There *is* a rational logic to the arrangement of structures but the pagoda has changed over time. If anything, it might be likened to a "metaphorical rhizome . . . spreading and multiplying organically to create many chains of relationships."[52] The relationships are between the Shwedagon hill and the platform, the central stupa and smaller shrines, and the shrines and the pilgrims. Each is informed by the past, particularly the momentous changes sparked by colonial occupation: protest, new patronage, and artistic innovation create a complex and often contradictory profile that is not simply local and European. The colonial heritage and the contemporary Shwedagon cannot be neatly divided into past and present or "easily reducible to two views, one indigenous and one Western."[53] Past and present, indigenous and foreign, are all part of the vocabulary of the Shwedagon and places of ritual activity throughout the once colonized world. The experience and variation of these are often lost in the isolated disciplinary stance of imperial history and the iconography and architecture of art history. Vidya Dehejia describes such variation as a "system of networks" interlacing sequences of "labyrinthine complexity."[54] She then considers the reception of these narratives in relation to the artist and the viewer, particularly the emotions raised by the visual encounter with an image and the phenomenological experience of ritual movement.[55] A Shwedagon pilgrim may create a path in relation to the historical legacy of the Shin Saw Bu shrine on the northwest of the pagoda platform or the quiet recitation of the Dhammzeidi pavilion on the east side. Equally the pilgrim may wish for success at his or her planetary post or seek help by talking with a learned monk in one of the many pavilions and monasteries at the Shwedagon.

The Shwedagon attracts practitioners of all sorts and has shrines of canonical practice, popular beliefs and astrology. Many of the beliefs from text commentaries to weiza, nats, and astrology have evolved internally over the last 2,000 years. The images and shrines do not set out a simple linear chronology but are

determined by temporal frameworks that refer to an unspecified time in the future, eons of past time beyond human scope, and cycles of celestial bodies. In explaining how these relate to the many individual pathways on the pagoda platform, this essay provides a sense of the indigenous understanding of the pagoda. The Shwedagon is not just a pile of bricks; it has a special place in the social consciousness of Myanmar that comes from its public and personal ritual aspects.[56] This placement was and is not simply one of awareness but rather one forged through many historical and traditional contradictions, from British soldiers looting the pagoda and yet praising the beauty of the stupa to the bejeweled boat floating in the relic chamber deep beneath the pagoda and the donation of Queen Shin Saw Bu's weight in gold to gild the pagoda in the fifteenth century. The many temporalities are not cleanly divided in the eyes of the local pilgrim; the past can be in the present in an active way. We need iconography and context as well as history and tradition to interpret art.

The identification of iconographic elements at religious places such as the Shwedagon is important. There remain, however, many vital questions about the meaning of objects and the manner in which visual and spatial presentation echoed and influenced devotional practice.[57] Whether walking to a shrine or to a planetary post, the moment one moves off the wide white marble walkway around the main stupa of the Shwedagon to the outer platform, the atmosphere and devotional practices change. There is a constant flow of devotees moving around the passage encircling the main stupa but on the outer platform there are individuals in meditation, couples in conversation, and families enjoying a meal carried up to the platform in tiered containers. The spaces become intimate and the shade and shelter replace the intense light and openness of the main circular walkway. As these examples illustrate, it is in the interplay of space, light, people, and movement that one best realizes the dynamic of the Shwedagon platform. The "art of turning" from one to the other, and then turning again and again shapes a multitude of individual texts within the pagoda spaces.[58] Each new turn and path is the experience of the individual; taken together over the many moments of the day and night during the long history of the pagoda they create the free and active rhetoric that is a vital part of Buddhist culture in Myanmar. The lens of the local pilgrim offers a glimpse of the eclectic atmosphere of the pagoda that gives the iconic golden stupa meaning. The bodily movements and sounds of the Shwedagon platform tell us something of the unexpected experiences the pilgrim encounters.[59] With this knowledge, we can move beyond mere visual identification of the structure to understanding the Shwedagon, Myanmar Buddhisms and the experiential role of religion in daily life.

Notes

1 "Pagoda" is used in Myanmar to refer to temples with one or more religious images inside and also to hemispherical stupas.

2 Many Pali words are part of the Myanmar language so Pali rather than Sanskrit spellings are used here for religious terms (e.g. Dhamma not Dharma and Gotama rather than Gautama). John Okell's system of romanization is used although common spelling is retained for names and toponyms. Where current spellings are given, earlier European spellings are inserted in brackets at the initial citation of the word.
3 Tun Aung Chain and Thein Hlaing, *Shwedagon*, vii, 18.
4 Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 53; Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 77.
5 Fraser-Lu, *Burmese Crafts*; Moore, "Monasteries of Mandalay: Variation" and "Monasteries of Mandalay: Changes."
6 de Certeau, "Walking in the City," 126–8.
7 The introduction of the crown-like *hti* is attributed to the Mon–Burmese conflicts during the fifteenth century. During this period, a struggle for power continued between the Burmese at Inwa, their capital in upper Myanmar, and the Mons at Hanthwaddy, Bago (Pegu), Lower Myanmar. The victor of a battle signaled his success by placing his crown upon the pagoda platform.
8 Myat Kyaw and San Lwin, *A Pali Myanmar–English Dictionary*, 271.
9 Myanmar Language Commission, *Myanmar–English Dictionary*, 220.
10 Ministry of Religious Affairs, *A Dictionary of Buddhist Terms*, 188–9.
11 Kakusandha Buddha lived in the eighth *undrakut* of our present world, where one undrakut equals the descending of a human lifespan from infinite years to ten years and ten years to infinite years. Personal communication, U Khin Maung Myint, Shwedagon Trustee, April 1999.
12 Tun Aung Chain and Thein Hlaing, *Shwedagon*, 24. There are usually eight planet posts as Wednesday is divided into daytime and evening. The Shwedagon has more as there are two posts located on either side of the Devotional Pavilions for the days of the cardinal points.
13 Tun Aung Chain and Thein Hlaing, *Shwedagon*, 59–62.
14 Ferrars and Ferrars, *Burma*, 37; Tun Aung Chain and Thein Hlaing, *Shwedagon*, 66.
15 U Aung Myint, personal communication April 10, 2009; Kyaw Htut, *The Nine Attributes*, 29–31.
16 The golden objects of Shin Saw Bu may have been enshrined after her death by her grandson together with a scroll donated by the grandson, Hattiraja or Bana Ram, the Tiger (r. 1492–1526). They were shipped to India after Fraser's 1885 discovery and then brought to the Directorate of the East India Company in London. The pieces were displayed at a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1857 and are now in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Singer, "The Gold Relics," 75.
17 Singer, "The Gold Relics," 79–80.
18 Khin Maung Nyunt, "The 62nd Sacred Tipitakadhara," 7.
19 Aung-Thwin, *The Mists of Ramanna*, 281, 293.
20 Pollock, "Mimamsa," 603.
21 Historical Commission, *Relic History*, 66–9.
22 *New Light of Myanmar*, "Nay Pyi Taw," and "Religious Objects."
23 Win Pe, *Shwe Dagon*, 11.
24 Tun Aung Chain and Thein Hlaing, *Shwedagon*, 1–2.
25 For example, Aung-Thwin, *The Mists of Ramanna*, 68; Tun Aung Chain and Thein Hlaing, *Shwedagon*, 1–2.

26 Moore, "Ritual Continuity," 178; U Khin Maung Myint, Shwedagon Trustee, personal communication, 1999.
27 Hamilton *New Account*, 9 cited in Pearn, *History of Rangoon*, 37 and pl. 1.
28 Grierson's 1825 pictures were used again in Pearn, *History of Rangoon*.
29 Aung Myo, "Police Administration," 36; Thant Myint-U, *The Making of Modern Burma*, 23.
30 Tun Aung Chain and Thein Hlaing, *Shwedagon*, 13.
31 Grierson, *Twelve Select Views*; Pearn, *History of Rangoon*.
32 Tiffin, "Raffles," 349–50.
33 Raffles, *The History of Java*, 473 cited in Tiffin, "Raffles," 356 n.74.
34 Bailey, "Nineteenth-Century Murals," 46.
35 The seventeenth-century Chinese Ming Prince Yongli took refuge at the Htupayaon pagoda. Moore, "The Royal Cities," 104.
36 Bailey, "Nineteenth-Century Murals"; unpublished painted manuscripts, Department of Archaeology, Yangon; Universities' Central Library, Yangon and Sein Myint Collection, Mandalay.
37 Tillotson, *The Artificial Empire*.
38 Win Pe, *Shwe Dagon*, 36–7.
39 National Archives of Myanmar, "Military Occupation of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda."
40 Than Win Hlaing, *Distinguished Individuals*, 91.
41 Than Win Hlaing, *Distinguished Individuals*, 92, 96.
42 Win Pe, *Shwe Dagon*, 52.
43 Alfred Birnbaum, personal communication January 29, 2010.
44 Alexey Kirichenko, "Living with the Future" and personal communication, September 10, 2008.
45 Tilly, *Glass Mosaics*.
46 Win Maung (Tampawaddy), personal communication July 7, 2008.
47 Somsiri Arunothai, "Mirror Mosaic Decoration"; Navanath Osiri, personal communication May 4, 2009.
48 These three patrons were all part of the new middle class: Chan Mah Pee was a rice merchant, Po Tha was a land officer, and Po Thaung was a land-owner.
49 Tun Aung Chain and Thein Hlaing, *Shwedagon*, 32–44.
50 Ashin Pyinna Sara, personal communication April 5, 2009.
51 Tun Aung Chain and Thein Hlaing, *Shwedagon*, 20.
52 Nelson, "The Map of Art History," 29, 33 citing Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 3–25.
53 Charney, *Powerful Learning*, 175 citing Thongchai Winichakul, "The Quest for Siwilat."
54 Dehejia, "On Modes of Visual Narration," 388.
55 Dehejia, "On Modes of Visual Narration," 392.
56 Angela Chiu, personal communication, January 2010.
57 Leoshko, "About Looking at Buddha Images," 77–8.
58 de Certeau, "Walking in the City," 131.
59 My thanks to U Aung Myint for the phrase "unexpected spaces"; personal communication, March 26, 2009.

References

Aung Myo. "Police Administration in Myanmar (1885–1945)." PhD diss., University of Mandalay, 2007.

Aung-Thwin, Michael. *The Mists of Ramanna: The Legend that Was Lower Burma*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005.

Bailey, Jane Terry. "Nineteenth-Century Murals at the Taungthaman Kyauktawgyi." *Artibus Asiae* 41 no. 1 (1979): 41–63.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *In Other Words*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.

Charney, Michael. *Powerful Learning: Buddhist Literati and the Throne in Burma's Last Dynasty, 1752–1885*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006.

de Certeau, M. "Walking in the City." In *The Cultural Studies Reader*, edited by S. During, 126–33. London and New York: Routledge, 1999.

Dehejia, V. "On Modes of Visual Narration in Early Buddhist Art." *The Art Bulletin* 72 no. 3 (1990): 374–92.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Félix. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated and foreword by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Ferrars, Max, and Bertha Ferrars. *Burma*. London and Bangkok: Sampson Low, Marston & Co. and Ava House, 1901 [1996].

Fraser-Lu, Sylvia. *Burmese Crafts, Past and Present*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Grierson, H. *Twelve Select Views of the Seat of War in Burmah*. Calcutta: Asiatic Lithographic Press, 1825.

Hamilton, Alexander. *New Account of the East Indies, II*. London: Argonaut Press, 1930.

Historical Commission. *Relic History* [Dhat-taw-thamaing]. Yangon: Myanmar Historical Commission, 1911.

Khin Maung Nyunt. "The 62nd Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination in the Year 2010." *The New Light of Myanmar*, December 3, 2009: 7.

Kirichenko, Alexey. "Living with the Future: Succession of Royal Cities Preserving Sasana and Its Influence on the History of Myanmar and Myanmar Historical Writing." Paper presented at the Buddhist Studies Conference, DeKalb, Northern Illinois University, 2008.

Kyaw Htut. *The Nine Attributes of the Buddha*. Translated by Mya Tin. Yangon: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 1996.

Leoshko, Janice. "About Looking at Buddha Images in Eastern India." *Archives of Asian Art* 52 (2000/2001): 63–82.

Ministry of Religious Affairs. *A Dictionary of Buddhist Terms* [*Buddha-dethana-taw Wah-hara Ah-bhi-dan*]. Yangon: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2003.

Moore, Elizabeth. "Monasteries of Mandalay: Changes in Patronage and Architecture." *SPAAFA Journal, a publication of the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts, Bangkok* 6 no. 3 (1996): 5–30.

Moore, Elizabeth. "Monasteries of Mandalay: Variation in Architecture and Patronage": In *Traditions in Current Perspective*, edited by Ni Ni Myint, 304–27. Yangon: Universities Historical Research Centre, 1996.

Moore, Elizabeth. "Ritual Continuity and Stylistic Change in Pagoda Consecration and Renovation." In *Myanmar Two Millennia*, Part 3, edited by Universities' Historical Research Centre, 156–91. Yangon: Universities' Historical Research Centre, 2000.

Moore, Elizabeth. "The Royal Cities of Myanmar, Fourteenth–Nineteenth Centuries with Reference to China." In *South East Asia and China: Art Interaction and Commerce*, edited by Rosemary Scott and John Guy, 101–15. London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art (SOAS), 1995.

Myanmar Language Commission. *Myanmar–English Dictionary*. Yangon: Ministry of Education, 1993.

Myat Kyaw and San Lwin. *A Pali Myanmar–English Dictionary of the Noble Words of the Lord Buddha* [Htayawada Buddha-batha Myet Buddha-bawa-sana Ahbhi-htan]. Yangon: Myankun-sarpay-ah-kyo-hsaung-loat-ngan, 2002.

National Archives of Myanmar, "Military Occupation of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda at Rangoon." Document 1AO-000003, National Archives, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Yangon, 1853.

Nelson, R. "The Map of Art History." *Art Bulletin* 79 no. 1 (1997): 28–40.

New Light of Myanmar. "Nay Pyi Taw, Uppa Tasanti Ceti Taw and Shwepyitaw." December 24, 2008.

New Light of Myanmar. "Religious Objects Enshrined into Uppatasanti Pagoda." February 10, 2009.

Okell, J. "Burmese Romanization, a Proposed Systematization of the Traditional Method." Unpublished paper, 2000.

Pearn, B. R. *History of Rangoon*. Rangoon: American Baptist Mission Press, 1939.

Pollock, S. "Mimamsa and the Problem of History in Traditional India." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109 no. 4 (Oct.–Dec. 1989): 603–10.

Raffles, T. S. *The History of Java*, 2 vols. London: Black, Parbury and Allen, and John Murray, 1817 [1830].

Singer, Noel. "The Gold Relics of Bana Thau." *Arts of Asia* 22 no. 5 (September–October 1992): 75–84.

Somsiri Arunothai. "Mirror Mosaic Decoration" [Kan Pradab Krajoksi]. *Academic Journal of Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University* 3 no. 1 (2008): 87–95.

Thant Myint-U. *The Making of Modern Burma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Than Win Hlaing. *Distinguished Individuals of Myanmar History Described Through Sculptures and Pictures and Film* [Yot-tu-hma pyaw-thaw Myanmar-thamaing-win bug-go-htuu-mya]. Yangon: Kan-kaw-wet-yeh-sa-beh, 1997 [2007].

Thongchai Winichakul. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Tiffin, Sarah. "Raffles and the Barometer of Civilization: Images and Descriptions of Ruined Candis in The History of Java." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* Series 3, 18 no. 3 (2008): 341–60.

Tillotson, Giles. *The Artificial Empire*. London: Curzon, 2000.

Tilly, H. L. *Glass Mosaics of Burma*. Rangoon: Superintendent, Government Printing Office, 1901.

Tun Aung Chain and Thein Hlaing. *Shwedagon*. Yangon: Universities Press, 1996.

Win Pe. *Shwe Dagon*. Rangoon: Printing and Publishing Corporation, 1972.

Further Reading

Aung-Thwin, Michael. "Prophecies, Omens and Dialogue: Tools of the Trade in Burmese Historiography." In *Historical Essays in Honour of Kenneth R. Rossman*, edited by K. Newmyer, 171–85. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1980.

Herbert, Patricia. "Burmese Cosmological Manuscripts." In *Burma: Art and Archaeology*, edited by Alexandra Green and Richard Blurton, 77–98. London: British Museum Press, 2000.

Moore, Elizabeth. *Early Landscapes of Myanmar*. Bangkok: River Books, 2007.

Moore, Elizabeth. "Religious Architecture." In *Myanmar Style, Art, Architecture and Design of Burma*, edited by K. Inglis, 20–58. London: Thames & Hudson, 1998.

Moore, Elizabeth, Hansjorg Mayer, and Win Pe. *Shwedagon, Golden Pagoda of Myanmar*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1999.

Rohtagi, P., and G. Pheroza. *Under the Indian Sun, British Landscape Artists*. Bombay: Marg Publications, 1995.

Than Tun. *The Royal Orders of Burma, AD 1598–1885*, vol. 4: *AD 1782–1787*. Kyoto: The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1988.

Thongchai Winichakul. "The Quest for Siwilat: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century Siam." *Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 3 (August 2000): 528–49.

Yule, Henry. *A Narrative of the Mission to the Court of Ava in 1855*. Kuala Lumpur and London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

9

The Changing Cultural Space of Mughal Gardens

James L. Wescoat Jr.

Introduction: From Ideal Garden Form to Complex Spatial History

Mughal gardens constructed in South and Central Asia during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries constitute one of the distinguished chapters in the history of garden and landscape arts. In modern scholarship they have often been cast as a branch of "the Islamic garden." In survey books on world garden history, the Islamic chapter tends to follow that on medieval gardens, and precede either the chapter on Renaissance gardens of Europe or East Asian gardens of China and Japan.[1] As we shall see, neither of these chronologies makes sense, in large measure because the Mughal gardens of South Asia paralleled the development of baroque and early modern gardens in Europe and East Asia, in which there appears to have been a considerable amount of cross-cultural exchange of garden plants, imagery, and iconography. Aside from exploratory essays about the Medicis and the Mughals, and suggestive comparisons of contemporary monumental royal gardens in Europe and India, the global context of Mughal gardens raises more questions than answers.[2]

At the scale of the individual garden, Mughal gardens have likewise evoked a common spatial image – square enclosures, symmetrically divided into four equal parts delineated by slightly elevated walks and water channels that create the garden type known as the *chahar bagh* (four-fold garden). In addition to its iconic form, the chahar bagh is said to have strong symbolic associations with paradise gardens, the "gardens underneath which rivers flow," that await all faithful Muslims who have done good works at the Day of Judgment.[3] Although the Mughals did

construct rectilinear enclosed gardens with paradisiacal symbolism, the chahar bagh had a range of forms and was complemented by other major garden forms that included irregular and terraced sites as well.

Again, modern scholarship has done much to challenge stereotypes of Mughal garden form and meaning, largely in articles on specific garden sites, cities, and representations of gardens in paintings and texts.[4] This chapter seeks to develop a fresh synthesis of these ideas by using changing concepts of cultural space – that is, the spaces in, around, and representing gardens – to retrace the evolution of Mughal garden arts from their antecedents in fifteenth-century Central Asia, through the expansion of the Mughal empire in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, and its ultimate collapse in the mid-nineteenth century, but nevertheless continuing in a fascinating array of conservation, restoration, and imitation projects to the present day. This historical geographic perspective reveals, first, how Mughal gardens were always closely and complexly related to their immediate landscapes. It also sheds light on the ways that gardens embodied the visions, and realities, of larger territories that expanded, contracted, and were continuously restructured over relatively short periods of time. Seen from the present, these changing *cultural spaces* of Mughal gardens help us better understand current-day conservation projects, as illustrated in the following account.

A Mughal Garden Vignette

In 2010, a collaborative project between the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), and the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) expansively redefined the space of an historic Mughal garden. Humayun's tomb-garden, built in Delhi during the 1560s to 1570s to commemorate the second Mughal ruler, was the first monumental Mughal garden constructed in South Asia (fig. 9-1). The garden has a square four-fold chahar bagh layout. The visitor walks down the central axis of the garden to a high plinth surmounted by a chamfered octagonal tomb (known as a Baghdadi octagon which is more square than a perfect octagon), clad primarily in red sandstone with a grand white marble double-dome above. The garden and tomb thus also embody a *hasht bihisht* layout, that is, a nine-fold square composed of three squares on each side, which one perceives only from the upper tomb platform.

There are many interesting questions about the layout, design, construction, and use of this tomb-garden. During the past 150 years, it has variously been used as a farm, refugee camp, Victorian style garden, and in recent decades as a sleepy, dusty spot for school picnics, history buffs, and occasional ceremonial events.

During the late 1990s, the ASI and AKTC restored the interior garden enclosure to a dramatically improved state. In so doing, they wrestled with alternatives and uncertainties regarding original garden soil levels, plantings, paving materials, waterworks functions. They weighed all of the available Mughal-period evidence along with the significance of earlier historical interventions that had

FIGURE 9-1 Humayun's tomb-garden constructed by his son Akbar and wife Haji Begum between 1562 and 1571 CE in Delhi, India. Photograph by the author.

altered the garden, and yet had also become part of the garden's heritage value. They also had to consider modern interests and landscape tastes related to this historic Mughal site. The result was the most comprehensive Mughal garden conservation project in South Asia to date, carried out between 1997 and 2003.[5]

The conserved garden subtly refines one's perception of the interior garden space by re-establishing its sixteenth-century levels, retaining its vestiges of colonial-era tree and lawn planting, while reincorporating citrus plantings based on Mughal paintings and texts, and adding interpretive signage and garden furniture constructed with the hand-carved red sandstone and lime mortar of traditional Mughal masonry practices. These interventions have renewed the visual experience and understanding of Humayun's tomb-garden.[6]

The restored tomb-garden draws many times more tourists than before, and it is depicted on an increasing number of book covers, advertising brochures, commemorative stamps, and so on. Its position has risen in the space of domestic and international tourism as well as in the identity of India's cultural heritage. Until relatively recently, its position in the urban space of the Nizamuddin neighborhood of south Delhi remained a *local* place, ideal for a morning stroll; but for persons from more distant areas the tomb-garden was little known and perceived largely as an *object* walled off from the surrounding city.

Moreover, few tourists crossed the four-lane road to visit the fourteenth-century Sufi shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325 CE), which had caused Humayun's tomb to be built – spatially, spiritually, and politically – where it was in the first place.[7] If they did, they would have witnessed thousands of pilgrims seeking the blessings (*barakat*) of the saint by proximity and making prayers and offerings at his tomb, along with weekly performances of devotional *qawwali* music, and annual death-day (*'urs*, literally "marriage") celebrations of the saint, and recitations and performances of works by his poet-devotee, Amir Khusraw (d. 1326 CE). Likewise, few Sufi pilgrims or local Nizamuddin *basti* (urban village) residents crossed the road to visit the World Heritage Site, which had also originally been built in proximity to their saint's tomb and the blessings that emanate from it. The 'urs celebrations performed at the Mughal ruler's tomb-garden by his descendants to mark the day of his death lapsed long ago at the end of Mughal rule in 1858 CE if not before.

Few would know that this modern road is an alignment of the famous Grand Trunk Road that stretched from Kabul to Dhaka in the sixteenth century. Those who do cross the road today face an array of traffic hazards, environmental debris, and socioeconomic distress. And those modern spatial problems obscure the historical landscape of smaller graves, paths, plantings, and buildings that defined the spatial context of Humayun's Mughal tomb-garden. Actually, it was more than the "context" of the garden, for all of the buildings and spaces were laid out on a large grid of enclosures and pathways that are no longer discernible on the ground.

Fortunately, an expansive conservation project, launched in 2007, is linking the conservation of Humayun's tomb-garden with adjacent spaces, an environmental conservation project in Sundar Nursery to the north, and a socioeconomic development program in the Nizamuddin basti across the modern Grand Trunk Road to the west. When completed, this project will draw together cultural heritage, environmental conservation, and socioeconomic development within their widening urban spatial context. Concurrent proposals are striving to extend the cultural heritage corridors north from Nizamuddin along the Grand Trunk Road to the Purana Qila (Old Fort), which Humayun helped to build; and to the west along the Lodi Road past the pre-Mughal Sultanate tombs of the fifteenth century to its terminus in Safdarjung's tomb-garden, the last monumental Mughal tomb-garden in Delhi, completed in 1754 CE.

The story of Humayun's tomb-garden is not entirely unique. Other recent investigations and conservation proposals have addressed the links between the Taj Mahal and Mahtab Bagh gardens across the river from one another in Agra, as well as the terraced tomb-garden of Babur in Kabul and hillside gardens of Kashmir, some of whose stories will be told below.

The point is that we live in a moment when the spatial reweaving of historical landscapes in South Asia for various reasons has become a cultural priority. It replaces an earlier era that focused on Mughal buildings and even sites as "art objects," fenced off from their modern surroundings at arbitrary administrative distances from building plinths and boundary walls. That mentality persists, but

it is gradually yielding to what can be termed a landscape approach. This new spatial approach in landscape history and conservation is exciting and brings up interesting queries. What ideas, methods, and evidence does it entail? What new insights can it reveal about landscapes modified by centuries of dramatic change? And how might that new knowledge be employed by current and future generations? These are some of the questions that have prompted re-examination of the changing artistic space of Mughal gardens.

The next sections follow the Mughal dynastic chronology that structured their sense of identity and the cultural arts that they produced. In each dynastic epoch, we consider how the spaces within gardens were organized and experienced and, just as important, how they related to their surrounding landscapes and regional contexts. Notwithstanding the rich diversity of individual gardens, several recurring spatial patterns stand out including:

(a) the geographical space of water in landscape design in:
  the Timurid heartland in Central Asia
  waterfront gardens and tanks
  Kashmiri terraced gardens;
(b) the ephemeral space of:
  prospect and refuge in gardens
  symbolic appropriation of the land
  observation and experimentation;
(c) imperial dynastic space that evolved:
  from camps to gardens
  from gardens to cities
  from cities to imperial capitals, and
  from imperial capitals to regional sites;
(d) the afterlife of Mughal gardens in:
  colonial appropriation
  twentieth-century heritage conservation
  new frontiers for urban conservation design and development.

These themes help us return to Humayun's tomb-garden with a deeper understanding of what Mughal culture has contributed to Asian garden arts, how Mughal gardens have entailed dynamic spatial change throughout their history, even when they invoked the iconic chahar bagh, and why these artistic transformations have continuing significance.

Antecedents: Timurid Central Asia and Sultanate Hindustan

The search for origins is always elusive, and it has led some historians of Islamic gardens back to the hanging gardens of Babylon and even to Edenic myths of

the garden at the beginning of time. For Mughal gardens, two more immediate antecedents stand out – one a positive emulation of Timurid Central Asian gardens, and the other a more ambivalent relationship with the gardens of rival Sultanate dynasties that the Mughals defeated when conquering India.

Timurid Central Asia

Gardens figured prominently in the childhood of the first Mughal ruler Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur (reigned in India 1527–30). Babur was a prince of the Timurid empire, who traced his descent from Timur (known in the west as Tamurlane or Timur the Lame), whose empire was centered in the city of Samarkand, in what is now Uzbekistan, and stretched across large parts of Iran and Central Asia from 1370 to 1501.

In his personal memoirs, the *Baburnama*, Babur described the montane streamside gardens of his childhood home in the Ferghana valley in what is now Uzbekistan as "the fine front [embroidery] of a coat." Ferghana has a distinctive geomorphology and settlement pattern, in which streams rush down mountain valleys, irrigating small floodplain villages and gardens along the way, before depositing their sediments on alluvial fans that supported a larger settlement, and spreading out across broad irrigated pasturelands. Gardens were thus small, beautiful, productive, and refreshing; plots of fruit trees and flowers cascading downslope alongside a central stream. Each stream and associated alluvial settlement had its local clans and chiefs, associated to greater or lesser degree with the larger powers concentrated downstream in the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara.

Samarkand stands out as the second great Timurid antecedent for Mughal gardens.[8] It was the capital city of Timur (r. 1370–1405 CE), who at one point had conquered territory from Damascus in the west to Delhi in the east – and purportedly named some of his suburban gardens around the Samarkand citadel after these conquered cities. A contemporary travel account by a Spanish ambassador, Ruy González Clavijo, describes the elaborate courtly protocol by which he was permitted to approach Timur in these gardens, and the lavish garden banquets that followed.[9] The gardens surrounding Samarkand were situated on broad sloping meadows irrigated by streams diverted from the hills upslope. While gardens also graced the citadel, Timurid garden life ways developed in the suburban pastures of this formerly nomadic Turkic tribe. Senior female members of the Timurid court were prominent garden builders and patrons.[10]

By the time Babur rose to power, Samarkand possessed only a shadow of its former glory, and he attacked it from various garden encampments that were little more than cleared meadows that sometimes had a running stream, wildflowers that captured Babur's attention, and occasionally an extant pavilion. Babur would continue to deploy this military use of gardens in Afghanistan and Hindustan, refining the orderly layout of tents demarcated by textile enclosures. Conversely, gardens also served as places of fleeting refuge from the anguish of

defeats on the battlefield, places of rest, which also figured in Mughal memoirs and poetry.

The third main Timurid garden influence on the Mughals occurred in Herat (in present-day Afghanistan). Babur had established himself in Kabul and begun building his first gardens there. But his achievements could not match those of his sophisticated cousins in Herat who seduced him with wine as well as the courtly refinements of their irrigated gardens outside the walled city. As in Samarkand, the gardens of Herat surrounded the citadel, but in this case they were primarily aligned along an elaborate network of irrigation canals.[11] Babur developed several important gardens in Afghanistan, including Istalif, north of Kabul, and the Bagh-i Wafa in Jalalabad, made famous by paintings produced two generations later by his grandson Akbar's atelier. These images, painted from oral tradition and imagination rather than direct observation, depict one garden as a subtle straightening and impoundment of a stream course in the open landscape, while the other is presented as an enclosed chahar bagh.

Babur carried these three Timurid influences from the valleys of Ferghana, the suburbs of Samarkand, and the irrigated channels of Herat – along with his own garden experience at Kabul – into northern Hindustan, which he ultimately conquered in 1527 CE. One of his earliest gardens on the plains was known as the Bagh-i Safa (Garden of Purity) at Kallar Kahar, Pakistan, which featured a rough carved stone platform still known as the Takht-i Baburi (Throne of Babur) in an orchard overlooking a lake.

Sultanate antecedents

Before we describe Babur's subsequent projects in India, we must consider the Sultanate "other," and their gardens, for the Delhi Sultans had built cities, hydraulic works, and to some extent gardens for three centuries before the Mughals arrived. The various Sultanate dynasties came from Ghazni and other cities in present-day Afghanistan with a mixed Turkic and Persianate heritage, and a history of building monumental tombs as well as civic works. Attention is frequently drawn to Babur's negative first impressions of India. He complained about the heat, dust, manners, and waters; but just a little later in the text he commended the fruits, artisans, and many other aspects of India that convinced him to shift his capital there, building irrigated gardens and encouraging his nobles to do the same.[12] Anthony Welch has written an important critical assessment of "the gardens Babur did not like."[13] They may have included the square, enclosed tomb-garden of Sikandar Lodi, who died in 1517 CE only a decade before Babur arrived. Sikandar Lodi's tomb lies less than a kilometer from Humayun's tomb-garden, which was constructed a half-century later, also with an enclosed square chahar bagh layout. Its octagonal tomb and a single-bay mosque on the west garden axis occupy a much larger proportion of the garden space than does the architecture of Mughal gardens like Humayun's tomb, in which the tomb footprint is only one thirty-sixth of the garden space. Scholars have begun to shed light on

other Sultanate gardens, which as one would expect were not quite as rare or displeasing as Babur suggests.[14] But almost none of the purportedly thousands of gardens mentioned in Sultanate histories survive. However, the surviving Sultanate waterworks are particularly impressive, especially in the Mehrauli, Jahanpanah, and Tughluqabad capitals of Delhi. The Sultanate rulers were far greater patrons of civic waterworks than the Mughals, some of whom simply repaired Sultanate canals and reservoirs during their rule while building their own smaller-scale aesthetically refined garden channels and pools.

Mughal gardens were influenced by other Sultanate gardens in regions such as Gujarat.[15] The Sultanate city of Champaner in Gujarat, characterized by exquisitely carved yellow sandstone mosque architecture, had garden spaces within the city and on the lower hillside plateaus, one of whose walls and waterworks partially survives. Just as Timur had taken thousands of stonemasons from Delhi after its conquest to Samarkand, so too artisans followed Mughal conquerors from the Sultanate provinces to their court in Agra as it gained power. Other indirect influences probably passed down through historical and literary texts. For example, Masud Saad Salman, an early Muslim poet exiled in Lahore, yearned for the gardens of his native Ghazni.[16]

These antecedent influences on Mughal gardens were thus positive and negative, based on their spatio-cultural affinity with the "self" and "other" of the budding dynasty. Although most of the antecedent Sultanate landscape projects were grander in scale and civic significance than early Mughal gardens, their gardens per se lacked enduring salience, perhaps because Mughal garden tradition was so deeply rooted in the early dynastic psyche and continuity of dynastic identity, as outlined below.

Early Experimental Spaces: The Gardens of Babur and Humayun

The first Mughal gardens in India were physically small but culturally significant; that is, their physical spaces were modest, but the social space they envisioned was packed with imperial scale and meaning. Several gardens constructed by the first two Mughal rulers, Babur and Humayun, help establish this pattern.

Conquest gardens of the first Mughal ruler Babur (1527–30 CE)

The main surviving Baburi garden in northern India is the Bagh-i Nilufar (lotus garden) at the village of Dholpur, which was excavated by the ASI and garden historian Elizabeth Moynihan (1988). It draws water from a large earthen reservoir, built by the Lodi Sultans, from which a channel led to a small inclined waterfall (*chadar*), and lotus-foliated water tank (fig. 9-2). The floral imagery is from India as are the rock-carving methods, and the earth dam and reservoir. Babur added a garden in thanks for a military victory. To fulfill a vow he foreswore

FIGURE 9-2 Babur's extant garden waterworks at the Bagh-i Nilufar (lotus garden) built between 1527 and 1528 CE near Dholpur, India. Photograph by the author.

the wine he had first started drinking in a Herat garden and filled the Dholpur tank with lemonade. He later built another garden in gratitude for a victory at the village of Sikri, which later became the Mughal capital of Fatehpur Sikri.

Most common was Babur's marking of landscapes with small garden improvements – a 10 by 10 *gaz* tank for ablutions (one Mughal gaz was approximately 30 to 32 inches long and is translated as cubit or yard), a straightened stream channel, a bench for viewing the landscape, or an allocation of land to a noble for garden construction. These projects were as much or more about the political space of Mughal landscapes as they were about physical design.

Mystical garden experiments of Humayun (1527–56 CE)

The second Mughal ruler Humayun had a less successful military career than his father. Indeed, the Mughal empire collapsed under him, leading to his flight into exile in Persia, and Delhi was only barely recovered when he fell down the stone stairs of a pavilion there and died. None of his physical gardens survive. Even so, texts and paintings indicate that Humayun's gardens had extraordinary imagination and inventiveness that influenced more enduring projects in later decades.

Several examples stand out. A garden party described in his sister Gulbadan Begum's biographical account, the *Humayunnama*, and depicted in a near-contemporary painting, describes a "domesticated-wild" space of fruit trees and rock outcroppings.[17] Another garden picnic scene has an awning hung from a chinar tree in a loosely organized space with music and dance.

Gardens were also places of deepening symbolic significance. Humayun arranged his son's circumcision in a garden, as well as reunions following exile, and negotiations with his rebellious brothers, who constructed gardens in Lahore, Kabul, and elsewhere to establish their own status in those centers. Many gardens and waterworks were playful, showering unsuspecting young guests with surprise dunking, not unlike the *giochi d'acqua* of Italian gardens. At the same time, garden symbolism reached in numerological and mystical directions in Agra where Humayun ordered the construction of a floating *chahar taq* garden, which consisted of four octagonal pavilions lashed together in such a way as to frame a central octagonal pool. This design prefigured his own tomb-garden's design. He also explored the spatial symbolism of the stars, days of the week, colors, physical elements of the universe, and so on.

Humayun's exile in Persia introduced two important influences on the space of Mughal gardens. The first influence came from his usurper, Sher Shah Sur, an Afghan leader who was not a great garden designer but was a superb administrator.[18] In addition to carrying over Sher Shah's imperial administration, subsequent Mughal rulers built upon his alignment of the Grand Trunk Road, the geographical backbone of the Indo-Gangetic plains which to this day runs from Dhaka, Bangladesh to Kabul, Afghanistan. One of the main sites along the Grand Trunk Road in Delhi was the citadel known today as Purana Qila (Old Fort),

which Humayun initially established as a palace-capital known as Dinpanah. Suri mosques, octagonal tombs, city gates, and Sher Shah's tomb set within a water tank itself may have influenced some Mughal ideas about architectural siting, construction, and decorative detail.[19]

Another influence on early Mughal gardens came from Persia itself.[20] In addition to an army to regain his territory, Humayun drew along courtiers who included painters, poets, and musicians. The Shiite court of Shah Tahmasp and his predecessors in Persia had a long record of garden patronage. The Persian influence on all of the arts expanded as artists migrated to courts that had the resources and taste to support them. It is important to underscore that while the gardens of early Mughal rule were physically small, they had broad spatial meaning that took physical shape in the imperial expansion that followed.

Imperial Spaces: From Gardens to Cities to City-Gardens

After Humayun's death, the Mughal army conquered territories and formed a state that spanned much of South Asia. Its garden arts began to flourish in size and sophistication. Each ruler had a long life and/or reign, and an expanding family and court of garden patrons. This section describes the successive developments of garden form and meaning, along with the historical, geographical, and cultural contexts that shaped them – and which they shaped in turn.

Akbar's shift in emphasis from gardens to urban design (1556–1605)

The first long-term Mughal ruler, Akbar, was also one of the greatest, measured in terms of political-economic expansion and pluralistic cultural production.[21] His legacy continues to resonate in contemporary cultural debates in South Asia and the west where he is championed by cultural liberals and castigated by cultural conservatives. For our topic of garden design, his legacy is also mixed as is evident in the several examples provided here.

Akbar's reign begins in a garden, in a hastily constructed coronation platform at the garden of Kalanaur in the Punjab. As a 13-year-old he was too young to immediately grasp the precarious dynastic situation, but he soon learned the joint significance of architectural building and state formation. His earliest projects were defensive, reinforcing his own forts and attacking those of others. These forts included courtyards whose functions ranged from military review to public petitioning, private strategizing, and secluded family life. As subsequent rulers have renovated them extensively, little remains of the Akbari period forts besides their overall enclosure shapes and open spaces that are akin to the open *maidans* (squares) that provide large sparsely vegetated spaces or fields used for public gatherings and informal activities.

The great garden innovation of this period was Humayun's tomb-garden, described at the start of this chapter. The designers, Mirak-i Sayyid Ghiyas and

his son Muhammad-i Mirak came to Delhi from Herat by way of Bukhara.[22] They laid out a square garden enclosure 450 by 450 gaz that they divided into both four, and nine, equal parts – a chahar bagh and hasht bihisht garden – which is the only garden of this type in South Asia. Although sophisticated in its layout and proportions, it was probably designed with simple methods on five-gaz gridded paper. The tomb had a hasht bihisht layout like the garden, which bears comparison to Humayun's chahar taq composition in Agra. Akbar's garden design role was presumably paramount in the selection of the site and scale, but otherwise supervisory, along with his stepmother, Humayun's senior wife, Hajji Begum. Humayun's tomb-garden established the dynastic model for a ritual funerary space that continued throughout the Mughal period and reached its pinnacle in the Taj Mahal in Agra. Humayun's tomb-garden's proximity to the shrine of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya Chishti had special significance for Akbar, who drew spiritual inspiration from the Chishtiyya Sufi order, walking on foot from his capital in Agra to the shrine of Muinuddin Chishti in Ajmer, where he also built a fort and garden.

A local Chishti saint at Fatehpur Sikri inspired Akbar's most enduring architectural legacy in the ceremonial capital he constructed there. Sheikh Salim Chishti forecast the birth of Akbar's son and heir who was named Salim after the sheikh, and who would later become the emperor Jahangir. Perched along a rocky ridge overlooking an impounded reservoir, Fatehpur Sikri is a masterpiece of urban and architectural design. Although it is exquisitely sited and encompasses a staggered composition of courtyards and elegantly carved red sandstone buildings, Fatehpur Sikri has few gardens per se. This observation prompts the question, what was a Mughal garden? The rock-cut pool at Dholpur was called a garden, but the red sandstone lined pool of Fatehpur Sikri known as the Anup Talao was not. There presumably were gardens in and around the stone courtyards, but contemporary Mughal and European accounts rarely mention them.[23] Akbar's official history, the *Akbarnama*, refers to gardens on various occasions but not with the passion of Babur or imagination of Humayun.

Akbar's reign thus marks a transition from garden design to urban design, and thus a recentering of the space of Mughal culture from the garden suburbs to fortress courtyards. Akbar's political conquests of and alliances with Rajput rulers, and his early excursion to Kashmir where he once again built a fort, and which he described as his regional garden, set the stage for a synthesis of city- and garden-building in the century that followed.[24]

Persianate garden efflorescence in the reign of Jahangir and Nur Jahan (1605–27 CE)

Emphasis on garden aesthetics returned with Jahangir who, like his great-grandfather Babur, was a keen naturalist, listing the flora and fauna of his travels which were partly the basis for his garden projects. Also like Babur, he kept a private journal that shed light on his personal reflections and aspirations.

Unlike his predecessors, he had to wait a long time to succeed his father, which entailed various projects as a prince. One of the most notable is the so-called Hiran Minar water complex near Sheikhupura Fort, southeast of the capital city of Lahore in what is now the Punjab province of Pakistan. The Hiran Minar is a large rectangular water tank with guard towers at each corner, ramps down to the water for animals on each side, and a beautiful pavilion in the center that is connected to one side of the tank by a causeway, which is on axis with a nearby free-standing minaret (fig. 9-3). The minaret is purportedly dedicated to a pet antelope named Minraj, who was trained to lure other animals to the tank for hunting. The Hiran Minar complex thus embodies the complex Mughal relationship between hunting, natural history, and pets.

After Jahangir ultimately succeeded his father in 1605, he constructed an exquisite water court in Agra Fort known as the Jahangiri Mahal.[25] It bears comparison with Babur's Dholpur water garden. Though even smaller in size, its jewel-like stone carving and elegant proportions included a miniature water chute, narrow water channel, and deep lotus-foliated pool, which overlooks the vast Yamuna River floodplain, reinforcing the Mughal pattern of small water systems that had a large aesthetic impact, as did the narrow water channels of Humayun's tomb-garden and Fatehpur Sikri. But the Jahangiri Mahal does not appear to have been conceived as a garden per se. Other fortress courtyards did however become gardens during Jahangir's reign, such as those he built in Lahore Fort that included plantings with their pavilions and waterworks. Jahangir also undertook more extensive palace-garden construction at the pre-Mughal site of Mandu in central India, where he built gardens, water tanks, and pavilions, perhaps because in Mandu he was unconstrained by his immediate forbears.[26]

One of his first acts was to build a dynastic tomb for his father Akbar, located in the village of Sikandra just north of Agra. Like his father, he built the tomb in a symbolic location, but not in the city in which he ruled – perhaps there was not enough space for two generations of Mughal rulers in the same city! Akbar's tomb at Sikandra is a curious place, both in its location north of the city, and in its design. Like Humayun's tomb, it has a large square chahar bagh enclosure in which the tomb is centrally sited. The walled enclosure has monumental gateways and pavilions on each axis. Elevated walks and water channels partitioned the garden into a hierarchy of chahar baghs, rather than the hasht bihisht layout of Humayun's tomb-garden. The tomb structure itself also consists of multiple horizontal stories like a larger and stronger version of Akbar's Panchmahal pavilion at Fatehpur Sikri, again in contrast to the hasht bihisht composition and double-dome of Humayun's tomb. Its red sandstone cladding was combined with an unusually large pattern of sandstone and marble floral ornamental details. Jahangir did not like the first phase of the building and had it torn down and rebuilt.[27] As his memoirs did not comment on it further, we do not know his final opinions of it, or those of other Mughal writers, and we are left instead with the later descriptions, drawings, and impressions of European travelers.

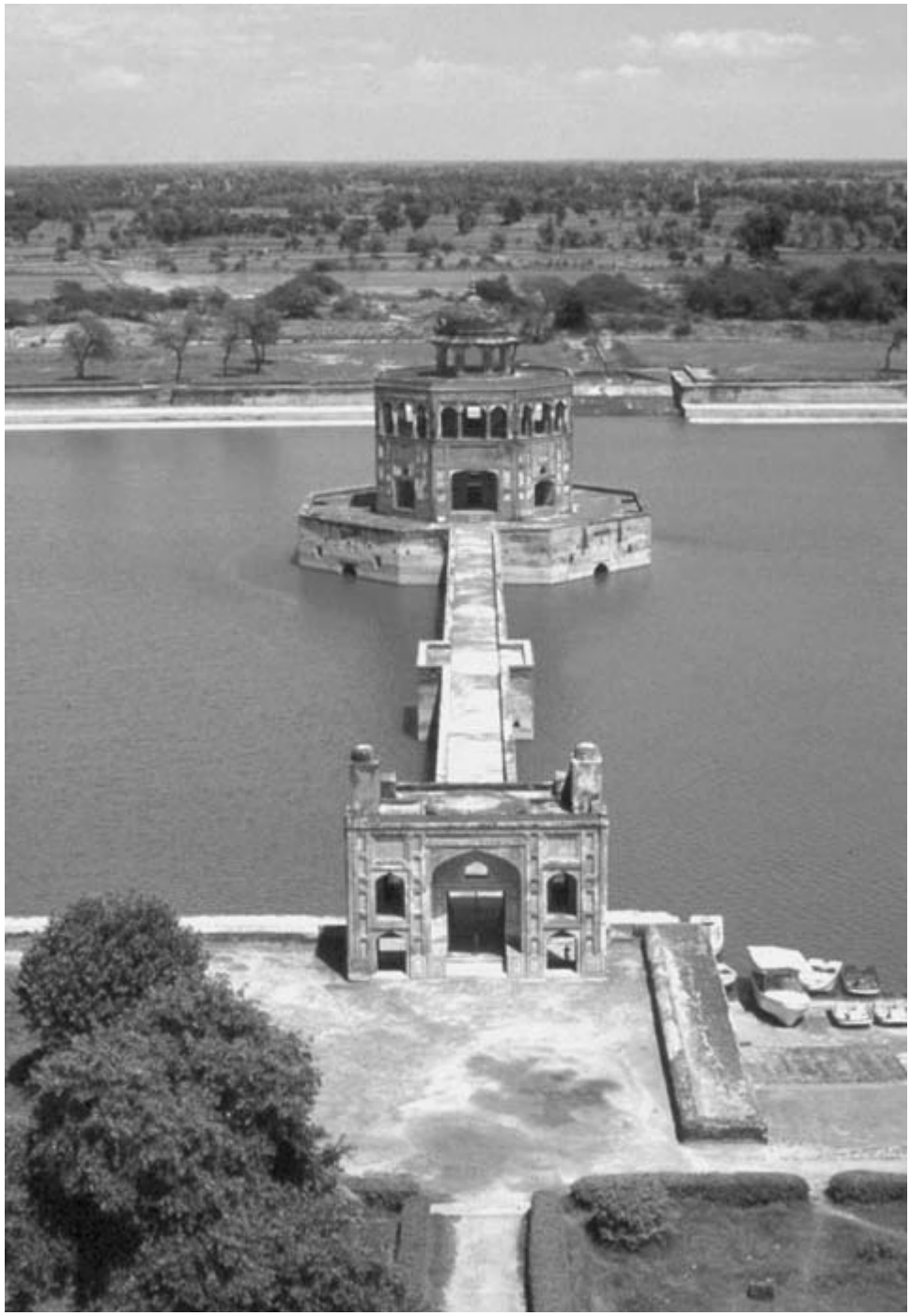

FIGURE 9-3 The Hiran Minar hunting pavilion and waterworks built *c.* 1606 CE by Jahangir near Sheikhupura Fort in the Punjab region of Pakistan. Photograph by the author.

Jahangir soon married a woman who would bring her entire family and Persianate culture into the center of the Mughal court and garden culture. Nur Jahan (d. 1645 CE) had extraordinary political ability and aesthetic taste, as did her brother Asaf Khan (d. 1641 CE) and her father Mirza Ghiyas Beg who held the title of Itimad ud-Daula (d. 1622 CE). Their patronage brought renewed focus on gardens as an expression of Mughal dynastic identity. The Shiite influence on the Mughal court thus continued from Humayun's association with Shah Tahmasp to Akbar's support for the literary family of Abul Fazl to Jahangir's alliance with the family of Nur Jahan.

Most notable were the monumental gardens of Kashmir. Jahangir improved the spring at Virnag, the crystal clear source of the Jhelum River, in which he ornamented fish with pearl rings. Water flowing from the spring was directed down terrace gardens. Jahangir built the terraced garden that came to be known as Shalamar, which stepped down from its hillside water source toward the level of Dal Lake, which it ultimately reached by a long perfectly straight canal. Nur Jahan was said to have initiated the manufacture of the *otto* (essence) of rose at Shalamar garden.

Her brother Asaf Khan built the nearby Nishat Bagh in Srinagar, which had a single pavilion at the top and a magnificent set of terraces overlooking Dal Lake (fig. 9-4). Unlike the gardens of the plains, or those of Kashmir today, water supplies were abundant for these gardens, which led to a shift away from narrow channels with subtle bubbling fountains and rippling cascades, and toward dramatic cascades and fountain displays. Spatially, these Kashmiri gardens had extensive prospects with no visual boundaries, perhaps like the earliest Mughal gardens of montane Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Nur Jahan is credited with several garden pavilions along the Yamuna riverfront, including those of the Ram Bagh.[28] Originally thought to have been Babur's garden, the architecture is of later Jahangir period style and decoration. In the tomb-garden of Itimad ud-Daula, just downstream from the Ram Bagh along the Yamuna riverfront in Agra, Nur Jahan constructed a complete tomb-garden for her parents that consisted of a white marble-clad tomb set within a simple chahar bagh space delineated once again by walks and plantings. Itimad ud-Daula's marble tomb set an important partial precedent for the Taj Mahal's extensive marble cladding, and even today local guides refer to it as "Baby Taj."

However, Nur Jahan's greatest funerary gardens were those for her husband, her brother, and ultimately herself in what has come to be known as the Shahdara tomb-garden complex across the Ravi River from Lahore Fort. It is the most extensive multi-garden funerary complex in the Indo-Islamic realm.[29] Like Humayun's tomb, the complex was laid out on a decimally proportioned grid. Each of the gardens is proportional to one another, with Asaf Khan's 300 by 300 gaz garden exactly one quarter the size of Jahangir's 600 by 600 gaz garden.[30] Jahangir's tomb sits on a 100-gaz plinth, with tall minarets at each corner which frame an extraordinary "empty" roof space above the single-story tomb. Nur Jahan's own tomb was likewise square and single-storied, while Asaf

FIGURE 9-4 The Nishat Bagh garden built *c.* 1633 CE by Asaf Khan, brother-in-law of the Mughal ruler Shah Jahan on a hill above Dal Lake near Srinagar in the Vale of Kashmir. Photograph by the author.

Khan's was octagonal with a dome above. The Mughal rulers all had square tombs and gardens while octagonal tomb-gardens were more common among high-ranking nobles. Unlike the gardens of Kashmir, the water channels of Shahdara were narrow and shallow, fed by wells that lifted water onto aqueducts that ran atop the garden walls. By the time this funerary complex was completed, however, imperial gardens had taken a new direction during the rule of Shah Jahan.

Synthesis of gardens and cities in the reign of Shah Jahan (1627–56 CE)

Like his father Jahangir, Prince Khurram, the future Shah Jahan, was an accomplished patron of the arts before he assumed the throne. He built hunting palaces that underscored the age-old Persian dynastic symbolism of the hunt. He left no autobiographical memoirs, but his reign is the most richly recorded in terms of illustrated manuscripts, such as the *Padshahnama*, which contains highly detailed landscape images including several gardens.[31] He patronized numerous historians, painters, and court poets who presented idealized garden imagery and allegories.

Shah Jahan's gardens have survived more than others in part because their architectural elements were sturdily constructed. Even minor garden walks had lime-mortared brick masonry foundations a half-meter thick, while larger platforms and water tanks had foundations greater than a meter in depth. Even when these have collapsed or been robbed of brick by subsequent generations, the lineaments of their garden layouts survive. They include fortress garden courtyards such as the parterred Anguri Bagh (grape garden) in Agra Fort, and the Diwan-i Khas (Hall of Private Audience) courtyard in Lahore Fort. Shah Jahan continued the garden-building passion in Kashmir, refining the Shalamar garden begun by his father.

What Nur Jahan had begun in the way of white marble cladding and *parchin kari*,[32] or hard semi-precious stone floral inlay, at her father's tomb, Shah Jahan carried to perfection at the Taj Mahal, built in 1632–48 CE in commemoration of his wife Mumtaz Mahal who bore all of his 14 royal children.[33] The Taj Mahal gardens have received interesting attention over the years.[34] They were the first to undergo British conservation, which included documentation, decorative stonework repairs, new lighting, and massive removal of *jangli* or overgrown vegetation, which was replaced by grass lawns and Victorian flower beds. Debate has focused on why, unlike all of its imperial tomb-garden precedents, the Taj Mahal tomb was situated on a plinth at the riverfront end of the garden, rather than at the center, where a raised white marble pool stands instead. One provocative thesis drew inspiration from Ibn al-Arabi's mystical images of the throne of god.[35] Others challenged this symbolic interpretation, arguing instead for the pragmatic aesthetics of the riverfront as the logical site for this extraordinary structure.[36]

A Smithsonian archaeological excavation of the garden opposite the Taj Mahal in the late 1990s led by Elizabeth Moynihan raised other possibilities.[37]

The Mahtab Bagh had side-walls perfectly aligned with those of the Taj Mahal. When included in the overall Taj complex, it resituates the tomb near the center of the complex with the river Yamuna running between the Taj Mahal and Mahtab Bagh gardens. If correct, this may represent the largest scale Mughal effort to emulate a "garden beneath which rivers flow" as presented in the Koran.[38]

Notwithstanding Ebba Koch's book, *The Complete Taj Mahal*, this greatest of Mughal tomb-gardens still poses interesting unanswered questions about the spatial character of Mughal gardens.[39] For example, all of the royal tomb-gardens discussed thus far were laid out in regular decimally proportioned spaces – 5, 10, 50, 100 gaz, and so on. However, the modules at the Taj Mahal involve multiples of irregular prime numbers, such as 17 and 23 gaz. What explains this mathematical irregularity? The original planting design of the Taj Mahal is likewise unknown, and will remain so until new manuscripts are found and/or new paleobotanical analyses are undertaken. The hydraulics and water budget of the Taj Mahal warrant detailed analysis. The garden's spatial form and aesthetics are also likely to stimulate many more studies in the decades ahead.

If the Taj Mahal was Shah Jahan's masterpiece of garden architecture – an advance that built upon but went far beyond any of his predecessors in its range of functions, spaces, and linkages with riverfront gardens and urbanism upstream – his new capital of Shahjahanabad in Delhi was his crowning achievement in what might be called city-garden design – the fusion of garden and urban design at the height of Mughal imperial power and spatial vision.

Shah Jahan moved his capital from Agra to the new site in north Delhi in part for the greater space and lower congestion that it offered. He must also have considered Delhi's symbolic significance as the capital of every major Muslim dynasty since the thirteenth century. It was surprising that no attempt had been made to relocate there since Humayun's small-scale attempt at the Dinpanah or Purana Qila site just north of his tomb.

In addition to its walls, roads, and fortifications, Shahjahanabad contained at least three major levels of urban garden design. First, Shah Jahan built garden quadrangles within the fort. Although heavily altered in the colonial era, these gardens lay below a series of white marble pavilions and courts along the Yamuna River side of the fort, linked together by the Shah Nahr (Royal Channel), an elegant shallow marble water channel fed by a well from the Yamuna that cascaded down a *chadar* or water chute at the northeast corner of the fort into the channel. The water flowed gently under white marble screens (*jali*) one of which is carved with the scales of justice, and into a shallow square marble pool that circumscribes an elegantly designed lotus-petalled pool.

Royal gardens built by Shah Jahan's daughter Jahanara (d. 1681 CE) established the central east–west spine of the city, though they too have all but disappeared. The Jahanara Bagh was described – from outside only – by the traveler François Bernier in 1663.[40] Jahanara's gardens were fed by their own canal, which ran parallel to what was once a tree-lined water channel and major avenue known as Chandni Chowk, which is now the busiest street in old Delhi. Other gardens

of the royalty and nobility lined a canal that ran from the Yamuna River to the citadel and its moat.[41]

Up until the partial destruction of Shahjahanabad by the British after the uprising in 1857, and its dramatic repopulation during the twentieth century, the larger courtyard houses (*havelis*) also had gardens, which Stephen Blake describes as *khanah baghs* (household gardens).[42] This takes us down to a residential scale, which is rarely discussed or depicted in Mughal sources. It completes the portrait of a city-garden assemblage that developed over the course of two centuries.

Aurangzeb, his brothers, sisters, daughters, and saints (1656–1707 CE)

Though the empire continued to expand, artistic and garden patronage changed during the reign of Aurangzeb. A violent struggle for succession ensued even before Shah Jahan's death, which led to the king's imprisonment, the execution of his brothers, and the ascent of Aurangzeb Alamgir. Aurangzeb is most often contrasted with his elder brother Dara Shikoh (d. 1659 CE), who drew mystical instruction from Mulla Akhund Shah of Kashmir and Mulla Shah's *pir*, or teacher, Mian Mir, buried in Lahore. Indeed, the Mian Mir area of Lahore is one of the only Mughal complexes to include a Sufi tomb-garden, built for Mulla Shah, along with a large square water tank comparable to the Hiran Minar, built for Dara Shikoh's wife Nadira Begum. Dara Shikoh had literary and cross-cultural interests that included translation of Sanskrit texts, not unlike the great Khan-i Khanan Abdur Rahim (d. 1627 CE) of Akbar and Jahangir's era.

In an earlier time, Aurangzeb had written to his father with concerns about leaks in the Taj Mahal dome and flooding of the Mahtab Bagh across the river. As ruler, however, he focused on fortifications and mosque construction. He in effect shifted the capital from Delhi to Aurangabad in the Deccan, a beautiful landscape of rolling hills and verdant valleys irrigated by long underground tunnels known as *qarez* that were an ancient water supply technology from Persia. The unconquered hilltop fortress of Daulatabad in this area had a series of gardens, tanks, baths (*hammams*), and other waterworks on its lower terraces built by earlier provincial rulers, which may have influenced Mughal garden projects.

Aurangabad itself had several beautiful gardens, including one built in emulation of the Taj Mahal by Aurangzeb's sons in memory of their mother. While the Bibi ka Maqbara tomb (1651–61) is often criticized as a clumsy imitation of the Taj Mahal, its gardens had a fascinating water supply system, beautiful siting, and an intriguing rectilinear composition.[43] Aurangzeb himself requested a simple grave, open to the sky, that lies in the compound of a Chishti Sufi saint in the nearby town of Khuldabad; this placement is striking because orthodox leaders like Aurangzeb and his modern apologists generally advocate simple burial in a common graveyard (*qabristan*). The Khuldabad Sufi shrine has also been characterized as a garden, and the general area was known as *rauza* (funerary garden).[44]

Leadership in Mughal garden design in the historic capital cities was taken over by Aurangzeb's sisters, Jahanara and Zebunissa (d. 1702 CE). Jahanara shared her brother's mystical nature, and she took care of her father Shah Jahan during his house arrest in Agra Fort until he died. She is now credited with building the Bagh-i Jahanara in Agra.[45] It has a large riverfront garden with a boat landing and the garden foundations are still visible. Her grandest garden in Shahjahanabad has already been mentioned, though almost nothing of it survives aside from foreign travelers' imaginative accounts.

Zebunissa by contrast supported her father Aurangzeb in his succession struggles and became a patron in her own right in Delhi, though like other Mughal princesses she was prevented from marrying, which gave rise to speculative gossip about secret lovers and palace trysts.[46] She too had literary and mystical aspirations which perhaps, along with her later political alliances, led Aurangzeb to imprison her. While Lahore residents locate her grave in the south part of that city, contemporary histories located it in a garden outside Shahjahanabad, which was later moved to Akbar's tomb-garden at Sikandra. With the passing of these female patrons and fragmentation of the empire, the space of Mughal gardens entered a new phase of regionalism.

The Regionalization of "Mughal" Gardens

As indicated earlier, Mughal gardens evolved in conjunction with Central Asian, Persian, Indian, and European garden traditions. Within India, garden history connections with Gujarat, Rajasthan, Kashmir, Punjab, and parts of the Deccan were particularly fruitful. Some of these cross-cultural relationships grew stronger as the Mughal imperial center waned during the eighteenth century.

Rajput gardens, for example, coevolved with Mughal gardens, due in part to marriages between Mughal rulers and the daughters of Rajput nobles. When Mughal power declined, the garden impulse in the Rajput centers of Marwar, Mewar, Bundi, Kota, Udaipur, Orchha and others continued to develop. While retaining the overall Mughal geometry, they took on selected asymmetrical forms, elaborate parterres, and exquisite water features. The garden of Deeg, for example, had a large elevated tank that supplied hundreds of fountains, each of which was fed by its own holes in the elevated tank. On special occasions, colored powders were placed in those holes, which led each fountain to have its own regulated flow and color, and when the fountains played, the ruler had large spherical rocks rolled on the stone roof of his pavilion to simulate the sound of thunder!

The fortress garden of Nagaur in the hyper-arid Marwar region of western Rajasthan achieved a beautiful synthesis of Mughal and Rajput garden forms (fig. 9-5). One of its chahar baghs appears rectangular but is actually a slightly rhomboid shape. Its main chahar bagh is square, but two quadrants were planted while the other two were shallow lotus pools. The elegance of these regional

FIGURE 9-5 The Ahhichatragarh palace-garden complex built by Mughal and Rajput rulers from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries on the citadel of Nagaur in the Marwar region of Rajasthan. Photograph by the author.

variations on Mughal and local garden design awaits further scholarly study, for they are some of the most exquisitely detailed garden spaces in South Asia.[47]

Eighteenth-century gardens were further characterized by increasing articulation of ornamental details. What they lost in spatial scale and imperial allusion, they sought to regain through heightened intimacy and taste. The Shiite courts of Lucknow and Hyderabad stand out as major centers of eighteenth-century Indo-Islamic garden design for funerary as well as palace, pleasure, and sometimes waterfront enhancement. Fresh attention is being given to the widespread gardens of the Deccan region of southern India, which includes a study of the poetics of garden scent.[48] Even Varanasi, the most sacred Hindu city on the Ganges River, boasted a few late Mughal gardens.[49] In some cases, such as the Rajput examples, this trend was artistically successful, while in others it lead to preciously small bulbous domes, overly reticulated cusped arches, and dramatically carved plastered surfaces that meant to imitate the more costly and elegant marble cladding of earlier times. The Sikh gardens in Punjab had a mixed record in these respects. While a garden known as the Hazuri Bagh, sited between Lahore Fort and the monumental Badshahi Masjid of Aurangzeb, is dwarfed by both of

these architectural complexes, other Sikh residential gardens in the Punjab add an important chapter to the legacy of Indo-Islamic garden history.[50]

Back in Delhi, garden construction continued to surround the large tombs of nobles such as Safdarjung and Najaf Khan, which marked a Shiite funerary area in Delhi and the relative rivalry and ascent of Shiite Lucknow. Safdarjung's tomb has unusually large water channels, which may have consumed more water than any of the larger imperial gardens of the city. The water system and planting design of Safdarjung's tomb have yet to be reconstructed even on a conjectural basis.

The last Mughal rulers sought to be buried near the Sufi Chishti shrine of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d. 1235 CE) in first capital city of the Delhi Sultanate, to the south of Shahjahanabad. Toward the end of the 1857 revolt, the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar II tried to flee there, but he and his retainers had to stop and seek refuge in Humayun's tomb-garden along the way. A British force captured them and executed the Mughal princes on the way back to Shahjahanabad. Unlike his ancestor Babur, who fled to the gardens outside Samarkand, the last Mughal did not escape nor did he return to Delhi after his banishment to Burma and his death there in 1862, where he remains buried in an unmarked grave.

The Afterlife of Mughal Gardens: Colonial and Postcolonial

Garden historian John Dixon Hunt has drawn attention to the importance of the continuing reception and reinterpretation of gardens long after their original construction, in this case through a century of late Mughal political decline (that nevertheless witnessed some outstanding local garden projects), a century and a half of colonial rule, and 60 years of postcolonial initiatives.[51] This certainly applies to Mughal gardens, which British travelers began to appropriate as part of the expanding political and economic domain of the East India Company. Various European entrepreneurs transformed tombs into residences, churches, clinics, and libraries, depending upon their special interests. In each case the garden made for comfortable surroundings and recreation especially for the British who had by then developed sophisticated theories of garden history at home. Agro-horticultural and ancient monument protection organizations were created to promote related interests in the colonies. Viceroy George Nathaniel Curzon (1899–1905) made early interventions at the Taj Mahal, while a later viceroy raised the question of how much might be made by selling the Taj Mahal for its salvage value! In one of the first art historical writings on gardens in India, E. B. Havell in 1904 lamented the rapid decline of those gardens, which he attributed to the loss of indigenous expertise and the growing imitation of western garden fashions.[52] It was a familiar romantic colonial lament, which contributed

in small ways to the support of local gardeners and the emergence of Mughal garden history.

The first groundbreaking book on Mughal gardens was written in 1913 by the wife of a British officer stationed in India, Constance Mary Villiers-Stuart.[53] She hoped it might influence the landscape design for the new colonial capital in New Delhi. Serious treatment of garden history and conservation were set back, however, by the cursory treatment of the topic in the archaeologist Sir John Marshall's otherwise enduring *Conservation Manual* of 1927.[54] Most civic and pleasure gardens were lost due to land pressures, but even tomb-gardens and fortress garden courtyards were dramatically altered in part because the horticultural branch of the Archaeological Survey of India became largely a maintenance operation.

Postcolonial Mughal gardens

With independence in 1947 and the partition of India and Pakistan, many Mughal gardens and forts became refugee camps on both sides of the border. Over time, they acquired somewhat different meanings in each country, as a representation of the Islamic garden in Pakistan, and of national cultural heritage in India. In both cases, however, Mughal gardens have been publicly perceived largely as places to relax, walk, and picnic with family and friends. As historical gardens continue to be encroached upon and reconstructed, however, "new Mughal gardens" are being created for South Asian diaspora communities in Britain and in the luxury homes of new moguls.[55] While the field of Mughal garden history grew slowly during the 1960s and 1970s, it advanced substantially during the late twentieth century when garden archaeology projects in Agra, Delhi, Nagaur, and Kabul shed new light on garden history and technology.[56]

The Nizamuddin project vignette introduced at the beginning of this chapter is going still further by linking cultural heritage conservation of Humayun's tomb-garden with urban ecological design at a large-scale arboretum immediately north of the tomb-complex, and the socioeconomic development of the dense Muslim community in the Nizamuddin basti neighborhood in south Delhi. The arboretum will help visitors understand the native and adapted vegetation and their microenvironments that have influenced human settlement and architectural design in Delhi.[57] The Nizamuddin basti programs include educational programs in a local school for which the building is a learning aid.[58] In so doing, the greater Nizamuddin project draws upon the full depth of Mughal garden history, from its antecedents in Central Asia and Sultanate Delhi to its pivotal role in the expansion of dynastic territory and symbolic meaning, its pathos for the last Mughal rulers, and its waves of reuse and conservation to the present day. In each of these cases, the changing cultural spaces of Mughal gardens have an inner, an outer, and a dynamic dimension that have shaped the identity of a region and the development of an art form.

Notes

1 Ruggles, *Islamic Gardens and Landscapes*; Wescoat, "Mughal Gardens."
2 Jones, *A Mirror of Princes*; Wescoat and Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Mughal Gardens*, 5–29.
3 Though see Smith and Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection*; Wescoat, "From the Gardens of the *Qur'an*."
4 Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology*; Parihar, *Some Aspects of Indo-Islamic Architecture*; Wescoat and Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Mughal Gardens*, 5–29.
5 Aga Khan Trust for Culture, *Project Brief*.
6 Ruggles, "Humayun's Tomb and Garden."
7 Hasan, *A Guide to Nizamuddin*; Nizami, *The Life and Times*.
8 Golombek, "The Gardens of Timur"; Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, vol. 1, 174–80.
9 Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403–1406*; Lentz, "Memory and Ideology."
10 Golombek, "Timur's Gardens."
11 Allen, *A Catalogue*.
12 Wescoat, "Gardens vs. Citadels."
13 Welch, "Gardens that Babur Did Not Like."
14 Siddiqui, "The Discovery of Architectural Remains."
15 Siddiqui, "Discovery of Fourteenth and Fifteenth-Century Historic Garden Remains."
16 Sharma, *Early Persian Poetry*.
17 Wescoat, "Gardens of Invention and Exile"; Wescoat, "Ritual Movement and Territoriality."
18 Also known as Sher Shah Suri (i.e. of the Sur dynasty).
19 Brand, "Orthodoxy, Innovation, and Revival"; Asher, "Babur and the Timurid Char-bagh."
20 Parodi, "Humayun's Sojourn."
21 Habib, *Akbar and His India*; Wink, *Akbar*.
22 Subtelny, "A Medieval Persian Agricultural Manual in Context"; and Subtelny, "Mirak-i Sayyid Ghiyas."
23 Brand and Lowry, *Akbar's India*; Brand *et al.*, *Fatehpur-Sikri*.
24 Koch, "My Garden Is Hindustan."
25 Klingelhofer, "The Jahangiri Mahal."
26 Brand, "Mughal Ritual in Pre-Mughal Cities."
27 Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, 72.
28 Koch, "Notes on the Painted and Sculptural Decoration of Nur Jahan's Pavilions."
29 Brand, "Shahdara Gardens of Lahore"; Brand, "Surveying Shahdara."
30 Wescoat *et al.*, "Shahdara Gardens of Lahore."
31 Beach *et al.*, *King of the World*.
32 Known in Europe as *pietra dura*.
33 Begley and Desai, *Taj Mahal: The Illumined Tomb*.
34 Koch, "'My Garden Is Hindustan'."
35 Begley, "The Myth of the Taj Mahal."
36 Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal*.
37 Moynihan, *The Moonlight Garden*, 5–29.
38 E.g., Koran, 47:12 and many other verses.

39 Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal.*
40 Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire.*
41 Ehlers and Krafft, *Shahjahanabad/Old Delhi.*
42 Blake, "The Khanah Bagh in Mughal India."
43 Parodi, "Bibi-ka Maqbara."
44 Ernst, *Eternal Garden.*
45 Koch, "The Zahara Bagh."
46 Krynicki and Hamid, *Captive Princess.*
47 Joffee and Ruggles, "Rajput Gardens and Landscapes"; Singh "Conserving the Spirit of a Rajput Garden."
48 Ali, "Fragrance, Symmetry and Light"; Hussain, *Scent in the Islamic Garden.*
49 Rotzer and Deokar, "Mughal Gardens in Benaras."
50 Dar, *Historical Gardens of Lahore*; Parihar, *Some Aspects of Indo-Islamic Architecture.*
51 Hunt, *The Afterlife of Gardens.*
52 Havell, "Indian Gardens."
53 Villiers-Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals*; but see Wescoat, "Mughal Gardens."
54 Marshall, *Conservation Manual.*
55 The "mogul" spelling has been used for tycoons of the modern era.
56 Moynihan, *The Moonlight Garden*, 15–42; Francke-Vogt *et al.*, "Bagh-e Babur."
57 Aga Khan Trust for Culture, *Annual Report 2008–2009.*
58 Aga Khan Trust for Culture, *Annual Report 2008–2009.*

References

Aga Khan Trust for Culture. *Annual Report 2008–2009.* Delhi: Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

Aga Khan Trust for Culture. *Project Brief: The Revitalization of the Gardens of Emperor Humayun's Tomb, Delhi, India.* Geneva: Aga Khan Trust for Culture, 2003.

Ali, Daud, ed. "Fragrance, Symmetry and Light." Special issue of *Deccan Studies.* (2007): entire issue.

Allen, Terry. *A Catalogue of the Toponyms and Monuments of Timurid Herat.* Cambridge, MA: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1981.

Asher, Catherine. "Babur and the Timurid Char Bagh: Use and Meaning." *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1–2 (1991): 46–55.

Beach, Milo Cleveland, Ebba Koch, and W. M. Thackston. *King of the World: The Padshahnama, an Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle.* London: Royal Collection, 1997.

Begley, W. "The Myth of the Taj Mahal and a New Theory of its Symbolic Meaning." *The Art Bulletin* 61 no. 1 (1979): 7–37.

Begley, W. E., and Z. A. Desai. *Taj Mahal: The Illumined Tomb: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Mughal and European Documentary Sources.* Cambridge, MA: The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1989.

Bernier, François. *Travels in the Mogul Empire: AD 1656–1668.* Translated by A. Constable. 1914; rpt. Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1979.

Blake, Stephen P. "The Khanah Bagh in Mughal India: House Gardens in the Palaces and Mansions of the Great Men of Shahjahanabad." In *Mughal Gardens*, edited by

J. L. Wescoat Jr. and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, 171–88. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996.

Brand, Michael. "Mughal Ritual in Pre-Mughal Cities. The Case of Jahangir at Mandu." *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1–2 (1991): 8–17.

Brand, Michael. "Orthodoxy, Innovation, and Revival: Considerations of the Past in Imperial Mughal Tomb Architecture," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 323–34.

Brand, Michael. "The Shahdara Gardens of Lahore." In *Mughal Gardens*, edited by J. L. Wescoat Jr. and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, 189–212. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996.

Brand, Michael. "Surveying Shahdara." In *The Mughal Garden*, edited by M. Hussain, A. Rehman, and J. L. Wescoat Jr., 123–8. Lahore: Ferozsons, 1996.

Brand, Michael, and Glenn D. Lowry. *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory.* New York and London: Asia Society Galleries, distributed by Sotheby Publications, 1985.

Brand, Michael, Glenn D. Lowry, Ziyaud-Din A. Desai, Attilio Petruccioli, and Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture. *Fatehpur-Sikri: A Sourcebook.* Cambridge, MA: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1985.

Clavijo, Ruy Gonzalez. *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403–1406.* Translated by Guy le Strange. London: George Routledge & Sons, 1928.

Dar, Saifur Rahman. *Historical Gardens of Lahore.* Lahore: Aziz Publishers, 1982.

Ehlers, Eckart, and Thomas Krafft, eds. *Shahjahanabad/Old Delhi: Tradition and Colonial Change.* 2nd edition. New Delhi: Manohar, 2003.

Ernst, Carl. *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Franke-Vogt, Ute, K. Bartl, and T. Urban. "Bagh-e Babur, Kabul: Excavations in a Mughal Garden." *South Asian Archaeology* 2003 (2005): 539–55. Online summary accessed June 11, 2007. http://www.dainst.org/index_2888_en.html

Golombek, Lisa. "The Gardens of Timur: New Perspectives." *Muqarnas* 12 (1995): 137–47.

Golombek, Lisa. "Timur's Gardens: The Feminine Perspective." In *The Mughal Garden*, edited by M. Hussain, A. Rehman, and J. L. Wescoat Jr., 29–36. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996.

Golombek, Lisa, and Donald Wilber. *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan*, 2 vols. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Habib, Irfan, ed. *Akbar and His India.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Hasan, Zafar. *A Guide to Nizamuddin.* Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, no. 10. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1922.

Havell, E. B. "Indian Gardens." *House and Garden* 6 (2004): 213–20 and 268–74.

Hunt, John Dixon. *The Afterlife of Gardens.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

Hussain, Ali Akbar. *Scent in the Islamic Garden: A Study of Deccani Urdu Literary Sources.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Jahangir, Nur ad-Din Muhammad. *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri.* Translated by A. Rogers, edited by H. Beveridge. 1909–14; rpt. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1968.

Joffee, Jennifer, and D. Fairchild Ruggles. "Rajput Gardens and Landscapes." In *Middle East Garden Traditions: Unity and Diversity*, edited by M. Conan, 269–86. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2007.

Jones, Dalu, ed. *A Mirror of Princes: The Mughals and the Medici*. Bombay: Marg Publications, 1987.

Klingelhofer, William G. "The Jahangiri Mahal of the Agra Fort: Expression and Experience in Early Mughal Architecture." *Muqarnas* 5 (1988): 153–69.

Koch, Ebba. *The Complete Taj Mahal: and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2006.

Koch, Ebba. *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Koch, Ebba. "'My Garden Is Hindustan': The Mughal Padshah's Realization of a Political Metaphor." In *Middle East Garden Traditions: Unity and Diversity*, edited by Michel Conan, 159–175. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2007.

Koch, Ebba. "Notes on the Painted and Sculptural Decoration of Nur Jahan's Pavilions in the Ram Bagh (Bagh-i Nur Afshan) at Agra." In *Facets of Indian Art*, edited by Robert Skelton, 51–65. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1986.

Koch, Ebba. "The Zahara Bagh (Bagh-i Jahanara) at Agra." *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 2,1 (1986): 30–7.

Krynicki, Annie, and Enjum Hamid. *Captive Princess: Zebunissa, Daughter of Emperor Aurangzeb*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Lentz, Thomas. "Memory and Ideology in the Timurid Garden." In *Mughal Gardens*, edited by J. L. Wescoat and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, 31–58. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996.

Marshall, John. *Conservation Manual: Hand Book for the Use of Archeological Officers and Others Entrusted with the Care of Ancient Monuments*. Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, India, 1923.

Moynihan, Elizabeth B., ed. *The Moonlight Garden: New Discoveries at the Taj Mahal*. Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and University of Washington Press, 2000.

Nizami, K. A. *The Life and Times of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya*. Delhi: Idarah–i-Idabiyat, 1991.

Parihar, Subhash. *Some Aspects of Indo-Islamic Architecture*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1999.

Parodi, Laura. "The Bibi-ka Maqbara in Aurangabad. A Landmark of Mughal Power in the Deccan?" *East & West* 48, nos. 3–4 (1998): 349–83.

Parodi, Laura. "Humayun's Sojourn at the Safavid Court." In *Proceedings of the 5th Conference of the Societas Iranologica Europaea*, edited by A. Panaino and R. Zipoli, vol. II, 135–57. Milan: Mimesis, 2006.

Rotzer, Klaus, and Khandu Deokar. "Mughal Gardens in Benaras and Its Neighbourhood in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries." In *Confluence of Cultures: French Contributions to Indo-Persian Studies*, edited by F. N. Delvoye, 131–69. Delhi: Manohar, 1994.

Ruggles, D. Fairchild. "Humayun's Tomb and Garden: Typologies and Visual Order." In *Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires*, edited by A. Petruccioli, 173–86. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997.

Ruggles, D. Fairchild. *Islamic Gardens and Landscapes*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

Sharma, Sunil. *Early Persian Poetry at the Indian Frontier: Masud Sad Salman of Lahore*. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001.

Siddiqui, W. H. "The Discovery of Architectural Remains of a Pre-Mughal Terraced Garden at New Delhi." In *Archaeology and History: Essays in Memory of Sh. A. Ghosh*, edited

by B. M. Panda and B. D. Chattopadhyaya, 573–77. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1987.

Siddiqui, W. H. "Discovery of Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Historic Garden Remains in Delhi and Champanir (Gujrat)." *Journal of Central Asian Civilization* 24, no. 1 (July 2001): 168–76.

Singh, Priyaleen. "Conserving the Spirit of a Rajput Garden – Moolsagar, Jaisalmer." *LA!* 5.1 no. 17 (2007): 24–7.

Smith, Jane, and Yvonne Haddad. *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Subtelny, Maria Eva. "A Medieval Persian Agricultural Manual in Context: The Irshad Al-Zirà in Late Timurid and Early Safavid Khorasan." *Studia Iranica* 22 (1993): 167–217.

Subtelny, Maria Eva. "Mirak-i Sayyid Ghiyas and the Timurid Tradition of Landscape Architecture." *Studia Iranica* 24 (1995): 19–60.

Villiers-Stuart, C. M. *Gardens of the Great Mughals*. London: A. & C. Black, 1913.

Welch, Anthony. "Gardens that Babur Did Not Like: Landscape, Water and Architecture for the Sultans of Delhi." In *Mughal Gardens*, edited by J. L. Wescoat Jr. and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, 59–94. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996.

Wescoat, James L. Jr. "From the Gardens of the *Qur'an* to the Gardens of Lahore." *Landscape Research* 20 (1995): 19–29.

Wescoat, James L. Jr. "Gardens of Invention and Exile: The Precarious Context of Mughal Garden Design during the Reign of Humayun (1530–1556)." *Journal of Garden History* 10 (1990): 106–16.

Wescoat, James L. Jr. "Gardens vs. Citadels: The Territorial Context of Early Mughal Gardens." In *Garden History: Issues, Approaches, Methods*, edited by J. D. Hunt, 331–58. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1992.

Wescoat, James L. Jr. "Mughal Gardens: The Re-emergence of Comparative Possibilities and the Wavering of Practical Concerns." In *Perspectives on Garden Histories*, edited by M. Conan, 107–26. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1999.

Wescoat, James L. Jr. "Ritual Movement and Territoriality: A Study of Landscape Transformation during the Reign of Humayun." *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Region Research Centre* 1–2 (1993): 56–63.

Wescoat, James L. Jr., and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, eds. *Mughal Gardens: Sources, Places, Representations, Prospects*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks and Harvard University Press, 1996.

Wescoat, James L. Jr., Michael Brand, and Naeem Mir. "The Shahdara Gardens of Lahore: Site Documentation and Spatial Analysis." *Pakistan Archaeology* 25 (1993): 333–66.

Wink, André. *Akbar*. Makers of the Muslim World. London: Oneworld. 2008.

Further Reading

Brand, Michael. "Fatehpur Sikri: Dargah of Shaykh Salim Chishti." *Marg* 56 no. 1 (September, 2004): 24–35.

Findly, Ellison B. "Jahangir's Vow of Non-Violence." *Journal of the American Orientalist Society* 107 (1987): 245–56.

Findly, Ellison B. *Nur Jahan: Empress of Mughal India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Lowry, Glenn D. "Delhi in the 16th Century." *Environmental Design* 1 no. 1 (1984): 7–17.

Lowry, Glenn D. "Humayun's Tomb: Form, Function and Meaning in Early Mughal Architecture." *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 133–48.

Moynihan, Elizabeth B. "The Lotus Garden Palace of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur." *Muqarnas* 5 (1988): 134–52.

O'Kane, Bernard. *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1987.

Shaheer, Muhammad. "Mughal Gardens." *LA!* 5.1 no. 17 (2007): 28–30.

Sharma, Jyoti P. "The British Treatment of Historic Gardens in the Indian Subcontinent: The Transformation of Nawab Safdarjung's Tomb Complex from a Funerary Garden to a Public Park." *Garden History*, 35 no. 2 (2007): 210–28.

Siddiqui, Iqtidar Hussain. "Water Works and Irrigation System in India during Pre-Mughal Times." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 29 no. 1 (1986): 52–77.

Welch, Anthony. "Hydraulic Architecture in Medieval India: The Tughluqs." *Environmental Design* 2 nos. 1–2 (1985): 74–81.

Wescoat, James L. Jr. "Early Water Systems in Mughal India." *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* (special issue on water in Islamic architecture and design) 2 no. 1 (1985): 50–7.

Wescoat, James L. Jr. "Gardens of Conquest and Transformation: Lessons from the Earliest Mughal Gardens in India." *Landscape Journal* 10 no. 2 (1991): 105–14.

Wilber, Donald. "The Timurid Court: Life in Gardens and Tents." *Iran* 17 (1979): 127–33.

Part IV

Artists

10

Old Methods in a New Era: What Can Connoisseurship Tell Us about Rukn-ud-din?

Molly Emma Aitken and
Shanane Davis with Yana Van Dyke

Connoisseurship has developed a bad name over the past 30 years. Graduate art history programs have mostly ceased to teach connoisseurship, but the art market depends on it and many scholarly arguments could not be advanced without its judicious deployment. Despite its unpopularity in other fields of art historical inquiry, in South Asian painting studies connoisseurship remains dominant. Examination of our field's dependence on the connoisseur's outmoded methods is long overdue.

Instead of revisiting the criticisms that led to connoisseurship's fall from grace, this essay frames exercises in the connoisseur's methods within a critique. The essay is for students, teachers, those with a general interest in art historical methods, and connoisseurs in the art market. It also makes contributions that should be interesting to scholars of South Asian painting. Broadly speaking, it is about one of the connoisseur's central tasks: the attribution of works of art to specific artists. Specifically, it is about a well-known master named Rukn-ud-din who painted at the Bikaner court in the mid- to late seventeenth century. (Bikaner was one of the larger independent kingdoms that ruled in what is now the Indian state of Rajasthan.) The essay presents tactics the authors have used to determine whether a group of previously unknown works are by Rukn-ud-din.

Several of the pictures examined in this essay bear shorthand inscriptions that appear to identify them as Rukn-ud-din's. Others are uninscribed. All come from a collection of about 600 drawings, paintings, and preparatory materials that were

purchased in Bikaner in the 1950s by the current owner's uncle from a painter named Hisam-ud-din (the current owner wishes to remain anonymous). Hisam-ud-din was a direct descendant of the Lalanis, a branch of the Usta clan that had painted for the Bikaner rulers since the late sixteenth century. Rukn-ud-din was from another branch of Hisam-ud-din's family, the Umrani Ustas. However, he is thought to have been head of the Bikaner royal workshop in the later 1600s, and we guess these works came into the Lalanis' possession when the Lalani painter Nathu took over the leadership of the workshop from Rukn-ud-din's son Ibrahim.[1] The works raise difficult and important questions, above all because they associate Rukn-ud-din with a style that is not currently recognized as his. If the inscriptions are valid, we have to rethink how we identify his hand, who he was, and what he meant to his tradition.

Our essay will proceed from a general discussion of master painters to look at what is currently known about Rukn-ud-din. It will present the challenge to received wisdom that the drawings in question appear to pose and go on to lay out evidence for whether or not these drawings and related materials should be accepted as Rukn-ud-din's, as Davis proposed in her book *The Bikaner School.* Our metanarrative will be the process itself as we ask readers to question our methods, their reliability, and the utility of our findings to the future of our field.

A first step in judging any attribution is evaluating the scholars who make it. Shanane Davis, while not trained as an art historian, brings an expertise in gemology to the project, employing many of the looking skills painting connoisseurs also use. She developed her knowledge of Bikaner painting largely through the study of the private collection in question and in 2008 published a book on her findings entitled *The Bikaner School: Usta Artisans and Their Heritage.* Molly Emma Aitken, who wrote the foreword to that book, is the author of *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, holds a PhD in South Asian art history, and is currently a university professor teaching Asian art. For technical analysis in this study, Davis and Aitken have called on the expertise of Yana van Dyke, who is paper conservator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and who has worked extensively with paintings on paper.[2]

A few words about our collaborative format: egos dog connoisseurship and precipitated its fall from favor. By working together, we hope to highlight the need to bring multiple points of view into conversation to arrive at successful attributions. We have asked van Dyke to join us because she brings a level of technical observation to the questions we ask that is too often neglected by connoisseurs. Her presence has made us aware of how sorely we need a database of information available on the microscopic scale: there is a whole world in the microscope and available through technical testing that we overlook with our naked eyes.

Not all relationships are to the benefit of scholarship, however. It is important to remember that connoisseurship can be linked to commerce. Art historians may have friendships with dealers and collectors and they are not always financially disinterested. Davis is in a position to make money if the drawings in question were to be sold, and those drawings would be worth more if they could be shown

to be by Rukn-ud-din.[3] The authors feel that their scholarly honesty outweighs the urgings of greed. However, we ask our readers not to take our word for anything: we will simply lay out our evidence and conjectures.

This essay originated in a curious comedy. Each time Aitken insisted that a drawing Davis had shown her "could not possibly be by Rukn-ud-din," Davis would say, "but it has a signature." The half-finished painting that stretched Aitken's credulity to breaking point is clearly signed "rukan." The disagreements that followed initially suggested a rich opportunity to expose students to the profound subjectivity of the attribution process. Within a few weeks, however, as a friendship and trust developed between the authors, they – we – began to agree. Psychologists might have something to say about the social factors in such a process, the warmth generated by stimulating discussion that might influence concord, but that is beyond the scope of what we are qualified to comment on. We can only admit the chemistry of our collaboration in the interests of full disclosure. Such factors are intrinsic to a process that is irredeemably unscientific.

Why Individual Masters Matter

The history of connoisseurship's fall from grace is too long to be traced here, but it stems from decades of scholarship that sought to turn the study of art from its obsession with authorship and its links to the marketplace towards questions of historical context, ideology, gender, and sexuality. Let us begin, then, by attempting to historicize the process of attribution with a basic question: did it matter to seventeenth-century viewers who made a work of art?

Over the past century, scholars have rediscovered many Rajput court painters and have recently dedicated entire monographs to single masters.[4] As this article goes to press, a book is being prepared that will present Rajput court painting through the rubric of the artist in a collection of essays each dedicated to a renowned painter.[5] Are we witnessing a Vasari-ization of South Asian art as European prejudices infiltrate the field? Euro-American art has habituated us to the idea of individual genius, and the belief that an artist's individuality is important to the interpretation of his art. However, there *is* emic reason to focus on individual artists in the study of Rajput painting.

There was no concept of genius at the Rajput courts, but a master who excelled at painting could be held in high esteem. Over time, Rajput patrons and artists may have been influenced by the Mughal court, where the most talented painters were rewarded with titles like Nadir az-Zaman, "Wonder of the Age." The Mughal historian Abul Fazl (late seventeenth to early eighteenth century), who worked for the emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605), singled out a number of masters for praise, calling them "the forerunners on the high road of art."[6] This despite the fact that early Mughal workshop practice often required artists to work collaboratively so that a finished work was typically not by a single hand. Collaboration became less common under Akbar's successor, Jahangir

(r. 1605–27), who boasted he could distinguish an artist's style by an eyebrow alone, but even then Mughal culture did not encourage artists to develop obviously dissimilar stylistic signatures.[7]

At the Rajput courts, artists such as Pandit Seu of Guler, Nihal Chand of Kishangarh, and Bagta at Deogarh, who worked during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, created novel stylistic conventions that tie their names to a specific, easily recognized idiom. However, there is no reason to think that their innovations were intended to cultivate personal signatures, as their styles were invented in the service of their patrons and were perpetuated by their successors to become more family and court styles than flamboyantly individual styles. In general, practices did not evolve to bolster individual artistic reputations and there was no fetishization of artistic talent such as developed in Europe. Royal patrons tended to prize a high level of homogeneity so that all of Maharaja Man Singh (r. 1803–43) of Jodhpur's artists, for example, shared a distinctive overarching court style as did almost every Udaipur painter between the early and late 1700s.[8]

To appreciate an individual painter would mostly, therefore, have entailed appreciating his mastery of the repertoire, a certain freshness, a *subtle* but exquisite distinction, and only rarely, startling originality. Indeed nuance may have been valued precisely because it allowed the connoisseur to discover his or her man through an eyebrow, as Jahangir claimed he could do, rather than by means of something more obvious. Most courts acknowledged artists in the occasional inscription, but attitudes towards painting were not the same at every court. At Udaipur, the capital of another independent kingdom in the region, subject matter was more important than artistry. That Udaipur patrons recognized individual talents seems almost necessary, however, to explain why painters like Jai Ram and Bagta (even before leaving Udaipur) painted with a pride, intelligence, and attention to craft that the local court tradition mostly did not seem to have required of its artists, who labored first and foremost in the service of royal legitimation.

Bikaner lies at the opposite end of the spectrum from Udaipur. The products of the Bikaner workshop, and much of what we know about patronage there, indicate that its rulers and nobility held their artists in high esteem and took the appreciation of artistry very seriously. Hermann Goetz pioneered the study of Bikaner's arts in the early twentieth century.[9] Since then, Naval Krishna has made important advances, publishing extensively on the court's painters and patronage practices on the basis of vital information in court documents and inscriptions.[10] Recently, Davis has brought further documents to light, together with a genealogy of the Usta clan of Bikaner painters, which she acquired from the Ustas' living descendant, the Lalani painter Jamil Usta.

In the seventeenth century, Bikaner was the only major Rajput court that frequently named its painters in inscriptions, letters, and other documents. Consequently, we know that Bikaner employed two groups of artists in this early period: those whom Bikaner's rulers had lured from Mughal employ in Delhi

and those belonging to the Usta family of artisans, who may have immigrated from Herat in the late sixteenth century.[11] The Mughal trained artists included the *patasahi*, or imperial painter, Balmukund, Ali Raza, and Raza's sons Jamal and Hasan.[12] The Usta painters descend from two brothers and are known as the Lalanis and the Umranis after their progenitors, the brothers Lal Muhammed and Umar-ud-din. The Lalani painters of the seventeenth century were Shah Muhammad, Nur Muhammed (Nure), Nathu, Gul Muhammed, Muhammed, Hasam-ud-din (Hasamdi), Murad (not Murad, son of Luft), Qasim, Ahmad, Abdul Qadir, and Gullu. Their Umrani contemporaries were Rukn-ud-din, his brother Isa, and his son Ibrahim.

Davis has published records that throw some light on how painters were compensated at Bikaner.[13] The norm was gifts of 10 to 15 rupees or one to a handful of *bighas* (approx. one third to half an acre) of land. But rewards could be higher. Naval Krishna has published a document that records the gift of Rasisar to Rukn-ud-din and his family, and Gajendra Singh Chouhan has since translated another document that records the same transaction.[14] Rasisar became the Usta Mohalla or Usta neighborhood that is now part of Bikaner proper. Davis has also located another document that certifies Maharaja Anup Singh's grant of 2,000 bighas (approx. 800 acres) of land to a favorite, Nathu, who traveled with him on campaign.[15] In these records, we find the painter placed on a par with a member of the minor nobility, his contributions recognized far above those of other craftspeople. Indeed, as Krishna informs us, the Ustas' horses and elephants were maintained in the royal stables, and they had permission to "ride all the way up to the courtyard adjoining the Maharaja's Darbar hall."[16] The painter seems to have enjoyed an unusually high degree of respect at Bikaner. But how else do we ascertain his status?

Rulers were the painter's main support. That a good ruler was expected to appreciate the art explains the histories of almost unbroken dynastic patronage of painting at most of the major and some of the minor Rajput kingdoms. However, the connoisseur's love of painting may have thrived somewhat adjacent to these official lines of patronage. Jaipur records named individuals who stand out for their commissions and collecting activities – among them queens and a prime minister.[17]

Painters were also connoisseurs; the collection itself is evidence. That Hisam-ud-din Usta owned these drawings, half-finished paintings, and other preparatory materials and that he inherited a wealth of oral knowledge about them indicates the high degree of historical consciousness and pride with which his family regarded its labors. Many of the materials in the collection are not polished works of art: they are traces of thought processes, experiments, and compositional ideas. They exist today because they were deliberately preserved; they were preserved because they were valued. They were valued because they nourished a sophisticated, *historical* knowledge of the tradition that was essential to its continuation.

It would be fascinating to know whether this level of knowledge was cultivated outside painters' families. It is worth pointing to the Persian tradition from which

the Ustas understand themselves to hail. In Persian culture, such drawings and fragments were sometimes preserved and cherished by patrons in albums called *muraqqas*.[18] The Ustas may have perpetuated a romance of this level of patron engagement from the past, understanding their cache to contain a level of knowledge that was traditionally part of the pleasures their art afforded. Or perhaps such knowledge was simply the domain of the workshop. After all, the Indic concept of connoisseurship focused not on attribution but on the emotional sensibilities of the viewer, what one painting inscription called "the joyous appreciation of pictures."[19]

Even today, the Ustas regard Rukn-ud-din as one of their greatest masters. Until the collection was purchased in the 1950s, the Lalanis treasured his works though they did not belong to his branch of the Usta family. Both court and informal inscriptions name the master, further suggesting that his authorship was important at the Bikaner court and in the workshop. This, then, is the background for our decision to pursue attributions to Rukn-ud-din: the fact of his hand mattered to his original viewers and to his descendents.

The Problem

The pictures in question consist of 30 images that Davis has attributed in her book and elsewhere to Rukn-ud-din. These images include monochrome and tinted drawings, paintings, sketches, and pounces (pounces are images outlined in tiny pinpricks through which charcoal dust was "pounced" to allow their transfer on to another piece of paper). Space in this chapter does not permit us to examine all these works, many of which, in any case, have been introduced in Davis' book. Instead, we will focus here on seven drawings and an unfinished painting.

We are calling the drawings *siyah kalam*. Siyah was a lampblack said sometimes to have been infused with a minute touch of gold, though van Dyke has not detected gold in the siyah kalam discussed here. *Kalam* means pen or brush. Often siyah kalam were finely wrought monochrome paintings produced for public consumption. According to the Lalanis' descendant, Jamil Usta, a true master had to be able to paint siyah kalam to prove his skill. In a testament to the high regard with which Bikaner's artists held even preparatory and exploratory imagery, Jamil calls both polished and sketch-like drawings in the family collection siyah kalam. This is terminology used today by several families of traditional artists in India. Accordingly, we will here understand siyah kalam to signify both sketches and highly crafted monochrome pictures, (though we recognize that contemporary usage is not a definitive indicator of past practices).

We have divided our 30 pictures into three categories that we term Groups A, B, and C, as follows: Group A denotes those in a style that resembles Rukn-ud-din's; those in Group B are in a slightly breezier style; while Group C designates loose, stylized sketches that look more eighteenth- than seventeenth-century and

that a scholar would not associate with Rukn-ud-din based on his known works. This essay will concentrate on Groups A and C. Within these groups, 13 bear short inscriptions apparently written by a single hand: variously "ru," "ruk," and "rukan." These inscriptions appear on two finished paintings, an unfinished painting, and 10 sketches. The inscribed sketches and unfinished painting are *precisely* those that are not in a recognizably Rukn-ud-din style.

Three Paintings that Resemble Rukn-ud-din's and Are Inscribed to Him

Three works help orient us: they are inscribed to Rukn-ud-din and they are in a style that resembles his. One, "ru," depicts a *div* (demon) on a composite elephant in pale, almost chalky colors. The second work is a *khaqa* (a pinpricked composition), blurry with charcoal that was once pounced through its holes.[20] "Ru" appears on its recto, over an image of three ladies pricked with a delicacy and precision characteristic of Rukn-ud-din's hand (if one can compare holes with lines, which we think we can). The third work inscribed "ru" is a fragment picturing a raja on a horse aristocratic with nervous equine energy. This last work matches a published equestrian portrait of Maharaja Anup Singh that was inscribed to Rukn-ud-din. We will investigate "ru" and in due course, but for now let us provisionally trust them as indications of Rukn-ud-din's authorship (as other scholars have). These three inscribed paintings, which are plausibly in Rukn-ud-din's style, suggest that the Lalanis' collection contained works by Rukn-ud-din. By virtue of their style, they also give validity to other images in the collection that bear the same shorthand "ru."

Inscribed Paintings and Drawings in the Style of Rukn-ud-din: Attribution on the Basis of Style

As others have pointed out, connoisseurship is intuitive.[21] It is based on years of looking at multiple examples of a particular type of object: anything from enamels to papers. Human beings are highly attuned to patterns of similarity and difference, perhaps because they use those patterns to distinguish human faces. Whereas we instinctively become connoisseurs of faces because it is socially essential, we teach ourselves to distinguish other types of subtly different things, and so that process is more artificial. Putting this process into words is never fully satisfactory. Explaining why you think a painting is by a particular artist is like trying to describe a friend's face: two brown eyes, high cheek bones and slender lips do not do justice to the subtle contours and nuances of expression that comprise an individual's palpable uniqueness. The effort is necessary, however, to keep the connoisseur sharp and to make it possible for others to evaluate what she is seeing.

In the search for originals, the arch connoisseur Morelli depended on minute particularities of an artist's hand that others would least think to imitate: the way the artist depicted ears or fingers, for example (recalling Jahangir's own curiously Morellian-sounding approach to connoisseurship).[22] Morelli thought such elements were less likely to conform to cultural conventions and would therefore be more reliably autographic. There are moments of Morelli in the analyses that follow, but we focus on a whole range of characteristics, many of them obvious and eminently repeatable. We do not extensively rely on Morellian minutiae for the simple reasons that (1) efforts were not made until the twentieth century to fake the work of known Rajput masters, so that we are not attempting to distinguish originals from fakes here, and (2) we are not convinced that there was such a reliable level of inimitable individual detail in Rajput court painting.[23] Individuality was somewhat valued and was allowed subtly to express itself, but an artist's training began with its effacement in the studious, repetitive reproduction of conventional ears, fingers, and eyes.

For now, let us analyze in depth three uninscribed siyah kalam in styles that can reasonably be associated with known works by Rukn-ud-din: pictures of "the mood of fear" (*Bhebas*), of Kedara Ragini (a musical mode featuring an ascetic), and of Hindola Raga (a musical mode associated with lovers on a swing). All three pictures evince characteristics favored by artists like Nathu, Ali Raza, and Nur-ud-din, who were employed at Bikaner during the second half of the seventeenth century when Rukn-ud-din was painting at the Bikaner court. Mughal painting was highly esteemed at Bikaner during this time, and all these artists worked in a manner significantly inflected by the fashion of romantic idealism and exquisite precision popular with the artists working for the Mughal ruler Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58). Mughal-style portraits were common, as were images of beautiful women gathered together for wine and music. Later in the century, as tastes began to shift away from the Mughal aesthetic, love scenes illustrating *ragamalas* (musical modes), Keshavadas' *Rasikapriya* (connoisseur's delights), and *baramasas* (the twelve months) became more prevalent. Throughout this period, notwithstanding slight shifts in aesthetic prejudices, the court style was distinguished by a high degree of craft and detailing, and an almost silky perfection that tended to immerse outlines beneath soft, gently modeled, luminous surfaces. Quiet colors were favored, though against a lavish use of gold paint and with moments of orange and red brightness. The human form was rendered with long, slender limbs and a supple grace.

No painter exercised a fixed variant on this period style, however, so that one work inscribed to a master should not be expected to make a definitive statement about all a viewer might expect from him. This makes our job difficult. Take Nathu, for example. A painting of a woman looking in the mirror, inscribed to him, is an almost chilly perfection, a painting about beauty that cares for little more than its surface in the mirror.[24] The colors are mostly in a range of cools akin to the pastels of Persian painting. The symmetry of the page is broken by a heavy mass of trees on the left, their diagonal canopy answered by the upward

slant of steps below to meet at the woman's reflection in the mirror. These diversions from the center do not fully counterbalance the heaviness of the underlying grid: horizontals and verticals remain the dominant forces. The women are long and slender but sturdy as if with the strength of the grid that organizes them. This Nathu does not lead one to expect the painting inscribed to Nathu in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which disperses its figures into the corners and between the interstices of its grid to create a dominant diagonal.[25] The colors of that picture are softer and its figures return us to the small faced, slender delicacies that were more typical of Bikaner painting at the time and more typical, too, of Rukn-ud-din. From the first then, we confront uncertainties. How differently did Nathu paint from one work to the next? Can we, in fact, trust inscriptions? Perhaps one of these is not Nathu's after all. Welcome to the wonderful world of attribution.

We are on firmer ground with Rukn-ud-din because more pictures inscribed to him have survived. Stylistically, these Rukn-ud-dins form a fairly coherent group, though they are not identically styled. Several are highly Mughal. Others, based on Hindu court literature, are arranged in the quadrant traditional to indigenous illustration. The figures in his later *Rasikapriya* illustrations tend to be more freely limned and less detailed, with comparatively two-dimensional figures that seem almost to float free of the ground beneath their feet. As a rule, Rukn-ud-din's portraits represent people with greater solidity and less stylization than his romantic illustrations. The slight stylistic variation in his works seems, therefore, to stem from a sensitivity to the moods and aims of different types of subject matter. Nonetheless, certain characteristics shared by all these works have formed the bases of our rudimentary guidelines for attribution.[26]

1 **Color**: (a) a preference for cool colors and an abundance of gold, punctuated by small areas of orange, apricot, red, and yellow. (b) a penchant for an effect of translucency.
2 **Compositions**: diagonals and asymmetric compositions. When Rukn-ud-din centered figures, he distributed masses unevenly and often on a diagonal around the middle. He used tilted perspective and tended to render objects off the vertical, as if leaning.
3 **The human body**: slender, delicately formed, sometimes diminutive but never stout; almost doll-like, though always supple with life. Feet, mostly seen from the side, are defined by a single outline on the forward plane backed by a row of toes.
4 **Faces**: (a) The dark curves of upper and lower eyelids fade at the corner so that eyes typically appear to be constructed of two distinct lines, the top dominating the bottom. Often the curve at the bottom is paler. (b) Eyebrows trail off at the end. (c) Chins are defined to the point of mannerism by a halo of shading. (d) Fingers are always long and graceful. (e) Lips are subtly highlighted at the front and then dip into tight shadow at the corner where they meet the cheek. (f) Figures evince sweetness and gentleness; they often have

slight smiles. (g) Often at least one figure looks forward. In *do-chashmi* (three-quarters view), the chin is shown to be quite small, adding to the almost adolescent quality of the figurative ideal. (h) Noses transition from foreheads with no bridge and in an almost concave line. (i) Feet often tip gently forward onto the balls of the toes, so that figures palpably float. (j) Hairs are tiny and softly rendered so that they gather into indistinct masses, which nevertheless hint that every hair has been individually rendered.

5 **Poses**: Figures seek contact with one another, and take a wide variety of poses. Often a figure sits with one leg turned out over the other thigh or with knees bent and both feet angled inwards but not meeting. Commonly one foot is up on a seat while the other leg stretches out on a strong diagonal. A penchant for diagonals realizes itself in figures that turn their bodies into positions that go against the orthogonals of the picture plane.

6 **Architecture**: (a) Common is a long frieze ornamented by a repeating shape that resembles conjoined Persianate throne backs. (b) Balustrades are sometimes defined simply by rectangles (particularly in siyah kalam). (c) He shades architectural elements, such as the *chajja* (projecting eaves supported by brackets), with long, closely spaced parallel lines.

7 **Shading**: He often layers a darker wash of color over a lighter pigment.

8 **Objects**: (a) Pillows are mostly situated on a diagonal. (b) Flasks have exceptionally long, narrow necks and are frequently aslant, as if tipsy. (c) Clouds are impressionistic, and in drawings are outlined in scalloped curves (like trees), while backgrounds are often a celadon green. (d) *Vinas* (stringed instruments) are held at a raking angle. (e) Water fountains tumble a gentle smoke-like spray. (f) Trees are built from broad areas of dark and light. These are overlaid with leaves, which the master rendered with small, single, leaf-shaped areas of color, infrequently outlined. (g) Women's blouses (*cholis*) typically swoop up over the bottom of one or both breasts with the torso most often seen from a three-quarters view. (h) Jewelry falls with a sense of the movement of the body. (i) Pearls are tiny and, on necklaces, of identical size – much more carefully and minutely done than in paintings by colleagues.

9 **Line** (based exclusively on fig. 10-3): The master seems to use a variety of lines: thin and light lines for less important details; an almost watery stroke and a tiny, hasty dash for quick sketching; and long, sure and undulating lines to give finished definition. He does not use straight edges to create architectural lines: the only straight edges are the *jajwal* (framing lines around the image).

With these characteristics in mind, let us turn to three siyah kalam in the collection at hand.

Bhebhas and Kedara Ragini (figs. 10-1 and 10-2)

These two must be by the same artist. Both use a vertical format and a similar size ratio between figures (small) and setting (expansive). In both the brush has

FIGURE 10-1 "The Mood of Fear" (Bhebhas), tentatively attributed to Rukn-ud-din, seventeenth century, siyah kalam, Bikaner, 19.3 × 13.9 cm, private collection.

FIGURE 10-2 Kedara Ragini, attributed to Rukn-ud-din by Davis and Aitken, seventeenth-century, Bikaner, siyah kalam, 15.3 × 10.3 cm, private collection.

lightly searched out complex contours with a delicate mobility that brings the figures to life: they have a freshness that seems to originate as much from observation and empathy as from convention. The clouds are comprised of simple curves that almost spoon one another as they circle. Trees are simpler balls of scalloped puff. The balustrade in the front of "Bebhas" (fig. 10-1) and on the roof terrace in "Kedara" (fig. 10-2) share an awkwardness in their nested boxes, because they have been rendered without the use of a straight edge. The siyah kalam are masterful, but are they by Rukn-ud-din?

AITKEN: I am comfortable dating these paintings to the second half of the seventeenth century. Both have been produced by someone with skill comparable to Rukn-ud-din's. However there were several artists who matched Rukn-ud-din's talents at Bikaner, and I see reasons for and against an attribution to Rukn-ud-din. The asymmetries of the overall composition and the delicacy and supple aliveness of the figures correspond to what I associate with Rukn-ud-din's paintings. However, the man's posture and the warmth of the lovers' interaction in "Bhebas" recall, to my mind, the lovers in a painting by a contemporary of Rukn-ud-din's

at Bikaner, the Usta master Qadir.[27] The compartment of depth framed by the pavilion seems also in keeping with that contributed by the bed in the Qadir scene. Unfortunately, little of Qadir's work is known, making attribution to him difficult. For now, I'd say the diminutive delicacy of the figures in the drawing seems more in keeping with Rukn-ud-din's work than with the comparatively solid figures in the Qadir painting. Artists studied and borrowed extensively from one another's works, and the artist of this drawing may simply have been looking at Qadir's imagery (or vice versa).

The softly searching lines and more confident, but nuanced contours match what I find both in the unfinished equestrian portrait marked "ru" mentioned in the first section and in a depiction from Catherine Benkaim's collection of Maharaja Anup Singh, which is clearly inscribed to Rukn-ud-din (fig. 10-3). The Benkaim maharaja is strikingly akin to the raja in our Kedara Ragini: both hold a similarly erect, dignified pose. I also see a sympathy between the bent backs of the old musician in the Kedara and of the ashen sage who listens to music in an inscribed Rukn-ud-din of Kedara Ragini at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.[28] On the other hand, Rukn-ud-din's love of diagonals is virtually absent here, with most lines arranged horizontally and vertically: surely Rukn-ud-din would have turned his boats at an angle? The figures in these siyah kalam are firmly embedded in the scene, with little of the floating effect Rukn-ud-din so often seems to cultivate. Whereas the trees in both siyah kalam reiterate the scallops in the Benkaim work, the curious spooned curves of the clouds in the Bhebas and Kedara are unique. However, I know of no siyah kalam inscribed to another seventeenth-century master that evinces this feeling of delicacy: for example, two siyah kalam inscribed to Nathu, which Davis has brought to my attention in this regard, employ much harder contours and are far more conventionalized.[29]

In known paintings inscribed to Rukn-ud-din, the master prefers an empty ambience to landscape detail. When he provides a landscape, he tends to create recession through a series of diagonals, not through the march of horizontals we see in these two works.[30] Better evidence for attribution may lie in the collection at hand, because it includes a number of drawings that bear Rukn-ud-din's "ru," "ruk," and "rukan." If these are taken into consideration, then the techniques of recession, the boxy balustrade, and the tiny buildings in the background become more plausibly characteristic of Rukn-ud-din. A much wider range of settings is employed in these works and a heavier use of horizontals. Unfortunately, the second portion of this paper does not provide definitive proof that the inscribed drawings in our anonymous collection are Rukn-ud-din's, which makes it impossible to use them for attribution here.

Tentatively, I weigh in pro-Rukn-ud-din. What clinches the deal for me is the emphasis on mood. "Bhebhas" is one of the *rasas*, and here the artist has made palpable what feels like a real expression of a universal emotion to give us a frisson of titillating fright. In the Kedara, the bent

back of the old musician as he lowers himself over his vina suggests a life of heavy, rich experience, which seems to pour through his music into the ears of the raja. Alert with feeling, the raja raises his arrow (his worldly power) as if in exchange for this moment with the arts. The emotional resonance of this image strongly reminds me of the Kedara Ragini by Rukn-ud-din at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.[31] There, the light and shade that bifurcate the tree at center reverse the light and dark skins of the figures under its canopy. Light belongs to music; shade to the closed eyes of the ascetic who prefers sound to sight. The gleaming white shape of the crescent moon recapitulates the tonal theme and seems to unite the dark and light ascetics below into a single metaphoric image. Here is a beautifully orchestrated expression of a peace, *shanta*, born of meditation, spurred by the senses, and felt deep in the heart. This is pure romance on my part. Because I am susceptible, I want the Kedara siyah kalam in question to be Rukn-ud-din's and to confirm that this musical mode did indeed mean something special to the master.

DAVIS: As Aitken has pointed out, these two siyah kalam drawings are obviously by the same artist. But are they by Rukn-ud-din? My own knowledge of Rukn-ud-din is based on works of art in private collections, but I will attribute here on the basis of comparisons with pictures that scholars know and have accepted as Rukn-ud-din's. These two works have an emotional sensitivity that makes us believe the characters' feelings are real and that transport us into a moment in time, a characteristic of the best Rukn-ud-din paintings. One finds a comparable precision and refinement in works by contemporaries of Rukn-ud-din such as Nathu, but they do not convey real emotion as powerfully. More concrete is the vina with its swan head, which is the same as that in the Met's Kedara Ragini, where it is held at an identical diagonal, and also with a consciousness of its perceptible weight. With his slightly hunched shoulders, an arm that rests on his knee, and a hand with delicate fingertips that touch gently on the strings, the sage in this siyah kalam takes a pose that is unusually relaxed for one typically portrayed in a state of proud religious fervor. Although his posture is different from that of the sage at the Met, the refined details of hair, bracelet, gestures, mood in a moment of time, and the touch of the fingers to the vina are all similar. Both the listening sage in the Met's Kedara and the playing sage in ours prop their legs up in a similar fashion. Although our Kedara places more emphasis on horizontal and vertical lines than we are accustomed to seeing in Rukn-ud-din's imagery, the building is set at an angle, turning to the right, and other moments of asymmetry join with the crooked doorway – not rendered with a straight edge – to recall the master's sensibility.

For me, the most powerful argument for Rukn-ud-din's authorship lies with the raja, however, because he looks very like the figure of Maharaja Anup Singh in Benkaim's siyah kalam (fig. 10-3). The raja in the Benkaim work appears relaxed but confident. He looks up and points his finger as if to deliver a command. The raja in our Kedara Ragini looks

Figure 10-3 Maharaja Anup Singh with attendant, inscribed to Rukn-ud-din, seventeenth century, Bikaner, Rajasthan, Ralph and Catherine Benkaim Collection.

almost identical. He too has a slight paunch, a high forehead, and the same nose, moustache, and long sideburns. His turban is tied in the same fashion, and he wears the same necklace and pendant. He also is relaxed and proud, sketched with the same lines and in the same style. The similarities seem too many to be accidental: surely the raja in the Kedara Ragini is, indeed, Maharaja Anup Singh.

Hindola Raga (fig. 10-4)

Like the earlier two works, this drawing seems to have been conceived as a finished siyah kalam. In most other respects, however, it is very different from the two works just discussed. Are we really thinking of attributing it to the same person? Where the pavilion in "Bhebhas" was turned into space, here the swing is seen straight on, as a rectangle flush with the plane of the page. Surely the composition is too symmetrical for Rukn-ud-din's taste? Moreover, the architectural lines have been drawn with a straight edge, almost as if the jajwal had entered into the picture. Nevertheless, we feel it is important to emphasize, with this contrast, the role of genre in style. (As was mentioned earlier, Rukn-ud-din's portraits, *Rasikapriya* pages, and Mughlai images of women's gatherings were styled slightly differently: it was not unusual for a painter to adjust his style to the demands of a particular genre or subject matter.) By tradition, symmetry was an essential convention of the Hindola Raga. Hindolas were widely employed in devotional and court rituals to enshrine gods and kings: the Hindola Raga should establish a shrine-like composition. Furthermore, strong effects of two-dimensionality accord with the conventions of standard devotional imagery and recall earlier indigenous precursors. Why does the Hindola page answer more closely to the strictures of ragamala convention than the Kedara Ragini discussed above? One obvious answer is that they are by different artists. However, there is a strong likelihood that the work at the Met and the siyah kalam Kedara were made to stand alone, while the Hindola Raga was designed as one in a series. As part of a series, the Hindola Raga would have had to conform more strictly to established ragamala conventions. Thus there are intelligent reasons why an artist might depict these scenes in formally very different ways.

AITKEN: I feel on firmer ground with this image. The two pillows resting diagonally behind the lovers are a standard Rukn-ud-din convention. Even more typical, to my eye, is the way the throne-back behind the hero tips sideways. Notice, too, that the outline of the throne is identical with the form Rukn-ud-din consistently used to decorate architectural friezes and with the throne in his picture of a woman looking in the mirror.[32] There is a certain softness of effect lacking here, but the mouths, noses, and eyes of these figures seem consistent with Rukn-ud-din faces as are their slender proportions. An impression of bodies with the gentle elasticity of boughs also reminds me of Rukn-ud-din's people as does the way their feet float on tiptoe above an undefined ground. The hero holds

FIGURE 10-4 Hindola Raga, tentatively attributed to Rukn-ud-din, seventeenth century, Bikaner, siyah kalam, 14.8 × 10.4 cm, private collection.

one leg in a diagonal, with the other leg out and foot crooked down: it is a typical Rukn-ud-din pose, though it is more exaggerated here than in the Benkaim drawing. Its emphatic diagonal serves to counter the rigidity of the hard-edged compositional structure. While the fountain burbles more effervescently than the fountains in the Benkaim drawing or in the Kronos collection's picture of a zenana gathering, its curls seem to restore some of the sweet buoyancy of Rukn-ud-din's other work to the stiffnesses of this one, as if picking up on the playful note of its heroine's tight curls.[33] Where is my moment of doubt? The professional ease and almost insouciant display of talent that mark the earlier two works as the products of a major artist of their time are missing here. This is more Rukn-ud-din in detail than in overall effect. It is possible to imagine that this was the work of a very talented subordinate working closely on Rukn-ud-din's heels, whereas no one would be likely to attribute the earlier two works to the hand of anyone less than a master.

DAVIS: I agree with Aitken on many points, including the crossed jajwal lines, the hero's angled leg, and the tilt of the throne. I also agree that the painting is "more Rukn-ud-din in detail than in overall effect." As Aitken suggests, emotion is undercut by the austerity of the straight lines. However I see more life here than she does. Our couple's eyes meet. She inhales the scent of an open mogra flower, while he lowers the flower in his hand. She seems to open her other hand in acceptance, while he appears to clench his in defiance. Notice how the attendants look discreetly away. Here is a curious narrative that presses on convention to tug on the careful viewer's sensibilities. Surely Rukn-ud-din's attention to emotions is at work here. But what of that first impression that something is not quite right with the attribution? What of the difference between the rendering of this work and the more searching, mobile line that brought our "Bhebhas" and Kedara Ragini to life? Rajput workshops of this time employed numerous painters to assist their senior masters. We don't know how many commissions a workshop handled at a time, but it could have been dozens. Many painters helped with the less important stages of production. Presumably, a number were apprentices. The rigid structure of our Hindola Raga may have been the work of a lesser artist assigned to outline each scene in what would have been a ragamala series. He would have worked somewhat mechanically according to established convention. The figures may then have been Rukn-ud-din's responsibility. After all, he would not have met every task with the same level of emotional investment, and a series outlined by a subordinate would not have engaged him as much as a siyah kalam of his own conception (such as, perhaps, our Kedara Ragini). My sense it is that this work is too masterful to have been produced exclusively by a lesser artist. Therefore, my best guess is that we see more than one hand here, and that the hand responsible for figural details and the enrichment of the lovers' interaction was Rukn-ud-din's.

Our connoisseurship has led us to attribute these works *tentatively* to Rukn-ud-din. The implication of any attribution is that the scholar has added something

worthwhile to a work of art, presumably a knowledge that enriches our understanding of it. If connoisseurship were a science instead of an art, these attributions would have expanded our understanding of who Rukn-ud-din was. But attribution is not scientific. What, then, has our attribution added to these works? Attributions can be thought of as place-holders in the construction of a possible story about who our artist was. If these three siyah kalam are by Rukn-ud-din, then the master worked in a personal, emotional, and highly polished manner in this medium as well as in a more conventional (and possibly collaborative) mode, employing what almost amounts to two styles, though they share many stylistic conventions. These two siyah kalam modes are thus entered into the realm of possibilities for future research. If scholars find inscribed examples in either of these modes, they will be able to build more confidently on what has been presented here to offer a clearer vision of Rukn-ud-din. (Though any vision, however well backed by research, will always be a provisional fantasy to some degree.) Alternatively, if further study of siyah kalam finds other artists employing what almost strikes us as a private and a more commercial idiom, then scholars can turn to these works as place-holders that have already staked out that possibility. Think of attributions like (more or less) tentative lines in an underdrawing that will one day become a finished painting or will be tossed aside.

We were motivated by three other considerations, however. This exercise was intended to give readers a picture – ripe for critique – of how attributions happen on the basis of style. It was also intended to question the standard use of the term "attribution." An attribution has the ring of authority, in part because catalogues and museum signage rarely indicate who is responsible for it. Ours is a small field, and we would like to propose here that our fellow scholars consider qualifying their attributions. New attributions could be ascribed to the scholars who make them, as in "attributed by Aitken and Davis to Rukn-ud-din." "Tentatively attributed to" and "widely attributed to" could also be used to distinguish levels of uncertainty. The purpose would be to keep the open-endedness of attributions in public view.

Finally, our attributions were intended to walk readers through what current scholarship recognizes as within the purview of Rukn-ud-din's style. This is important, because several of the pictures we examine in the following pages do not resemble this style at all. In the following section, we look at attribution on the basis of inscriptional evidence, an approach that also belongs to the province of the traditional connoisseur.

Signed Paintings not in Rukn-ud-din's Style: Attribution on the Basis of Inscriptional Evidence

Connoisseurs tend to favor inscriptional evidence over stylistic analysis in attributions, but not unquestioningly so. On the basis of stylistic analysis, as Gary Schwartz has recounted, the Rembrandt Research Project rejected a drawing

bearing a convincing Rembrandt signature, "although it displays dendochronological and technical characteristics virtually identical to those of an accepted painting also dated 1629."[34] Inscriptions have not been accepted without question among scholars of Rajput court painting either. Naval Krishna writes that "virtually hundreds of paintings and line drawings bear the name 'ruk' or 'rukandi' . . . They are datable to different decades of the eighteenth century and most of them cannot be the work of the great Ruknuddin himself."[35]

Krishna has not published further evidence for "hundreds" of such paintings and admits himself that a later Rukn-ud-din, the so-called "Rukn-ud-din" the second (*dome*), is probably a scholarly construct, an opinion in which we concur. However, it is likely that many stylistic inconsistencies among paintings inscribed to Rukn-ud-din ("ruk" and "rukandi") can be explained by workshop practices: some of these paintings were probably finished, if not largely (or entirely) produced, by his subordinates. A Malavi Ragini that bears an inscription to "rukandi" is a case in point.[36] Though it has been attributed to Rukn-ud-din on the basis of both style and its inscription, it does not resemble his hand in several key points: the figures are longer and stiffer, facial features are more wooden (Rukn-ud-din's gently swooped nose is gone, for example), while hard edges and square registers are inconsistent with the master's tipsy angles. Though Rukn-ud-din's scalloped clouds fill the sky, the leaves of the tree in this work are outlined: as mentioned earlier, Rukn-ud-din typically brushed his leaves in single color swathes. Here is evidence, we believe, for the kind of workshop practices Krishna describes and to which we allude in our discussion of Hindola Raga (fig. 10-4).

This is not to say that inscriptions are useless: the one on the Malavi Ragini probably indicates the authorship of someone from Rukn-ud-din's workshop, for example. More importantly, inscriptions provide a vital opportunity to explore works that might not initially be associated with a master and that can, therefore, expand our understanding of who he was. In the following pages, we follow a trail of inscriptional together with stylistic evidence to explore how inscriptions are studied and what, potentially, they can do for scholars.

In an unfinished illustration of Desvarari Ragini, a faint charcoal underdrawing outlines a picture of a terrace, a palace pavilion, and a woman with her attendant or friend (*sakhi*).[37] The sakhi turns her hand up in the air as if she were about to sing. According to van Dyke, the drawing shows "no evidence of transfer, pouncing, incisions, indentations, or any related planar distortions"; in other words, it is a freehand drawing. The sakhi and a vase beside her have been worked up from the drawing in what van Dyke affirms is a siyah (lampblack) line. Unlike the line in other inscribed Rukn-ud-dins, the siyah line here is quick, buoyant, and more varied in its thickness and thinness. It may exemplify the master's hand in a different kind of exercise, the jotting down of pictorial ideas for future work. Therefore it is the inscription, not the style, that guides us to Rukn-ud-din. On the back, in the Devanagari script, are three letters that transliterate as follows: "ruk" (fig. 10-5b).

FIGURE 10-5a "Ruk," Ralph and Catherine Benkaim Collection.

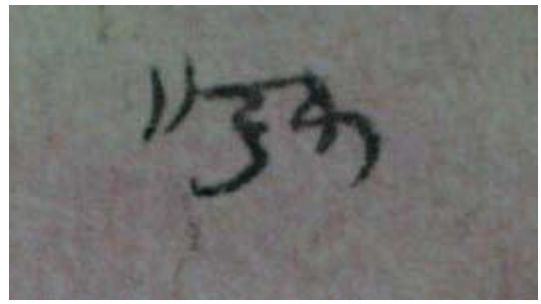

FIGURE 10-5b "Ruk", on the reverse of a sketch for Desvarari Ragini, private collection.

The signature "ruk" – which also appears on the back of our composite elephant – has been noted by Chandra *et al.* on the reverse of a finished portrait of Muhammad Dilawar Khan[38] and on the back of a portrait of Rukn-ud-din's grandson, Ustad Abdullah.[39] They proposed that "ruk" signified Rukn-ud-din.

A number of paintings inscribed to Rukn-ud-din name him as "rukandi" as in: "kam rukandi ro." On the back of Catherine Benkaim's siyah kalam of Maharaja Anup Singh (fig. 10-3), something more precise is written: "Daskat Uste Rukandi Najira Che" which means "the signature of Usta Rukn-ud-din; given in *nazar* (gift to the ruler)." (For *daskat* we read *dastkat*, which in Hindi means signature: such elisions in spelling were common.) It is Davis' opinion that most of the inscriptions on Rukn-ud-din paintings were written by a court scribe (*likhakar*). This would be the case with, for example, the inscription on the San Diego Museum's *Rasikapriya* page, which is inscribed: "rasikapriya ra rukandi ra" (of the *Rasikapriya*, of/by Rukandi) and which does not include the word "daskat." The treatment of the "r" and "k" in that inscription is, indeed, quite different from their rendition in the Benkaim "daskat." The "u" is more clearly differentiated from the "r" and the loop in the "k" is larger and pushed upwards, where, by contrast, the "r" runs into the "u" in the Benkaim inscription and the loop in its "k" is less round.

On the back of the Benkaim piece, to the left Rukn-ud-din's dastkat/signature, is written "ruk" in a thicker, wetter line (fig. 10-5a). Though the "ruk" was evidently put on at a different time with a different mixture of siyah, the handwriting resembles that responsible for the "rukandi" beside it: this "r" and "u" also run together in a near continuum. Therefore, "ruk" appears to be Rukn-ud-din's shorthand signature. But how does this "ruk" compare to the "ruk" on our unfinished drawing (fig. 10-5b)? Van Dyke put the latter under high magnification and found that the ink was distinctively darker at the bottom of the left-hand stroke and at the low end of the "u." On the Benkaim "ruk" the ink also seems to puddle at the bottom of letters, where one would assume the brush ended its strokes. The letters are similarly formed: they appear to be in the same hand.

Does this constitute proof that our drawing is by Rukn-ud-din? No, but it is compelling evidence. Perhaps the charcoal underdrawing alone was his or perhaps a student used a blank piece of paper he had signed. The former is more likely; the latter implausible when we turn to a handful of other siyah kalam in the collection that also bear this familiar "ruk." Why would he have signed numerous blank papers? In the collection in question, the signed drawings are all in related styles – what we are calling the "Group C" style – and the "ruk" (and in some cases "ru") is alike in each signature, though the characteristic puddling of paint at the base of the letters is not apparent when the siyah is darker and glossier with gum binding. Other than the Benkaim drawing, the authors have not been able to look at examples of these shorthand signatures on works outside the collection examined here. However, Chandra *et al.* reproduced two works that are stylistically consistent with Rukn-ud-din's idiom that, they noted, bore the letters "ru" or "ruk" on the reverse.[40] These signatures are unlikely to be designating someone other than Rukn-ud-din as seventeenth-century Bikaner records and inscriptions do not mention another artist with a name that begins "ru."

What happens if we accept that the drawing is by Rukn-ud-din? The first steps on this path are not challenging. It is, indeed, possible to conceive that Rukn-ud-din sketched the piece. The sakhi or friend in this drawing still has the small head, slender limbs, and long graceful fingers of the period, and the vase corresponds somewhat to the vases in the San Diego *Rasikapriya* page inscribed to Rukn-ud-din.[41] The charcoal figure's pose, with one knee up, and the diagonal line of the object in her hands also suggest Rukn-ud-din's hand. Finally, the small scale of the drawing and its figures is typical of the period. Only two things seem slightly off to Aitken. The rounded line of the stomach and the double line that comprises her back together exaggerate the figure's curvaciousness. To Aitken, these are hallmarks of the female ideal that was favored in the succeeding century. It is a picayune detail, but on such fussiness is the connoisseur's intuition founded. Nevertheless, the summary insouciance of the brush, which is so unlike what we see in the drawings discussed earlier or in the Benkaim piece, may simply be a function of the task at hand: to sketch quickly with no thought for the finished product. Those pictures were considered complete, while this piece was not for consumption outside the workshop.

Let us take another example. A drawing of Malkaus, also marked "ruk" on the back, is in a similarly speedy hand (fig. 10-6). It features the frieze pattern mentioned earlier and the scalloped trees found in the Benkaim drawing. In a characteristic Rukn-ud-din pose, the musician on the left bends his legs inwards so that his feet nearly meet. The figure's small round face and long slender arm look typical of Rukn-ud-din as well, but much less so the other members of the scene. The back of the female attendant is also made luscious with a conjunction of two lines and the seductive forward arch of her stomach again evokes eighteenth-century ideals. For a Rukn-ud-din face, her chin seems overly prominent, and her legs uncharacteristically long in relation to her torso. The man's face is oddly crude; his eye too big. But if we accept the previous figure as Rukn-ud-din's,

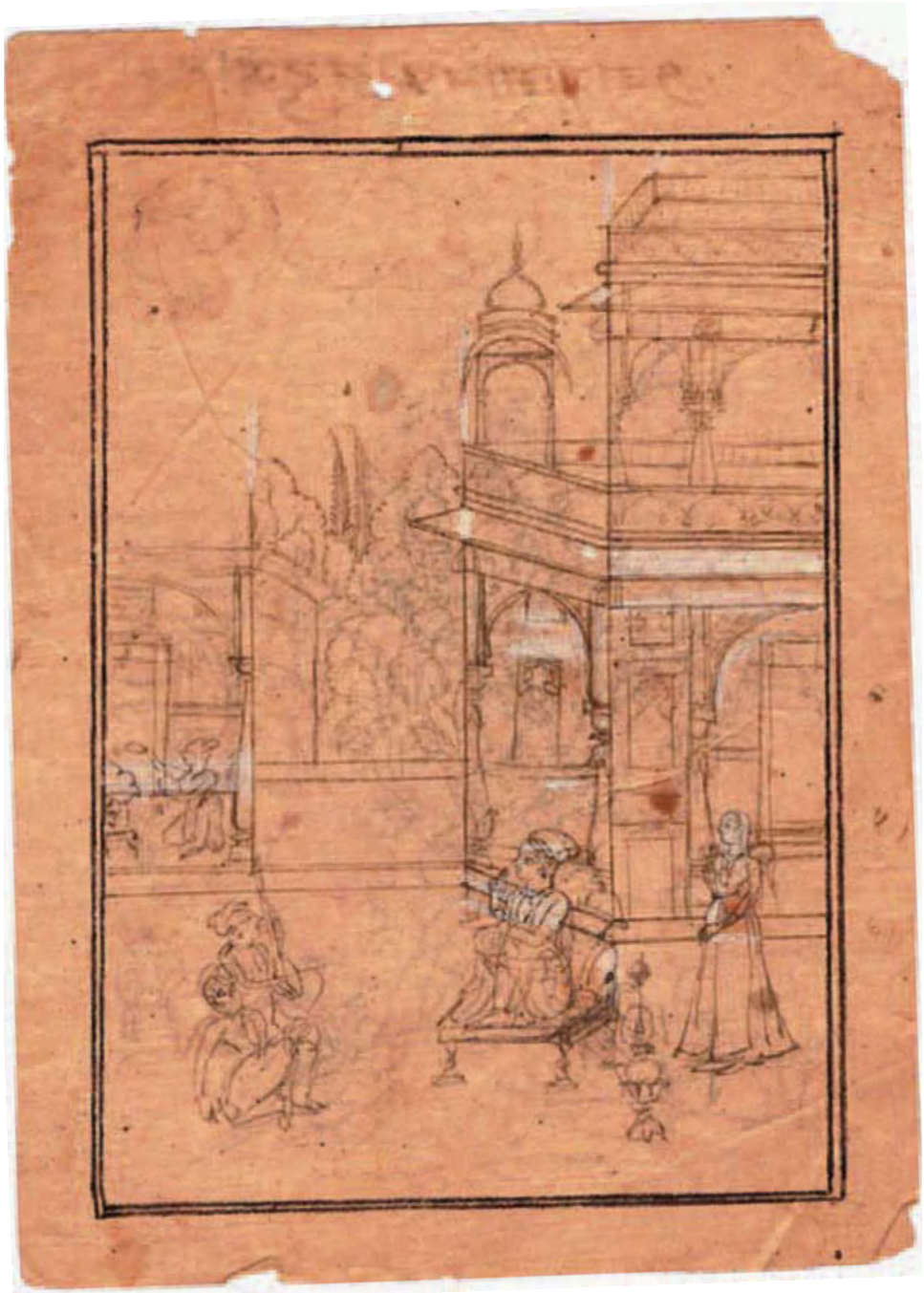

FIGURE 10-6 Malkaus Raga, inscribed "ruk", attributed by Davis and Aitken to Rukn-ud-din, seventeenth century, Bikaner, siyah kalam, 19.3 × 13.9 cm, private collection.

FIGURE 10-7 Gathering of women (three "styles"), tentatively attributed to Rukn-ud-din, Bikaner, siyah kalam, private collection.

then this too may well be an example of his sketching style. The inscriptional evidence is persuasive.

An unsigned drawing in the collection offers a stylistic assist (fig. 10-7). On the left is a woman resting her arms on her pillow, head thrown slightly back, eyes closed, and mouth smiling as if she were lost in an erotic dream. She is delicately and skillfully rendered, with each lock of hair drawn gracefully back from her forehead. Her three-quarters face, her smile, her slender arms, the tilted flask in her hand (its neck no more than a line) and an unconventional life-like pose put her directly in Rukn-ud-din's ambit. The central figure is faint but is also consistent with Rukn-ud-din's Mughlai heroines. However, the two figures on the right are sketched with the freedom of our signed pieces, taking us right to their rounder, more careless style. One artist and two modes of working: quick versus polished.

So far, fine, but we have a few difficult steps yet to take. Raga Malkaus (fig. 10-6) leads us to Ragini Gujari (fig. 10-8) because she appears to be from the same ragamala series: the paper size is the same and it is framed with the same double-line jajwal. It is sketched even more freely than the last piece, and is also signed "ruk." However, even fewer elements in this piece connect it stylistically to Rukn-ud-din. A hill that rises in the back is a common Bikaner convention, the combination of inscriptions in Hindi and *nastaliq* (a Perso-Arabic calligraphic script) is typically seventeenth-century, and the heroine's pose, with one leg extended, recurs in Rukn-ud-din's works. The small scale of the drawing and its

delicacy, common to all the Group C works, is also an indication of a seventeenth-century date. However, the face looks eighteenth-century. The curved nose, the upturned lips, and above all the long curving eye and dramatically raised brow closely resemble the female ideal that dominated Bikaner painting in the second half of the eighteenth century. That ideal was formed in response to Kishangarh painting, which was famed for the long eyes and exaggerated brows of its Radhas and Krishnas. But the Kishangarh stylization was invented in the 1730s, long after Rukn-ud-din's death!

Before we continue, let us sum up: the Benkaim siyah kalam, the unfinished siyah kalam with the sakhi and vase, the Malkaus, and the Gujari all bear the signature "ruk" written in what looks like the same hand in the same place on the reverse (upper middle to the right). They also share identical jajwal lines (either one or two lines) that cross rather than meet at the corners. The Benkaim drawing is characteristic of what we have categorized as Rukn-ud-din's Group A style, namely the style that scholars widely recognize as his. The three other siyah kalam are drawn in the much looser manner that we identify as the "Group C" style. Elements of the Group C style look strikingly eighteenth-century, especially in the instance of the Gujari (fig. 10-8).

FIGURE 10-8 Sketch for a Gujari Ragini, inscribed to "ruk," late seventeenth century, attributed by Aitken and Davis to Rukn-ud-din, siyah kalam, 19 × 13.8 cm, private collection.

Do we trust the inscriptional or the stylistic evidence? The resemblance of Gujari's face to later ideals may be an artifact of the artist's loose and free handwork, but the drawing sets us up for the last work to be considered: a half-finished painting of Radha and Krishna (fig. 10-9). Here is the problematic crux of our paper. The colors of the Radha and Krishna have been brushed in and elements of the underdrawing show through. However, the leaves and the lovers' faces and fingers are finished. The back of the painting reads "rukan." The "ruk" of its "rukan" looks like all our other "ruk"s. Here is the painting that Aitken cannot accept as Rukn-ud-din's, though Davis attributed it to the master in her 2008 book. In support of her attribution, Davis points to the diagonal pillow, to Radha's left leg stretched out like Gujari's, and to the nested boxes of the balustrade, which are also found in the Kedara Ragini page and the Bhebas. Aitken's basic objections are as follows: the nose, mouth, and chin resemble Gujari's and, like hers, recall late eighteenth-century Bikaner and even Jodhpur figurations; the eye is more prominent than a canonical Rukn-ud-din eye, the brow too high, and the head more long than round. The leaves of the trees are outlined against washes of color in stark contrast to the solid shapes of color Rukn-ud-din usually employed for leaves (though in keeping with the tree in the inscribed Malavi Ragini described at the beginning of this section as likely a product of Rukn-ud-din's workshop). Finally, and most significantly, Krishna's face reproduces the Kishangarh ideal that would not be invented for another 40 years.

What do we have to rethink if we are to accept Rukn-ud-din's authorship of this painting? We would have to accept the possibility that artists worked not just in stylistic variants but in totally and radically different styles. We would also have to reformulate our chronologies. By the end of Rukn-ud-din's life, Bikaner painting was moving towards greater abstraction and stylization. In a few years, Murad, son of Luft, would take Bikaner painting far from the Mughal style in which his father, a Delhi artist, had probably trained. Perhaps Rukn-ud-din was already anticipating this development in siyah kalam that were never intended for the court. Perhaps this painting reveals a new style that he invented behind the scenes to instigate innovations in the workshop. If this is so, is it possible that Nihal Chand, the Kishangarh master, obtained examples of Rukn-ud-din's private experiments and made them one basis of his stylistic transfigurations.

Anything is possible, but the scenario seems preposterous because it is so far from anything existing scholarship has conceived. It is far easier to believe that the inscriptions have led us astray. The authors have yet to devise a scenario that would undermine their authority. Van Dyke confirms that the paper and pigments are original to the period, though hemp paper, mercury, indigo, red, tin, and Indian yellow were used by traditional artists throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[42] Forgery is unlikely for a number of reasons, not least because it is so improbable that those with access to our anonymous collection ever had their hands on the Benkaim drawing. Furthermore, given the presence in the collection of several drawings that look like they could be Rukn-ud-din, why would someone put signatures on those works least like Rukn-ud-din's? Unless we can identify an evil genius, the forgery theory does not stand up to scrutiny.

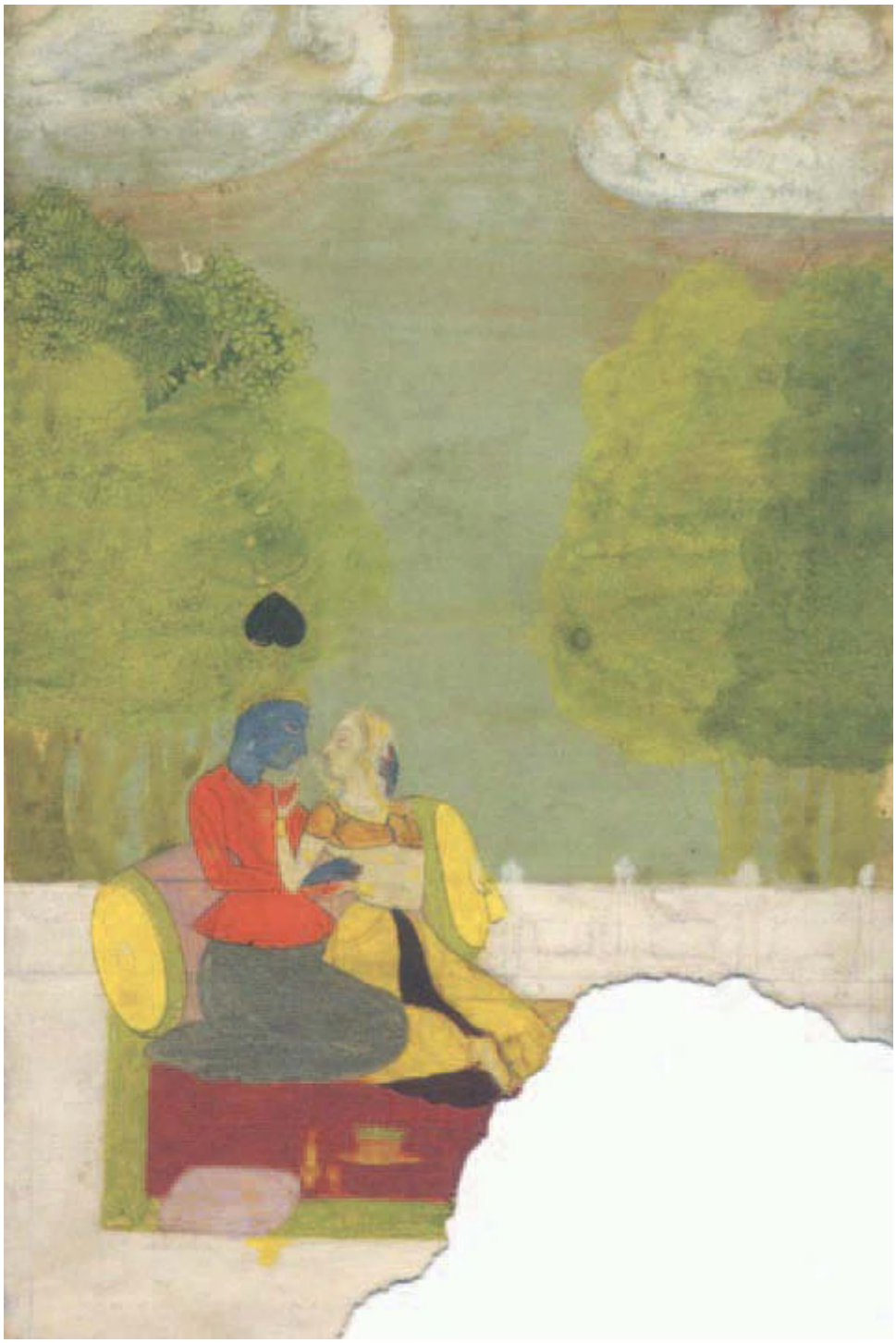

FIGURE 10-9 Radha and Krishna, gouache, date questionable (see discussion), Bikaner, 25 × 15.5 cm, private collection.

Which leaves the conjecture that for some unfathomable reason the signatures ("ru," "ruk," and "rukan") were added after Rukn-ud-din's death to both the Benkaim Rukn-ud-din and these other drawings. But to insist that the signatures are not real is to deny that the stylistic links are there to forge a tantalizing chain binding Rukn-ud-din's known style to this impossibly eighteenth-century, Kishangarh-looking Krishna.

Other scenarios may open up with further research. In connection with this picture, we are interested in the mid-eighteenth-century Lalani artist Umar who worked in an idiom that appears to have been strongly inflected by developments at Kishangarh, but that also grows directly out of the style of the sketches in question. He seems often to have drawn elements directly from Rukn-ud-din's workshop siyah kalam, and his signature "u" has some of the fluid quality of Rukn-ud-din's, almost as if in tribute. Might he have painted this work over a Rukn-ud-din underdrawing? Could he have imitated Rukn-ud-din's "ruk"? Might "rukan" mean "after Rukn-ud-din" in the shorthand of the workshop? If so, then it would seem Umar was making a connection between Rukn-ud-din's sketching style and the Kishangarh-inflected idiom that was emerging in his time. The painting would accordingly become a fascinating example of historical and stylistic consciousness. It would come to suggest that the late Bikaner style derived, not just from Bikaner, but from sources within the workshop that anticipated Kishangarh's stylizations. A lot is at stake here: the picture begs further examination, we hope in the light of additional discoveries.

For the most part, scholars encounter works one at a time, often far from their sources. When this happens, style is often the only clue they have to place an art object. The stylistic categories with which we work and that shape our thinking were created to make sense of a vast array of varied material. These categories will always be neater than the materials they categorize. Because it is messy with the kinds of odds and ends that rarely make their way into the market, our collection of siyah kalam, paintings, and pounces pushes back at accepted categories. Perhaps we should pay these materials heed, not only because they come from the Usta workshop, but because some of them are so unlikely. They are the messiness of a history that we know is far vaster than what we have conceived. If we are to expand our knowledge, it has to be through confrontation with the "odds and ends," the things that don't fit, the scraps that result from life happening in all its unlikely, rich, and implausible ways.

Conclusion

Attribution to a master depends on the existence of individual idiosyncrasies, however minute, that betray his hand. It is motivated by a conviction that individuality mattered. We began by saying that Bikaner's seventeenth-century viewers valued the court's painting masters and that a master's "name" was therefore a thing of emic worth. But do we know enough to say what a master was valued for? Was it his individuality or was it simply his mastery? Attribution tends

to be a reductive exercise because it funnels an artwork into a slot within a kind of conceptual sorting box organized by date, artist, and region. So long as we pursue conventional methods of connoisseurship, we perpetuate the assumption that styles correspond neatly to individuals, times, and places. But perhaps it is premature for us to have made this assumption. Perhaps we are using a sorting box imperfectly suited to our material. Certainly there were temporal, regional, and individual styles: connoisseurship has not led us hopelessly astray. But when we turn to siyah kalam – and a critical subtext of this article is that siyah kalam demand far more attention – then the question arises whether these styles were inflected by others less obvious and whether styles were less neatly contained than we think: imagine a Kishangarh style at Jaipur, for example, or a Bikaner style a century too early; a private style to be practiced simultaneously with a court style and a conventional style for the market; a sketching style that permitted stylizations that would not be accepted in formal works for decades. We see hints here of these possibilities.

We do not propose to discard connoisseurship. On the contrary, the connoisseur's tools which we have put on view here are valuable because they lead us to look with relentless care at every piece of evidence – stylistic, inscriptional, material – that time has left us. Such looking should be integral to our training. The point may be, however, that we need to let our connoisseurship make a mess of our categories. Our focus today has been individual style, and our search has led to the possibility that that category needs to be expanded. Were any of Rukn-ud-din's styles indelibly marked by his irrepressible self or did the master shift from one construction to another, each rich with allusions to fellow masters who alluded to him in turn, and each deeply imprinted by the exigencies of genre and audience? Our final point is this: that what can be at stake in connoisseurship is not simply positivist questions of taxonomy but the very concepts of master and style that operated in South Asian courts and painting workshops. It is meaning that remains to be plumbed, not simply facts, and for that task, the connoisseur's methods are some of the best tools we have.

Notes

1 Krishna, "The Umarani Usta Master-Painters," 59.
2 Davis, *The Bikaner School.*
3 Aitken was initially involved in arranging a sale of these drawings. That sale fell through and she has since withdrawn from any financial stake in the collection.
4 Goswamy, *Nainsukh of Guler*; Beach and Singh, *Rajasthani Painters.*
5 Edited by Milo C. Beach and Eberhard Fischer; to be published by *Artibus Asiae.*
6 'Allami, *A'in-i-Akbari*, 114.
7 Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 20.
8 For a discussion of paintings from the reign of Maharaja Man Singh of Jodhpur, see Diamond *et al.*, *Garden and Cosmos.*

9 Goetz, *The Art and Architecture of Bikaner State*.
10 Krishna, "Bikaneri Miniature Painting Workshops"; "Painting and Painters in Bikaner."
11 Jamil Usta is the source for this information. See Davis, *The Bikaner School*, 53.
12 A list of painters on the back of a portrait of a seventeenth-century portrait of Ali Raza describes him as *Usta* Ali Raza, not *Ustad* Ali Raza as he is usually called. This would make him a member of the Usta clan, even though he immigrated from Delhi. See Chandra *et al.*, *Miniature Painting*, fig. 81.
13 Davis, *The Bikaner School*, plates 96–105.
14 Krishna, "The Umarani Usta Master-Painters," figs. 357–64; Davis, *The Bikaner School*, pl. 101.
15 Davis, *The Bikaner School*, pl. 42.
16 Krishna, "The Umarani Usta Master-Painters," 61.
17 Inventory and daily records of the Jaipur *suratkhana* (painting workshop), seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner. See also Aitken, "Pardah and Portrayal."
18 Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600*.
19 Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur*, 175, n. 41.
20 Davis, *The Bikaner School*, fig. 31.
21 Max Friedlander, *On Art and Connoisseurship*; Ginzburg and Davin, "Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes," 28.
22 For an excellent discussion of Morelli, see Ginzburg and Davin, "Freud and Sherlock Holmes," 5–36.
23 Copying or what I have called responding to earlier works was rife, but such exercises did not attempt to fool viewers.
24 Reproduced: <www.sdmart.org/popup/indian-lecture.html>. San Diego Museum of Art, Edwin Binney 3rd Collection, acc. 1990:783.
25 Reproduced: www.mfa.org/collections; search "Natthu" or "Bikaner." Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Harriet Otis Cruft Fund, 1917, acc. 17.73.
26 Particularly: Lakshmi-Narayan (Museum Rietberg, Zurich, Switzerland); Raga Nat (LACMA, Los Angeles, USA); *Rasikapriya* page (San Diego Museum of Art, USA); *Rasikapriya* page (Ralph and Catherine Benkaim Collection, USA); Kanada Ragini (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK); Devasakh Ragini; Muhammad Dilawar Khan (Sri Motichand Khajanchi Collection, India); Woman under a tree (Khajanchi Collection); gathering of women (Kronos Collection, USA); Kedara Ragini (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA); gathering of women (formerly Bikaner royal collection, now sold and dispersed); heroine enthroned (formerly Bikaner royal collection, also sold and dispersed), Maharaja Anup Singh with attendant (Ralph and Catherine Benkaim Collection).
27 Reproduced: Chandra et al., *Miniature Painting*, fig. 65 (cat. 84).
28 Reproduced: Kossak, *Indian Court Painting*, cat. 32.
29 These were on sale at Simon Ray, London. At the time, Simon Ray kindly supplied digital images of these works to Davis.
30 See for example, Goetz, *The Art and Architecture of Bikaner State*, cat. 78.
31 Reproduced: Kossak, *Indian Court Painting*, cat. 33.
32 Reproduced: Goetz, *The Art and Architecture of Bikaner State*, cat. 78.
33 For the Kronos painting, see Kossak, *Indian Court Painting*, cat. 32.

34 Schwartz, "Connoisseurship," 203.
35 Krishna, "Bikaneri Miniature Painting," 24.
36 Kalista and Wilkinson, *Indian and Southeast Asian Art*, cat. 13. The authors quote Joan Cummins' comments on another painting from this ragamala to the effect that that painting too (in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) may well be by someone in Rukn-ud-din's workshop and not by the master himself.
37 Van Dyke notes that the fibers, which she has teased from the paper, stained, and studied through a polarizing microscope, do not present raw fibers, which suggests the paper was made from material extracted from textile rather than directly from plant sources. The paper was brushed with a "carbohydrate sizing," probably starch, to seal it.
38 Chandra *et al.*, *Miniature Painting*, 50, fig. 67.
39 Chandra *et al.*, *Miniature Painting*, 54, note "ruk" in the inscription but do not take it into account in their interpretation. The inscription on fig. 38 is as follows: "Abdula Kayamji ro bete ri sabih ruk." As the authors note, this translates as "picture of Abudula son of Kayam." Kayam was Rukn-ud-din's son. The authors date the piece to the eighteenth century, but the letters "ruk" would appear to make this a portrait by Rukn-ud-din of his grandson. The authors consider the style appropriate for Rukn-ud-din.
40 Chandra *et al.*, *Miniature Painting*, cat. 85, 86, and 119.
41 San Diego Museum of Art, acc. 1990:787.
42 Van Dyke acquired and analyzed micro samples through polarizing light microscopy as well as through non-destructive x-ray fluorescence XRF. Polarized light microscopy (PLM) executed by van Dyke as well as XRF spectroscopy performed by van Dyke using the Bruker ARTAX open-beam ED-XRF, at a keV of 50 and μA of 500 through air, using no filter, with a live time of 100 seconds.

References

Aitken, Molly Emma. *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.

Aitken, Molly Emma. "Pardah and Portrayal: Rajput Women as Subjects, Patrons, and Collectors." *Artibus Asiae* 62 no. 2 (2002): 247–80.

'Allami, Abu'l Fazl. *The A'in-i Akbari*. Translated by H. Blochmann. 3 vols. 3rd edn. 1927. New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1977.

Beach, Milo Cleveland, and Rawat Nahar Singh II. *Rajasthani Painters Bagta and Chokha: Master Artists at Devgarh*. Zurich: Artibus Asiae Publishers; Museum Rietberg, 2005.

Chandra, Moti, Pramod Chandra, and Karl Khandalavala. *Miniature Painting: A Catalogue of the Exhibition of the Sri Motichand Khajanchi Collection*. New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1960.

Cummins, Joan. *Indian Paintings: from Cave Paintings to the Colonial Period*. Boston: MFA Publications, 2006.

Davis, Shanane. *The Bikaner School: Usta Artisans and Their Heritage*. Jodhpur: RMG Exports, 2008.

Diamond, Debra, Catherine Glynn, and Karni Singh Jasol. *Garden and Cosmos: The Royal Paintings of Jodhpur*. Washington DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery; Smithsonian Institution, 2008.

Friedlander, Max J. *On Art and Connoisseurship*. Translated by Tancred Borenius. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960.

Ginzburg, Carlo, and Anna Davin. "Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method." *Source: History Workshop* 9 (Spring, 1980): 5–36.

Goetz, Hermann. *The Art and Architecture of Bikaner State*. Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1950.

Goswamy, B. N. *Nainsukh of Guler: A Great Indian Painter from a Small Hill-state*. Zurich: Artibus Asiae; Museum Rietberg, 1997.

Gray, Basil. *Treasures of Indian Miniatures in the Bikaner Palace Collection*. Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1955.

Jahangir. *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri or Memoirs of Jahangir*. 2 vols. Translated by Alexander Rogers, edited by Henry Beveridge. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1968.

Kalista, Kathleen, and Edward Wilkinson. *Indian and Southeast Asian Art: Selections from the Robert and Bernice Dickes Collection*. New York: Carlton Rochelle Asian Art, 2010.

Kossak, Steven. *Indian Court Painting: 16th–19th Century*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997.

Krishna, Naval. "Bikaneri Miniature Painting Workshops of Rukn-ud-din Ibrahim and Nathu." *Lalit Kala* 21 (1990): 23–7.

Krishna, Naval. "Painting and Painters in Bikaner: Notes on an Inventory Register of the Seventeenth Century." In *Indian Painting: Essays in Honour of Karl J. Khandalavala*, edited by B. N. Goswamy, 254–80. New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1995.

Krishna, Naval. "The Umarani Usta Master-Painters of Bikaner and Their Genealogy." In *Court Painting in Rajasthan*, edited by Andrew Topsfield. Mumbai: Marg, 2000.

Roxburgh, David. *The Persian Album, 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005.

Schwartz, Gary. "Connoisseurship: The Penalty of Ahistoricism." *Artibus et Historiae* 9, no. 18 (1988): 201–6.

Topsfield, Andrew. *Court Painting at Udaipur: Art under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar* (*Artibus Asiae* Supplementum 44). Zurich: Fischer and Museum Rietburg Zurich, 2001.

11

Convergent Conversations: Contemporary Art in Asian America

Margo Machida

The terrain of twenty-first century Asian America provides a transnational nexus where artists of different Asian and Asian diasporic backgrounds converge, their work and perspectives situated in the intersections of their own and other people's cultures as those cultures are complexly transposed and transformed in the United States. As social actors and witnesses to their times who are caught up with symbolic negotiations of place and position in a nation fashioned from the transactions of many groups – indigenous and immigrant alike – it is not unusual to find these artists guided by polycentric sensibilities and affinities. Their expressive efforts, linking the immediacy of personal experience with the unfolding social conditions that shape their themes and observations, engender fresh conceptions of Asia and things Asian that routinely exceed narrowly delineated boundaries between nations, cultures, and peoples.

The concept of "diaspora," by emphasizing mobility over stasis, highlights contemporary Asian subject positions that circulate among multiple locations, in which the United States might only be a temporary destination in an ongoing journey through successive nation-states. Since processes of globalization are inherently productive of diasporic communities, the idea of diaspora allows for distinct, multivalent identifications that can transcend bifurcated notions of domestic identity implicit in terms like "Asian American." Contemporary art produced under these complicated spatiosocial circumstances demonstrates how cultures and consciousness are continuously transformed through the interaction of – and contention with – difference, while also providing grounded understandings of how present-day

matters related to globalization, including migration, trade, warfare, and intercultural contact and mixing, are impacting the United States and western culture.

Even as the overlapping array of Asian diasporas that constitute Asian America has offered a dynamic magnet for transnational movement and interaction from its inception, the capacious language of globalization must nevertheless be tempered by an awareness of the importance of localism, place, and embodied histories in shaping individual consciousness and communal memory.[1] While some scholars proclaim a new era of "postnational globalism," and put forward rhetorics of nomadism and cosmopolitanism that elevate the status of mobility, it is important to keep in mind that matters anchored in locality and local circumstances continue to occupy a meaningful position in art produced in Asian America. It therefore remains necessary, as one cultural critic cogently reminds us, to be "skeptical about the seductive attraction of abstract polarities like the local and the global because they give an illusion of theoretical mastery over an unstable world of risk and uncertainty."[2]

Asian America as a Site of Global Convergence

The ties between the United States and Asia are longstanding. Soon after the new nation achieved independence, the China trade became an important generator of wealth that shaped local tastes and fashions and would rapidly extend to other parts of Asia. This burgeoning commerce, by progressively binding the fates of the United States and Asian and Pacific lands together, paved the way for missionary activity, Commodore Perry's 1853 opening of Japan, US gunboats patrolling Chinese rivers between 1854 and 1941, the 1898 annexation of the Philippines, Guam, and Hawai'i; the 1899 partial acquisition of Samoa, three major wars fought during the twentieth century on Asian soil (the World War II clash with the Japanese empire and the Cold War era conflicts in Korea and in Vietnam), and the current struggles in the South and West Asian nations of Afghanistan and Iraq – as well as the basing of armed forces throughout these regions to protect America's ever-expanding interests.

Yet, the Asian presence in the Americas significantly predates the formation of the United States as a nation. With peoples from Asia reaching North America as early as the 1600s, the territories absorbed into the United States, which would span a continent to enfold far-flung islands across the Pacific, have long been a fluid nexus for intercultural interchange and contention. In this expansive crosscultural "contact zone" increasingly made up of peoples transplanted from abroad, newly arriving Asians encountered and sometimes collided with one another, with growing numbers of American-born Asians, and with other groups in the larger US society.[3] Filipinos, following European routes forged through conflict, commerce, and religious conversion, could be found in Louisiana's bayous by the mid-1700s, and Chinese had begun to arrive in major East Coast port cities by the late eighteenth century. Their numbers, however, remained comparatively

small until the 1849 California gold rush attracted the first sizeable wave of Asian (primarily Chinese) migrants. They would successively be joined by many others – Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Koreans, and Indians – recruited as contract laborers to toil in the fields, fisheries, factories, railroads, and mines of the American West, and on Hawai'ian sugar and pineapple plantations.

This expanding Asian influx, in a nation polarized by racial friction even as it sought to espouse equality and pluralism, was soon met with intense resistance from European Americans. Urged on by this rising nativist reaction, a series of anti-Asian immigration laws were enacted, including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, aimed at stemming this flow of foreign labor. These efforts, culminating in the 1924 Immigration Act, would exclude virtually all Asians until repealed in 1943, in deference to the US World War II alliance with Nationalist China. While a trickle from allied Asian nations or those fleeing Communist regimes were allowed to enter during the Cold War, miniscule quotas continued to severely curb Asian immigration prior to the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act. This policy shift, alongside refugee statutes enacted in the wake of the Vietnam War, radically transformed the landscape and internal dynamics of Asian America, leading to a tenfold increase in the Asian presence over the ensuing four decades.[4] These latest entrants would comprise nearly 70 percent of the Asian population by 2000, substantially outstripping the US-born generations, most of whose forebears had settled in the US during the nineteenth century.[5]

Moreover, Asian migratory journeys, rather than solely following paths to the United States from originary points in Asia, have likewise sprung from dispersed Asian diasporas, delineating routes that are considerably more complicated than standard narratives might suggest. Today, for instance, one can find Japanese and Koreans from Brazil and Canada, and Chinese from Mexico, Peru, Cuba, and Panama, as well as ethnic Asians like Chinese from Vietnam and Thailand, and Vietnamese from Cambodia. There are also descendants of Asians who intermarried with non-Asians, their cross-identifications and mixed ethnoracial genealogies offering cultural and corporeal embodiments of these ongoing diasporic processes. More recently, rising numbers of South Asians have been wending their way to the US, some via longstanding diasporic communities in Britain or from other points in its former world-spanning empire. Unlike most previous settlers, new migrants from Asia and Asian diasporas alike can effortlessly maintain ongoing contact with their countries and cultures of origin, and with families and friends spread around the world, due to enhanced mobility afforded by inexpensive travel and access to powerful telecommunications and information networks.

Apart from aspects of cultural and religious heritages they may hold in common, Asians in America have often shared the effects of racialization, experiences of displacement and migration, and the impact of US foreign policy and warfare in Asia. Yet, they may also confront considerable differences, including long memories of antagonism between their countries of origin, to say nothing of extensive internal diversity and factional struggles. This conglomeration of Asian groups is dispersed across a national terrain rife with tensions and contradictory currents which offers a plenitude of possibilities for the formation of new types of affiliations and

affective identifications – as well as for unexpected hybrids that inevitably result from the interplay between cultures and peoples. The all-embracing expression Asian America, therefore, provides an overarching metacultural term for the disparate, ever-evolving Asian presence in the United States.

Despite this intrinsic heterogeneity, Asians – especially East and Southeast Asians – have commonly appeared in American media and popular culture as members of exotic civilizations replete with mystical and erotic possibilities, or as the faceless minions of monolithic societies. While the historical experience of Europeans in the vast, extraordinarily diverse territory of Asia tends to provide them with wider-ranging conceptions of what is Asian, the United States' more limited legacy of involvement in lands mainly adjoining the Pacific Rim has distinctively shaped American perceptions of who is Asian or "oriental." Although the idea of Asia – a term that arose in the European geographic tradition of naming – looms large in the western imaginary, rooted in a highly elaborated body of Orientalist tropes that have evolved over millennia of contact and conflict since the time of the ancient Greeks, Asia itself remains comparatively distant for most Americans.

Art, Identity Politics, and Asian America since the 1990s

In the US, the Asian presence is also deeply intertwined with an embattled domestic legacy of racialization and the protracted struggles for equal rights and economic opportunities by peoples of color. Alongside intensifying opposition to the Vietnam War, this vexed history had a powerful politicizing effect on youth in Asian America that fueled the rise of the Asian American movement in the 1970s. This pan-Asian surge of activism, brought together under the rubric of Asian American identity, sought to articulate a common cause among different Asian ethnic groups and evoked the rhetorics of territory, home, and belonging to stress an equal claim to place in the United States. Its leaders, influenced by the civil rights, Black power, Third World liberation, counterculture, women's rights, and gay rights movements, and linking domestic and global struggles for social justice and human rights, were chiefly American-born Asians – many of whom also worked alongside or directly participated in these movements that effected the momentous changes sweeping the US during the final decades of the twentieth century.

Seeking alternate grounds to foster new expressions of an Asian American consciousness, and paralleling efforts by scholars to establish fledgling ethnic studies programs in American universities, the arts were envisioned as a platform and site of resistance to affirm the histories and achievements of Asians in US society. Alongside concurrent grassroots cultural organizing among African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans, new organizations were established by activist artists during the 1970s aimed at developing a distinctly Asian American visual art and culture. Many of these artists, in response to their immediate experience, sought to portray the local circumstances and conditions of community life. The interlocking histories of US dealings with Asia and with

Asians in the domestic sphere also became a subject during this era, especially when artists addressed schismatic events that remained in living memory, such as the imprisonment of Japanese Americans in internment camps during World War II, ongoing US involvement in Korea, and the trauma of the Vietnam War among refugees who fled their Southeast Asian homelands. Lingering hostility over Japan's ferocious militarism in Asia and the Pacific during the 1930s and 1940s would likewise offer a compelling topic.

The past 20 years have been a remarkably fertile period for new writing and scholarship devoted to individual artists, past and present, as well as ambitious research efforts to construct regional and national Asian American art histories. Four important books devoted to Asian American art as a subject were released between 2007 and 2009 alone: a groundbreaking art historical survey spanning two centuries, an encyclopedia profiling artists born since the early 1900s; a thematic exploration of art from the 1990s engaged with self- and social identification; and a study chronicling the evolution of new types of artist groups.[6] Yet, much has also changed over this period, with post-1965 migratory flows reordering existing Asian ethnic populations and generating emergent communities across the breadth of the United States. With new arrivals from Asia often having little initial knowledge of, or identification with, the domestic histories and struggles that shaped Asian American cultural politics, it is not uncommon for them to feel that Asian American social and political conceptions do not reflect their interests, or the reality in their home countries, where they would instead self-identify and be identified in terms of a specific ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic affiliation, rather than as "Asian." Conversely, the distinguishing concerns of Asians who have undergone multiple displacements are often more involved with movement, flow, fragmentation, and multiple points of connection, than with place or fixity. This Asian influx, reflective of such varied national, diasporic, and migratory positions, has introduced a host of fresh perspectives and differing priorities that have both unsettled and recast the discourses surrounding Asian identity politics and multiculturalism in the United States.

By the 1990s, the expanding presence of foreign-born Asian artists and intellectuals was having a significant impact on Asian American art communities and the American art world. The decade witnessed the formation of open-ended gatherings of artists, outside of institutionalized community-based organizations, that brought together the foreign- and American-born, as well as the emergence of a younger generation, some of whom were carving out fresh positions critical of multiculturalist and racial politics. In parallel with these changes, there was a shift toward exhibitions, organized both domestically and abroad, that emphasized international connections among Asians.[7] This development registered the more visible presence and influence of "Asian Asians" in the US art world and academy, along with the rising economic, political, and cultural impact of Asian nations in an ever more multi-centered world.

This conceptual realignment provided the pivot around which to place Asian American art in larger inter-regional and transnational frameworks, allowing the

notion of diaspora, with its connotations of multilocated experience spanning centuries, continents, and generations, to take center stage. While some of these framings were centered on the domestic realm, in other exhibitions, art from Asian America was taken as just one point of reference alongside art from Asia and from Asian diasporic communities around the world. For the most part, such projects, by juxtaposing artists in Asia with their ethnic counterparts in Asian diasporas, sought to catalyze dialogues between homelands and diasporas; to trace trajectories of peoples and influences; to explore historical relations of power and conflict; or even to manifest how notions of Asian-ness, nation, and home are provisional and mutable. *transPOP: Korea Vietnam Remix* (Arko Art Center, Seoul, South Korea, 2007), and *Present Tense Biennial 2009: Chinese Character* (Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco) are among the more recent of these exhibitions. Enfolding artists of Korean and Vietnamese descent who have lived in South Korea, Vietnam, and the United States, *transPOP* considered how these two Asian societies are entwined not only by Cold War histories and traditional cultural influences, but also by intersecting economies – as witnessed by the simultaneous interchange between Korean and Vietnamese youth cultures that has attracted a considerable overseas and US Asian audience.[8] The organizers of *Chinese Character*, conceiving of contemporary Chinese-ness as straddling multiple points of attachment, solicited works by Chinese from the mainland and other parts of Asia, Chinese Americans, multi-ethnic Asian Americans, as well as non-Chinese artists, around the question of what it means to be Chinese in the modern world.[9]

Artists in the Asian American Diasporic Nexus

Through work that ranges from the intensely personal to the straightforwardly political, and approaches to making art that can be as rigorously cerebral as poetic, elusive and indirect, humorous, or informed by fantasy processes and dreams, artists in Asian America today embrace virtually every medium, stylistic exploration, and intellectual current, drawing upon the full range of contemporary formal, representational, and critical strategies. The artists discussed here, while of diverse heritages, generations, and places of birth, are conjoined by their copresence in the United States, and have produced individual pieces and bodies of work around subjects that denote parallels and convergences in their responses to their social and physical landscape, historical moment, and everyday realities. The issues being attended to in their work, therefore, assay the phenomenon of intercultural interaction – as experienced and conceived – by proceeding at many levels simultaneously, from personal encounters, family relationships, and community life, to world-circling historical, economic, and political events that have brought groups together in the US sphere by circumstance, necessity, or force, and often continue to infuse their relationships in this nation. At the same time, their interests, desires, and life trajectories are not necessarily unique

to Asians, nor are they unified by any single aesthetic sensibility, art-making tradition, or belief system.

The in-depth focus on individual artists allows for a higher degree of specificity than can be achieved through a broad thematic overview. To account for the very real impact of human agency and individual intervention on the production of meaning, the information on each artist is derived from my own interviews with them, and framed by biographical material that provides a life-based context for understanding her or his concerns and motivations. Their imaginative transactions, by embodying a "performative aesthetics of connectivity and linkage," offer animate points of encounter around which to construct fuller personal and collective understandings of the contemporary world and our places within it.[10]

The work is broadly grouped around four coextensive thematic armatures: transnational circulation, polycentric affinities, embodied affiliations, and war and remembrance. Each of these schemata, by framing correspondences and points of connection, brings forward a significant facet of the Asian presence in the US that has aroused the attention of contemporary artists. Transnational circulation – intertwining trajectories of people, goods, and ideas, with thematics of arrival, place, and dwelling – speaks of the boundary-hopping journeys that have continually reshaped Asian America. Polycentric affinities considers how relations between cultures, peoples, and histories (Asian and non-Asian alike) complicate subject positions in the American sphere, while embodied affiliations acknowledges the cultural and emotional resonance of mixed ethnic and racial backgrounds and upbringings on traditional notions of group membership and collectivity. Interweaving the public and private realms, war and remembrance looks to how artists contend with personal and historical legacies of trauma, rupture, and displacement – both within groups and across ethnic lines – arising from hostilities in Asia. Highlighting what I term "iconographies of presence," and drawing from a range of visual and cultural influences, the selected work samples contemporary standpoints, affiliations, and frictions as Asians circulate in the US sociopolitical sphere, and should not be construed as providing a comprehensive overview of current art in Asian America; nor are these examples necessarily representative of the entirety of each artist's *oeuvre*, expressive interests, and current concerns.

Transnational Circulation

Painter, mixed media and installation artist Hung Liu (b. 1948), who grew up in the People's Republic of China amid the extraordinary ferment of the Cultural Revolution, relocated to the US in her mid-thirties. Drawn mainly from photographic sources, her art bestows a prominent place to Chinese women through whose images she frequently addresses larger issues. Liu's decision to start life anew outside China, where she came to conceive of herself as part of

a continuum of Chinese experience that equally encompasses her homeland and "overseas" Chinese communities, has made the artist attentive to local signs of historic Chinese travel and settlement. In *Can-ton: The Baltimore Series*, a sprawling 1995 installation situated in an old bank building in the Canton district of Baltimore (whose name is derived from its link to the artist's homeland), Liu foregrounds the Chinese presence in the US through the material bonds that emerged between Baltimore and Canton following that American port city's 1785 entry into the lucrative China trade. Significantly, the first documented Chinese to have settled on the US East Coast arrived in Baltimore aboard an American merchant ship soon after the inauguration of commercial relations with China.

For this project Liu assembled a group of paintings and objects, that she termed "identity fragments," to mark out Baltimore's history in ways that allude to the peoples, places, and autobiographical associations through which the artist situates herself in the United States. Liu's installation was held in conjunction with an exhibition of historic Chinese trade goods; the artist took the visual metaphor of voyaging as a means to tack back and forth between distant places and different eras – a common way for Chinese to look at history in which events across long stretches of time and space are superimposed and collapsed. The installation incorporated Liu's paintings of a China trade sailing ship, 1950s-era residents of Baltimore's Chinatown, and locally born celebrities like baseball player Babe Ruth and African American singer Billie Holiday. These domestic vignettes were loosely commingled with China-centered references, including the artist's reproductions of Chinese Buddhist murals located astride the Silk Road, an ancient Asian overland trading network, and figures of young Chinese women appropriated from catalogue-like albums of prostitutes made by nineteenth-century Chinese photographers. One piece in the installation, entitled *Migrants*, comprises a pair of oval paintings with the silhouetted figure of a traditional Chinese junk, emblematic of Chinese ocean travel, mounted between them. To contrast the circumscribed situations of those who remained in China with the globe-spanning adventures that have drawn many out of their homeland, the left-hand image depicts a pair of nineteenth-century Chinese women unhurriedly being conveyed in an antique handcart, while the right-hand picture superimposes one of their faces over a modern satellite image of our planet viewed from outer space.

Born in India in 1937, much of Zarina Hashmi's (or Zarina, as she prefers to be known) art embodies a peripatetic life that has taken the printmaker and sculptor to many Asian nations, as well as to Europe, North Africa, and Latin America. She has lived in the US since 1976, becoming a citizen in 1993 and ultimately settling in New York, a city with a highly diverse international populace, including a sizable and growing South Asian presence. The artist, who perceives a formal congruence through visual simplification between Islamic artistic traditions and aspects of Euro-American geometric abstraction and minimalism, draws on such spare means to address worldly realities. While Zarina considers her Indian Muslim heritage deeply meaningful as a cultural lens through which she filters her often profoundly personal work, she nevertheless conceives of herself as a

secular artist, her influences and practice shaped by cosmopolitanism and the cultural hybridity of the Indian environment in which she was raised.

In the 1997 etching series *Homes I Made/A Life in Nine Lines*, and in the 2001 woodcuts of *Atlas of My World*, Zarina embarked on projects that provide, at vastly different scales, an index of her roving presence in the world. To connect her current life in the US to the succession of dwellings she has inhabited since leaving India in 1958, and to the serial displacements of her wide-ranging journeys, *Homes I Made/A Life in Nine Lines* incorporates hand-drawn floor plans of every one of her homes – ranging from Bangkok to New York – while *Atlas of My World* (fig. 11-1) consists of simply rendered representations of individual nations and whole continents, including North America, prominently centered on the United States. Signaling her symbolic possession of these far-flung sites, Zarina identifies each with a text in Urdu, her mother tongue and a major language of South Asia, that is written in Arabic script. A reference to the artist's adopted American city also figures prominently in *those cities blotted into the wilderness* (2003). Having as a child witnessed the fierce intercommunal carnage that attended the 1947 British withdrawal from India, Zarina is not only acutely conscious of mistreatment and discrimination directed against her coreligionists, but also has a keen appreciation for human vulnerability and resilience in the face of social disruption on an immense scale. This woodcut portfolio, therefore, joins eight overhead maps of cities like Baghdad and Srebrenica that have witnessed havoc and bloodshed involving fellow Muslims, to the image entitled "New York," in which a vertical pair of opalescent stripes on a raven-black ground evokes the 2001 destruction of the World Trade Center's twin towers by Islamist radicals.

Michael Arcega's family settled in California in 1983, when the Philippine-born conceptual artist was ten years old. Through the off-hand use of humorous materials and word-play, Arcega's reproductions of antique sailing ships, armor, heraldic shields, and the facades of Catholic cathedrals address the ongoing effects of the past on the present in shaping whole societies. *El Conquistadork* (2004), referencing the material globalization that attended Spain's post-Columbian imperial expansion, is a ten-foot-long incarnation of a Manila galleon in which Chinese luxury goods were once transshipped via the Philippines in exchange for silver mined in the New World (fig. 11-2). However, *El Conquistadork*, with its mocking title meant to diminish (indeed, emasculate) the former all-powerful colonizer of the Philippines, is no meticulously rendered historical icon. Unlike the stout wooden vessels that had once joined the artist's homeland to East Asia and far-flung Spanish possessions in the Americas, this sculptural object's model-like hull and masts were drolly concocted from mass-produced manila folders.

In a videotaped performance the artist also sailed on this seemingly flimsy craft to replicate, in microcosm, a local aspect of the centuries-long flow of goods, people, and influences between the Philippines and the Americas. Arcega's quasi-public nautical re-enactment served as something more than a quixotic gesture since its site, in northern California's Tomales Bay, is documented as a safe harbor for galleons sailing from Manila to Acapulco from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The performance provided an animate link between past

FIGURE 11-1 Zarina, *Atlas of My World I*, 2001, from a portfolio of six woodcuts with Urdu text, block size variable, 25.5 × 19.5 in. Courtesy of the artist.

FIGURE 11-2 Michael Arcega, artist performance of *The Maiden Voyage of El Conquistadork*, February 14, 2004, Tomales Bay, Marshall, California. Courtesy of the artist.

and present, by acknowledging the global reach of colonialism in bonding the land of the artist's birth to the American state in which he now resides, as the Philippines and California found themselves under the sway of Spain beginning in 1521 and 1542 respectively. *El Conquistadork*'s fabrication from commonplace office supplies further suggests, for the artist, how earlier forms of international domination, loosely mingling trade, culture, and religion, are replicated by the "new colonialism" of modern globe-spanning corporate enterprises.

Polycentric Affinities

Florence (Flo) Oy Wong (b. 1938) is a mixed media and installation artist who was born and raised in Oakland, California's Chinatown, where her family once owned a Chinese restaurant. Her autobiographically inspired works pay tribute to past generations of Chinese immigrants who defied considerable odds to make a landfall for themselves and their progeny in the United States. Wong's signature motif from the 1970s onwards is the use of burlap rice sacks with their commercial logos left intact. Overprinted with photo-silkscreened portraits and embellished with hand-embroidered texts, their personal significance is traceable to a period when Wong's family was impoverished, subsisting mainly on donated bags of rice. Since rice sacks were commonly recycled as dishcloths, sheets, and underwear by poor immigrant families, and since rice itself is iconic of sustenance for East Asians, for the artist the motif serves as a primary symbol of the ingenuity and perseverance that enabled the collective survival of Chinese communities in America.

The subject of family likewise provided Wong with a fertile ground to engage with the difficult circumstances shared by all people of color who came of age in the US during the 1940s and 1950s. The installation *Baby Jack Rice* (1993–6) emerged from her Chinese American husband's account of his boyhood in Augusta, Georgia, where his family once owned a rural grocery store. Printed on rice sacks, and incorporating photo-derived images from the period and oral histories that Wong had solicited, the silkscreened piece commemorates her husband's close childhood friendship with an African American family. The project not only spotlighted the Chinese presence in the American South, and the personal bonds that sometimes flourished between Asian Americans and African Americans despite barriers imposed by racial segregation, but also illuminated another commonality between these communities of color – both groups' involvement with the planting and cultivation of rice in the United States.

Born in 1959 in Bonn, the pre-reunification capital of West Germany, Korean American artist Y. David Chung traveled the globe as the son of a former South Korean naval officer and diplomat, a background that instilled in him an abiding awareness of cultural difference. In the 1970s, the artist followed his family to Washington, DC, where his father opened a series of small businesses after retiring from the South Korean foreign service. Chung's wide-ranging work takes

in important US and international collaborations that reflect his life-long fascination with the emergence of new "hybrid cultures" through local sites of contact and cross-fertilization. Many of Chung's drawings, installations, films, and performance pieces from the mid-1980s through the 1990s manifest an urban vision of the Korean American experience that is played out amid a roiling, multi-ethnic landscape being continually transformed by overlapping waves of migrants from around the world.

A seminal project, combining visual and martial art, performance, video, music, and dance, and bringing together local actors, musicians, artists, and film-makers from diverse communities, was the 1988 electronic rap opera, *Seoul House (Korean Outpost)*. Chung's floor-to-ceiling wraparound charcoal mural of a family-owned grocery's interior and its surrounding urban panorama, boldly rendered in a graphic style influenced by comic art and animation, served as the backdrop for this multimedia production. It related the travails of three generations of a Korean immigrant family – a son longing to leave his claustrophobic confines, a combative father obsessed with economic survival, and a grandmother emotionally anchored in the homeland. Successive encounters between the Korean merchant's family and representatives of the outside world, including an aggressive Caucasian salesman and an African American deliveryman, illuminated different facets of the struggle to contend with a rapidly changing social environment. Most of the actors wore highly stylized masks of the artist's design that bore fixed facial expressions to indicate particular character types, a device informed by traditional Korean mask theater. *Seoul House* was first mounted at Washington Project for the Arts amid growing tensions between local Korean merchants and other people of color that erupted in hostile confrontations around the nation during the 1980s, a pattern culminating in the 1992 Los Angeles riots. This nationally televised four-day-long explosion of violence saw numerous Korean businesses looted and burned to the ground, and armed Korean Americans defending their livelihoods with live ammunition.

The position in the US South Asian diaspora of Indian-born, New York conceptual and mixed-media artist and social activist Jaishri Abichandani (b. 1969) is pivotal to her imaginative efforts. Upon arriving in 1984 as a teenager from Mumbai, the artist settled with her family in Queens, a section of New York City that has become home to rapidly expanding immigrant communities from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa. There, Abichandani regularly came in contact with other diasporic South Asians – Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Nepalis and Sri Lankans – with whom she would not normally have interacted in India. Inspired by her presence in an urban setting that allows for the formation of inter-Asian affiliations which would rarely occur in homelands where these groups are separated by histories of political and religious strife, the artist, in the photographs of the ongoing *Reconciliations* series (2007–), merges segments of cityscapes acquired off the internet. These composite color images, emblematic of a unitary vision of our planet, allude to contemporary urban conjunctions the world over. "Siliconvalleybangalore" (2008), for example, pairs two major hubs of

global information technology, while in "TehranKarachi" (2007) Abichandani registers the flight of Iranians to Pakistan during the 1980s, following the 1979 overthrow of the Shah and the ensuing war between Iran and Iraq. For "NewYorkMumbai" (2007), the artist drew on local surroundings by combining images of Willets Point, a gritty Queens industrial neighborhood and Dharavi, a major slum in central Mumbai, both marginal neighborhoods in great metropolitan centers typically associated with urban blight, where tenacious immigrants and refugees nonetheless manage to thrive.

Born in 1936, Japanese painter Masami Teraoka studied art in his homeland before leaving for the US in 1964. Arriving in Los Angeles in his mid-twenties, he was strongly affected by his contact with California's expanding counterculture; drawn to a permissive atmosphere that placed a premium on expressions of individuality and sexual freedom – attitudes that contrasted sharply with the highly defined strictures he had known in Japan. Time spent in America would eventually direct the artist's attention toward the observation of contrasting cultural mores. After relocating to Hawai'i, a major Japanese tourist destination that has been the artist's permanent home since the early 1980s, Teraoka frequently came across vacationing countrymen and women, and found himself scrutinizing their behavior. In the often comic watercolors of *The New Wave* series and the follow-up mixed woodblock and etched prints of *Hawaii Snorkel* series from the early to mid-1990s, all rendered in the antique Japanese *ukiyo-e* style, Teraoka used his growing distance from the culture of his birth to gauge the changing social attitudes of his compatriots through their reactions toward foreigners. To mark these different peoples' fascination, ambivalence, and misapprehension when dealing with one another, in these imaginary scenarios, typified by the image of a samurai gaping at a Caucasian woman in a revealing swimsuit (*Makapuu Sighting*, 1991), Teraoka wryly depicts the chance encounters of Japanese tourists and westerners on the beaches of Oahu.

Embodied Affiliations

Tomie Arai (b. 1949), a Japanese American printmaker and installation artist, was born and raised in New York City. Growing up in an ethnically mixed neighborhood and married to a Chinese American, she views Asians in the US as part of a larger "third world" urban environment, and finds common cause in the histories and struggles of other minoritized groups. Arai, who describes herself as a social artist, articulates Asian American histories and experiences from a woman's perspective, while also engaging in public art projects that have integrally involved collaborations with members of other ethnic communities – Asian and non-Asian – whose lived realities and historical experiences she seeks to portray. In *Framing an American Identity*, a 1992 site-specific installation at New York's Alternative Museum, Arai contrasted the considerable internal diversity that exists among contemporary Japanese Americans with the delimited representations by

which they are commonly known in the US. Comprising photo-derived silk-screened images on wood and glass, the installation alternated life-sized depictions of real people and a compendium of stereotypic "oriental" types perpetuated in American film, popular culture, and wartime propaganda. Among the 18 assembled facial portraits of Japanese Americans were members of the artist's family and friends, and their fourth- and fifth-generation children, some of mixed backgrounds. Accompanying each visage was a label encoding the person's ethnic and generational status, including those of mixed African, Iranian, Jewish, Korean, and Scottish descent, and Arai's own fourth-generation son of Chinese and Japanese heritage. Taken together, these portraits not only acknowledge the high rate of out-marriage among Japanese Americans, and the larger trend toward interethnic and interracial unions in Asian American communities, but further suggest that hybridity itself is foundational to what it means to be an American.

Colorado-based photographer, mixed media, and installation artist Albert Chong, who is of Chinese and African ancestry, embodies several generations of racial and cultural intermixing on both sides of the family. His parents are the progeny of nineteenth-century unions between Chinese men who were recruited in China to labor on Jamaican plantations following the British Empire's abolition of slavery in 1833, and local Afro-Caribbean women. The last of nine children born to a merchant family in 1958, he grew up in Kingston, Jamaica and immigrated to America with his parents at the age of 19. To create a psychic home for himself in the US, where he came to identify with the Rastafari movement (an Afro-centric religious-political movement originating in his homeland in the 1930s), Chong devised a "personal cosmology" that drew upon imagery, objects, and religious and magical rituals associated with a sustaining Jamaican cultural legacy, including symbolic dialogues with ancestral spirits. In several bodies of photographs and installations from the 1980s he evoked quasi-supernatural forces through spiritually infused objects like coconuts and cowry shells. Although these pieces, often involving self-constructed shrines and altars, are derived from African and indigenous Caribbean traditions predating the introduction of Mediterranean monotheism to the Caribbean, the artist, by recognizing East Asian ancestor worship as an allied devotional practice, conceived a potent means of engaging with his combined Afro-Asian-Caribbean legacy.

Presented in wide copper frames debossed with hand-written notations, many of the artist's photo-based works spanning the mid-1980s through the 1990s incorporate the oral accounts and old photographs of relatives with partial Asian backgrounds. While Chong primarily identifies as Afro-Caribbean, his father's death in 1989 proved to be catalytic by severing a primary link to his Asian heritage. The loss of his father, who spoke Chinese, observed traditional holidays, and brought him on visits to Chinese relatives, impelled Chong to more actively chronicle the Chinese features of his family's history. These pieces, inscribed with the artist's poetry, prose, and journal entries, as well as familial narratives and song lyrics, are richly embellished with line drawings and symbols gleaned from non-western iconographies around the globe – corresponding to a world view

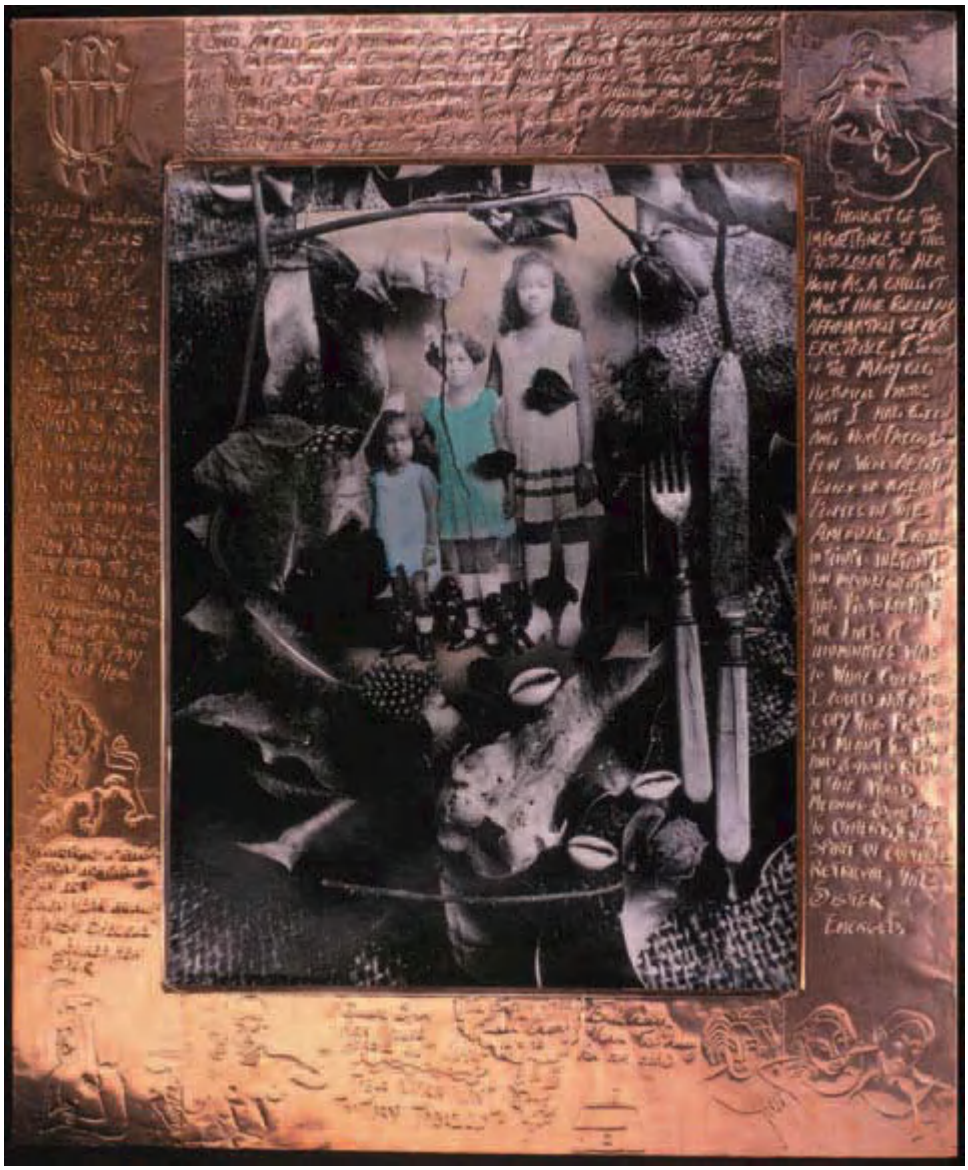

FIGURE 11-3 Albert Chong, *The Sisters*, 1986, hand-tinted gelatin silver print with debossed copper frame. Courtesy of the artist.

that seeks multiple points of identification with peoples of color. Among them are hauntingly poetic tributes to his female forebears such as *The Sisters* (1986), a hand-tinted gelatin silver print containing a triple portrait of Chong's mother as a young girl alongside her sister and a female cousin, that is overlaid with poignant personal objects (cowry shells, dried roses, a tarnished fork and knife) and affixed to a rough burlap ground, a reference to the 100-pound sacks of sugar piled high in the Kingston store once owned by the artist's father. The surrounding

text declares that the three girls are all of African-Chinese ancestry, indexes the place and time in which this family history is anchored, and testifies to how the artist acquired and responded to the image. Side by side with these writings, forming a syncretic spiritual pantheon that is thoroughly entwined with Chong's conception of Jamaican identity, are a Haitian voodoo goddess, a European saint, and Christian African figures elicited from Egyptian and Ethiopian iconographies.

Richard A. Lou (b. 1959), a conceptual, installation, and performance artist, and a cultural activist, was born to a Chinese father and a Mexican mother, both immigrants to the United States. Lou, who was raised in San Diego, California, and Tijuana, Mexico – neighboring Pacific coast cities with combined greater metropolitan areas that straddle both nations – embraces his dual ethno-racial heritage, even as he primarily identifies himself as Chicano.[11] As a youth, Lou maintained ongoing connections with Chinese communities in Tijuana, where his family had once owned a large grocery, and later, like his father, married a Mexican woman. Ironically, the US wrought the circumstances that led to Lou's birth, since his father's business in Tijuana (where he met the artist's mother) was established to serve both Mexicans and a local Chinese community initially diverted from the US because of the Chinese Exclusion Act. Today, the largest concentration of Mexicans with East Asian origins (from China, Japan, and Korea) lives adjacent to California in border cities like Tijuana and Mexicali.

FIGURE 11-4 Richard A. Lou, *Stories on My Back*, 2008, mixed media installation with audio piece, digital prints, and corn husks. Courtesy of the artist.

Although his immediate family's Mexican heritage is predominant, Lou considers family in the fullest sense to be their birthright. *Stories on My Back*, a 2008 mixed media and sound installation mounted at the Power House Memphis gallery in Tennessee, was conceived as a commemorative space through which Lou symbolically reunited his children with their Asian grandfather, who died when they were infants (fig. 11-4). Since Lou now resides in Memphis, and has relatives of mixed Chinese and African American heritage in the American South, the installation draws on an account of nineteenth-century Coahoma, Mississippi, inspired by the experience of the artist's grandfather who had joined Chinese relatives introduced into this rural region as "coolies" following the Civil War. As oral tradition is Lou's chief means of maintaining ties to his Chinese familial legacy, for this piece his son and three daughters recited audiotaped stories from the period related to the artist by his own father, that were played continually alongside photographs of each sibling pantomiming a scene inspired by one of these accounts. The children's portraits, superimposed over intermingled maps of China, Mexico, and California, were set in wall-mounted light boxes whose glowing forms conjured Chinese lanterns. All displayed placards on which their Chinese surnames were inscribed in Chinese characters, held pebbles on their extended tongues, and juggled additional pebbles. The pebbles allude to the artist's youthful father who pragmatically sought to eliminate his Chinese accent through self-designed elocution exercises reminiscent of the ancient Greek orator and statesman Demosthenes' means of overcoming a speech impediment. The light boxes were framed by rows of tubular corn husks and flanked by offering bowls along the floor that contained, along with sticks of burning incense, mixtures of rice kernels and dried beans, elemental symbols of life and nurturance for East Asian and indigenous American cultures. A stream of cornhusks likewise encased overhead lights along the entire length of the exhibition space, their elongated shapes simultaneously alluding to the mythic forms of the scaled Chinese dragon and to Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent deity once worshipped throughout much of Mesoamerica, the two symbols iconic of the Lou family's dual heritages. Significantly, the installation was centered on a rectangular doorframe evocative of thick Aztec or Mayan temple portals, a distinctive architectonic element that the artist equates with the moon gate, the traditional circular entrance to Chinese gardens that his father had built at their San Diego home.

Susan Sponsler, a photographer and mixed-media artist who currently lives in Texas, arrived in the United States as an infant six years after the end of the Korean War. Born in 1958, she was adopted in South Korea by a US veteran of the conflict and raised in a small town in rural Iowa. Such adoptions, almost all by Caucasians, were made possible by transnational agencies established to find homes for children orphaned by the war, given up amid the widespread social disruption and economic hardship that followed in its wake, or fathered by US servicemen.[12] Sponsler began to use art to heed the convoluted matters of self-perception surrounding being a transracial adoptee after becoming involved with photography in the mid-1980s. The artist's upbringing was a positive experience,

yet she was deeply immersed in a wider US culture that viewed East Asians as inherently foreign, and commonly assumed that she must be a recent immigrant. During this period, which corresponded to the rising influence of multiculturalism in the US art world, Sponsler began to look to American artists of Asian background who were dealing with their identities, yet their work failed to resonate with her own circumstances, as they often drew on the histories and situations of immigrant families. Their stress on cultural heritage, ethnic pride, and relations between generations also proved problematic, as the artist's sense of connection to Korea and her Korean ancestry was quite attenuated. Although the artist chafed at societal presumptions about how she was expected to identify based simply on physical appearance or ethnic origin, in due course she began to regard her position as being within the spectrum of Asian American concerns. Not finding her distinctive outlook reflected in the Asian American art she saw at the time, Sponsler resolved to foreground her own story.

Created between 1996 and 1999, *Assumed Identity* is an autobiographically inspired mixed-media project consisting of 21 color photo-based works that incorporates a compendium of imagery, texts, and personal items (among them the artist's infant portrait from the adoption agency's case file) and explores the inescapable impact of transnational adoption on her life. The first piece, also titled "Assumed Identity" (1997), is a horizontal triptych featuring Sponsler's adult face, her mask-like features melding with the faint underlying image of Korean women performing a traditional fan dance, and flanked by depictions of Asia and North America, each continent blurred as if fixed on a rapidly spinning globe. The central composition embodies the artist's disquieting insight that external appearance is inseparably entwined with self-perception, since no matter how she chooses to view herself, her face will be deemed as forever "alien" in the only land she has ever known. The placement of the self-portrait, equidistant between the two hemispheres, vividly denotes the considerable physical and psychic distance that Korean adoptees in the United States have had to travel, while equally conveying the artist's perception that their status remains perpetually liminal, as they will never fully belong to either culture.

War and Remembrance

Photographer Hanh Thi Pham (b. 1954) grew up in South Vietnam and joined the desperate exodus to the west when Communist North Vietnam emerged victorious in 1975. Settling in California, Pham seized upon photography to come to terms with her memories of that violent era in which an estimated four million Vietnamese combatants and civilians on both sides were killed or wounded, to say nothing of the neighboring Cambodian and Laotian casualties and the nearly 58,000 US servicemen and women who also died. Pham's highly manipulated color photographs speak forcefully to social and psychological trauma from the stance of a young girl caught up in the terror and disorientation of war who,

as an adult refugee, strove to confront the life she was forced to leave behind and its unresolved legacy in a reconstituted Vietnamese American community that mirrored the deep political schisms and traditional social expectations of Vietnamese society. Despite an emphasis on conflict, Pham's fiercely subjective work from this period allows for mutual recognition and accommodation by evoking the inherent complexity of the situation on all sides, without falling back on conventional rhetorics of anti-Americanism.

In *Along the Street of Knives*, a large series from 1985, Pham employs her own image and that of white California sculptor Richard Turner, who lived in Vietnam as a teenager, as stand-ins for their respective societies. Through privately staged, self-performative *tableaux vivants*, the artist foregrounds, from dual vantage points, the corrosive impact of the American intervention, including the uneasy cohabitation and misunderstandings that all too often typified wartime relations between Vietnamese and Americans. Pham's darkest visions are given expression in "Interrogation & Avenge I," and "Interrogation & Avenge II," two photographs in which Pham and Turner engage in deadly acts of aggression against each other. The first depicts the artist drowning Turner in a washtub, while the second not only reverses their positions but also portrays both artists suspended upside down like slaughtered animals. The process, for Pham, of symbolically re-enacting the reciprocal ferocity of the conflict allows for both combatants to perceive their own pain through the wounding of the other, thereby acknowledging that the perpetuation of such antagonism in America would only serve to destroy everyone involved.

Binh Danh (b. 1977), whose father served in the South Vietnamese army, escaped his homeland with his family when he was a three-year-old, while Elizabeth K. Moy (b. 1978) is the mixed-race daughter of a Caucasian mother and Chinese American career soldier who has served in Vietnam and Iraq. With mutual histories linked through fathers who fought in Vietnam, and by the war's psychic and social ruptures transmitted from one generation to the next, each photographer has actively sought to "process," from a present-day vantage point, the compelling yet elusive wartime memories of their parents' generation. For artists whose lives have been profoundly touched by a conflict they were too young to have witnessed, the era must be imaginatively reconstructed through traces gleaned from film and television images, and from popular period sources like newspapers and magazines, together with family photographs and stories. At Danh's suggestion, in 2006 they jointly mounted the exhibition, *Disrupted: A Photographic Installation about Memory, History and War* at San Francisco's Intersection for the Arts.

Printed directly on leaves, Danh's mixed media pieces consisted of ghostly photographic portraits of individual American military casualties from a 1970s issue of *Life* magazine (fig. 11-5). Employing a photosynthetic process he devised, and variously presented as hanging mobiles, wall pieces, and artifacts encased in low vitrines, these fragile works testified to the haunting legacy of violence and bloodshed that, for the artist, appears to still permeate the very vegetation and

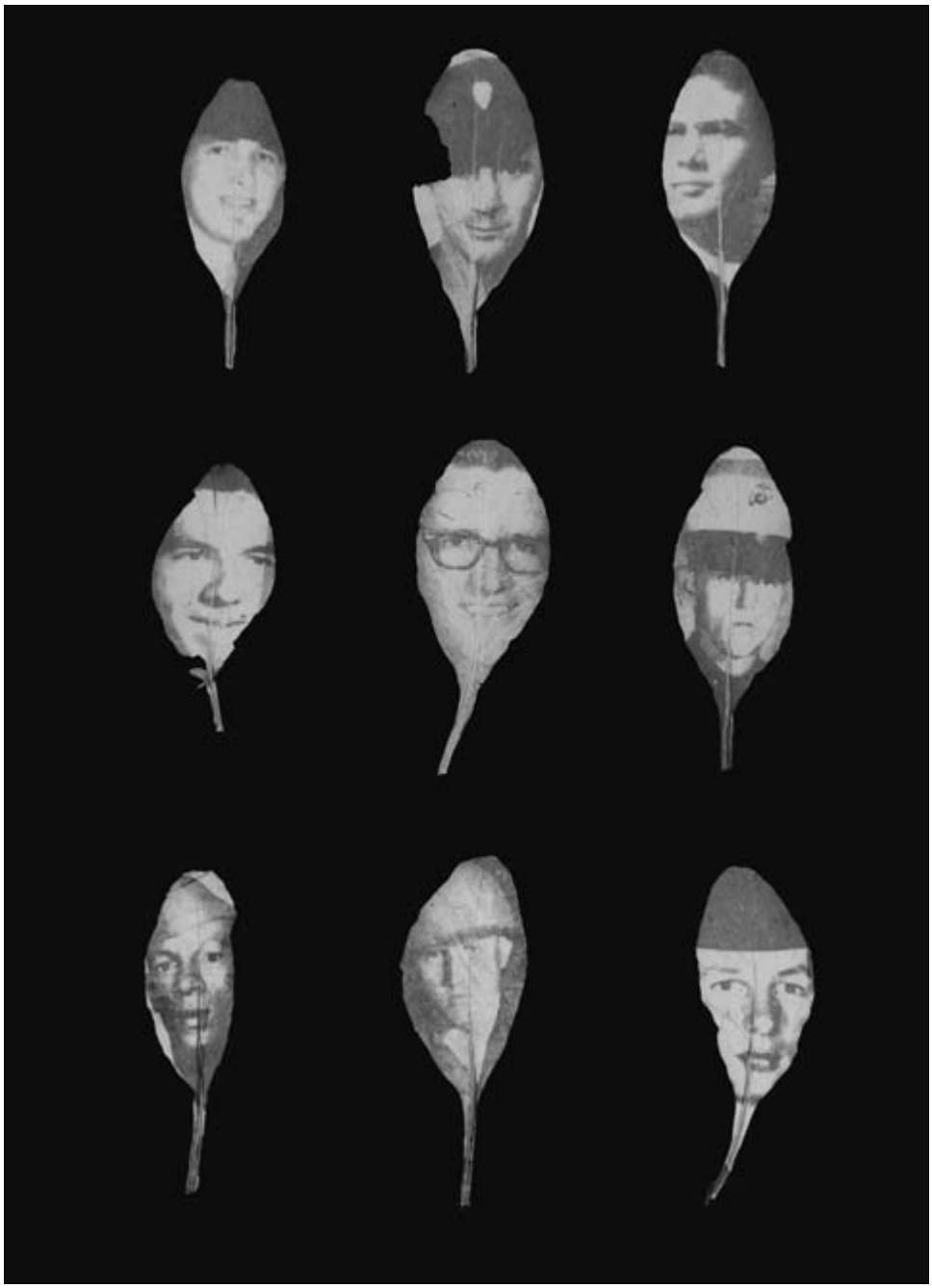

FIGURE 11-5 Binh Danh, from the *One Week's Dead Series*, 2006, chlorophyll print and resin, 10 × 8 in each. Courtesy of the artist.

soil of his homeland. Moy contributed a series of 15 sizable color photographs, in which snapshots taken by her young father in Vietnam were enlarged and presented at the same scale with ones she had recently made. The commingling of these images generated a highly subjective intervisual dialogue that blurred the distinctions between her father's photographs and her own subsequent consideration of his experience of combat and its psychological aftermath, including his uncomfortable position as a Chinese American at war in an Asian nation. To firmly ground *Disrupted* in California's twentieth-century military history, Danh and Moy deployed, alongside their individual work, a collaboratively produced short video in which eerie found footage of US marines on night maneuvers was intercut with passages shot by the artists of an abandoned World War II coastal fortification in a former San Francisco military base that subsequently became a Cold War site for Nike anti-aircraft missiles.

Born in South Korea several months before the end of the Korean War in 1953, artist, educator, curator, and political activist Yong Soon Min arrived in the US at the age of seven. As a self-identified child of the Cold War, Min empathizes deeply with people from nations who suffered as pawns in that long-running international conflict. In *DMZ XING*, commissioned by Real Art Ways of Hartford, Connecticut, Min linked her own history to those of the more than a million Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Hmong, and Amerasians who had settled in the US by 1990. Min interviewed local Southeast Asian refugees over several months during 1993; their meetings yielded a rich body of textual and visual material that provided the conceptual core for this 1994 piece. The project's title, referring to commonplace American street crossing signs and to the imposed demilitarized zones that bisected Korea and Vietnam alike, points to transhistorical parallels and commonalities between the circumstances of different Asian groups whose lives were forever changed by these Cold War conflicts, as well as to the artist's hope for the ultimate removal, the "X-ing out," of the political and historical barriers that have split these nations and peoples in Asia and in the United States.

For *DMZ XING* Min designed a circular gallery-sized enclosure whose surrounding eight-foot-tall walls were centered on a freestanding octagonal pillar sheathed in mirrors. Framed ensembles of photographs of the refugee families, arrayed on 16 vertical glass panels, were spaced sequentially around the pristine interior wall of the edifice to form an extended intertextual group narrative. The panels were densely overlaid with lightly etched texts that incorporated excerpts from the life stories and postwar experiences of these Asian refugees, Min's personal ruminations on the Cold War, as well as historical material on the division of Korea and Vietnam, and statistics on war casualties and recent Southeast Asian migration. To denote that the lives of the audience were also implicated in these histories, and to create the awareness that they were engaged in acts of reconstruction and interpretation, the artist made extensive use of materials with reflective and transparent properties which allowed viewers to continually see their own images, while at the same time summoning the elusive, fragmentary, and evanescent character of personal and historical memory.

Based in Arizona, installation artist Mona Higuchi was born in Hawai'i in 1942 to a Japanese American father and a Korean American mother. Since 1988, often in collaboration with sound and video artist Richard Lerman, she has engaged in site-specific projects focused on human rights and social justice, spanning subjects such as the Japanese American internment, contention over illegal immigration on the US–Mexican border, the concealed mass murders of Latin American military regimes, Kristallnacht, the 1938 nationwide anti-Semitic rampage in Nazi Germany that preceded the Holocaust, and imperial Japan's use of Korean (and other Asian) "comfort women" to provide sexual services for their military during World War II. Although not Higuchi's motivation, this theme brings forward the issue of lingering anti-Japanese hostility that remains a source of interethnic tension in Asian America, exacerbated by the post-1965 influx of immigrants whose forebears witnessed the Japanese empire's wartime atrocities during the first half of the twentieth century. Aside from the comfort women, a cause of enmity for Chinese American artists is the 1937 Japanese attack on the city of Nanjing that resulted in the mass murder and rape of hundreds of thousands over a six-week period, while the death of an estimated one million civilians during the 1941–5 Japanese occupation of the Philippines assumes an equivalent position for Filipino American artists.

While Higuchi takes on highly charged subjects, her spare, elegantly crafted installations, rather than seeking to be confrontational, invite quiet reflection and contemplation. The 1996 installation *Bamboo Echoes* was created during Higuchi's period as artist-in-residence at Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, in relation to their collection of Asian art (fig. 11-6). For Higuchi, in part responding to the public testimonies by former Korean comfort women that surfaced in the early 1990s, the project principally provided a means of exploring the Korean aspect of her ancestry. The Gardner originated as the private mansion and collection of an heiress whose fortune was largely derived from New England's historic ties to the Sumatra pepper trade. Through archival research, the artist learned that the building had once contained the Buddha Room, a private space dismantled following Gardner's death. Higuchi, seeking to combine a dialog with the museum's past with a contemporary Korean subject, centered *Bamboo Echoes* on a wooden polychrome statue of Kuan-yin (aka Guanyin, the bodhisattva associated with compassion in East Asia), a piece in the Gardner's holdings. Two identical, freestanding lattice-like structures, installed near the original Buddha Room, framed the effigy and formed an arched floor-to-ceiling passageway that dominated the gallery. For Higuchi, these segmented cage-like constructions, fashioned from bamboo poles, and wired together in stepped, upward rising formations, were suggestive of the multiply tiered eaves of Asian pagodas as well as the confining enclosures in which the comfort women were required to provide their services. Inspired by vernacular messages placed in prayer walls by religious pilgrims glimpsed in Korean temples, the artist suspended thousands of paper squares glimmering with gold leaf throughout the structures to represent the souls of the Korean comfort women, and to convey her fervent wish that they might finally obtain a measure of justice and peace.

FIGURE 11-6 Mona Higuchi, *Bamboo Echoes*, 1996, an installation, bamboo, wire, paper, composition gold leaf, and Kuan-yin, Chinese, *c.* twelfth century, polychromed wood with gilt, exhibited at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Kristen Palazzo and Scott Kester.

Coda

Ultimately, the breadth of frameworks and concerns that engage Asian diasporic artists, no matter how distant or partial their heritages, complicates what constitutes American culture, and moves us to reconsider the limited aesthetic and canonical grounds on which their art has typically been positioned and assigned value in this nation's cultural imagination. By attending more closely to the confluence of connections that propel these artists' efforts, as well as to the meanings they ascribe to their work, a richer and more complex view of contemporary art being produced in the US by individuals of Asian background takes shape. In a thoroughly heterogeneous Asian America, no single exhibition, cultural development, or theme could possibly be taken as definitive, whichever body of thought or artistic or scholarly tradition might be dominant at a given moment. Rather, all such efforts are inevitably partial yet complementary by offering multiple points of entry to the complex, ever-shifting Asian presence in the American nexus. Taken together, they provide compelling evidence of the growing maturity surrounding discourses on art and culture by Asians in America.

Notes

1 Lewis, "To Turn as on a Pivot," 3–32.
2 Mercer, "Intermezzo Worlds," 43.
3 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6–7. Whereas the term "contact zones" is associated with sites of colonial encounter, this essay employs the concept more broadly to indicate spaces of interaction between groups of different backgrounds.
4 Lai and Arguelles, eds. *The New Face of Asian Pacific America*, 7.
5 For general background reading, see Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*; Okihiro, *The Columbia Guide to Asian American History*; and Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*.
6 They are: Chang *et al.*, *Asian American Art: A History, 1850–1970* (2008); Hallmark, *Encyclopedia of Asian American Artists* (2007); Machida, *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary* (2009); and Chang, *Envisioning Diaspora: Asian American Visual Arts Collectives, from Godzilla, Godzookie to the Barnstormers* (2008). Chang *et al.*, *Asian American Art: A History*, published in conjunction with the groundbreaking 2008 exhibition *Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents, 1900–1970* (mounted at San Francisco's De Young Museum), offered the first systematic overview of artists of Asian ancestry in the United States, extending from the nineteenth century to the 1970s, and identified an international artistic sensibility behind the imagery of many these artists, a number of whom combined aspects of Asian and western artistic idioms, aesthetics, and philosophies. Machida, *Unsettled Visions* provided a thematic exploration of artists foregrounding matters of self- and social identification during the 1990s. Chang, *Envisioning Diaspora* traced the evolution of artist groups since the 1990s, and posited the emergence of new transnational communities of affinity.
7 Two exhibitions, both generated by the Asia Society Galleries in New York (now called Asia Society and Museum), were *Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art* (1994), that foregrounded foreign-born artists negotiating transnational passages and positioning themselves in a new society, and *One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now* (2006), that brought forward younger artists for whom ethnic or cultural identification was just one of many concerns. Other exhibitions embraced inter-regional, US/Asian, or transdiasporic connections. *Uncommon Traits: Re/Locating Asia*, CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, New York, 1997–8 joined artists from North American Asian diasporas under the umbrella of transmigration, while *Charlie Don't Surf: 4 Vietnamese American Artists*, Centre A, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada (2005), invited Vietnamese Americans for a show organized in Canada, a nation with its own well established post-war Vietnamese diaspora, and *KOREAMERICAKOREA*, held in Seoul (Artsonje Center, 2000), exhibited Korean artists living in the US alongside Korean Americans. In more globalized framings, along with the two exhibitions already noted, were *Across the Pacific: Contemporary Korean and Korean American Art*, Queens Museum of Art, New York (1993), involving Korean artists from Korea, the US, and Canada, and *At Home and Abroad: 20 Contemporary Filipino Artists*, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (1998) which featured Filipino artists residing in the Philippines, Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia. *Home and Away: Crossing Cultures on the Pacific Rim*, Vancouver Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia,

Canada (2003) gathered together Asian and non-Asian artists from various nations (including the US) under an Asia Pacific framework.

8 Le and Min, eds. "Curatorial Conversations/Correspondences." In *transPOP: Korea Vietnam Remix*, 12–37.

9 Chen, "China On My Mind," 2–3.

10 Chang, *Envisioning Diaspora*, 121.

11 The term "Chicano" was adopted by Mexican American political activists in the 1960s and 1970s to emphasize their affinities to indigenous cultures.

12 Shiao and Tuan, "A Sociological Approach to Race, Identity, and Asian Adoption," 151–66.

References

Chan Sucheng. *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1991.

Chang, Alexandra. *Envisioning Diaspora: Asian American Visual Arts Collectives, From Godzilla, Godzookie to the Barnstormers*. Beijing and Shanghai: Timezone 8 Editions, 2008.

Chang, Gordon H., Mark Dean Johnson, and Paul J. Karlstrom, eds. *Asian American Art: A History, 1850–1970*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.

Chen, Kevin. "China On My Mind." In *Present Tense Biennial 2009: Chinese Character*, edited by Gwen Kuo. Exhibition catalogue, 2–3. San Francisco: Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco, 2009.

Chiu, Melissa, Karin Higa, and Susette S. Min, eds. *One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now*. New York: Asia Society in association with Yale University Press, 2006.

Cornell, Daniell, and Mark Dean Johnson, eds. *Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents, 1900–1970*. Exhibition catalogue. San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco with University of California Press, 2008.

Fendrich, Laurie, Yong C. Lee, Elaine Kim, Minne Hone, and Jonath Goodman, eds. *Across the Pacific: Contemporary Korean and Korean American Art*. Exhibition catalogue. New York: The Queens Museum of Art, 1993.

Grenville, Bruce, Deanna Ferguson, Sacha Bronwassar, and Vancouver Art Gallery. *Home and Away: Crossing Cultures on the Pacific Rim*. Exhibition catalogue. Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2003.

Jung, Marilyn, Monica Chau, and Margo Machida. *Uncommon Traits: Re/Locating Asia*. Buffalo, NY: CEPA Gallery, 1997.

Hallmark, Kara Kelley, *Encyclopedia of Asian American Artists*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007.

Kim Sun-Jung, ed. *KOREAMERICAKOREA*. Exhibition catalogue. Seoul: Artsonje Center, 2000.

Lai, Eric, and Dennis Arguelles, eds. *The New Face of Asian Pacific America: Numbers, Diversity and Change in the 21st Century*. San Francisco and Los Angeles: Asianweek and UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 2003.

Le, Viet, and Yong Soon Min, eds. *transPOP: Korea Vietnam Remix*. Exhibition catalogue. Seoul: Arko Art Center, Arts Council Korea, 2008.

Le, Viet, Alice Ming Wai Jim, and Linda Thinh Võ. *Charlie Don't Surf! 4 Vietnamese American Artists.* Vancouver: Centre A, 2005.

Lewis, Earl. "To Turn as on a Pivot: Writing African Americans into a History of Overlapping Diasporas." In *Crossing Boundaries: Comparative History of Black People in Diaspora*, edited by Darlene Clark Hine and Jacqueline McLeod, 3–32. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Machida, Margo. *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary.* Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2009.

Mercer, Kobena. "Intermezzo Worlds." *Art Journal* 57, no. 4 (1998): 43–5.

Morrison, Michael, ed. *At Home and Abroad: 20 Contemporary Filipino Artists.* Exhibition catalogue. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1998.

Okihiro, Gary Y. *The Columbia Guide to Asian American History.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation.* London: Routledge, 1992.

Shiao, Jiannbin L., and Mia H. Tuan. "A Sociological Approach to Race, Identity, and Asian Adoption." In *International Korean Adoption: A Fifty-Year History of Policy and Practice*, edited by Kathleen Ja Sook Bergquist, Betsy Vonk, Dong Soo Kim, and Marvin D. Feit, 155–70. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 2007.

Sternbach, David, and Joseph N. Newland, eds. *ASIA/AMERICA: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art.* Exhibition catalogue. New York: The Asia Society Galleries and The New Press, 1994.

Takaki, Ronald. *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans.* New York: Penguin Books, 1989.

Wechsler, Jeffrey, ed. *Asian Traditions/Modern Expressions: Asian American Artists and Abstraction 1945–1970.* Exhibition catalogue. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. in Association with the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1997.

Further Reading

Kim, Elaine H., Margo Machida, and Sharon Mizota, eds. *Fresh Talk/Daring Gazes: Conversations on Asian American Art.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.

Okihiro, Gary Y. *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

Yang, Alice. *Why Asia? Contemporary Asian and Asian American Art.* Edited by Jonathan Hay and Mimi Young. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

12

The Icon of the Woman Artist: Guan Daosheng (1262–1319) and the Power of Painting at the Ming Court *c.* 1500

Jennifer Purtle

Women in male-dominated societies face difficulties in expressing their power in the visual field.[1] In such societies, the gendering of the body and the production of physical femininity differentiate female bodies from the bodies of their powerful male contemporaries, often in ways that preclude them from projecting power. For, to do so is to compromise their femininity. In some cases, the female body can pass as male. But the woman passing as male, which entails the visible erasure of one's biological sex to display alternative gender traits, does not serve to make female power visible; instead this permits the woman to project power through the device of a male body. More difficult is the projection of power through the female body.

In China *c.* 1500, *Two Women Looking at Paintings* (fig. 12-1) pictured a unique and anomalous subject: two gentry women in fur-lined robes seated in a wintry garden viewing a handscroll of ink bamboo. The subject and meaning of the painting cannot currently be ascertained through comparison with surviving pictures of the same iconography since no such images exist. Texts that describe women notably engaged with painting suggest that the painting images the greatest woman artist in the Chinese tradition, Guan Daosheng (1262–1319).[2] The

FIGURE 12-1 Anonymous, *Two Women Looking at Paintings*, undated (China, Ming dynasty, fifteenth to sixteenth century). Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 145.0 × 104.0 cm. Collection: Princeton University Art Museum; Gift of DuBois Schanck Morris, Class of 1893 (Y1947–83). Photo: Bruce M. White.

visual properties of the painting, its size, format, quality, style, and composition, suggest that it was produced in or near the Ming court during the sixteenth century, when and where large-scale, hanging scroll paintings of beautiful, cultivated, and powerful women proliferated, coincident with the increasing power of women in the palace, most notably Empress Zhang (1470–1541).[3]

To begin to understand the stakes of the iconic woman artist for the projection of female power at the Ming court, this essay studies how *Two Women* pictures female qualities and attributes essential to political agency, yet different from (if not incompatible with) the feminine ideals prescribed in canonical Confucian texts. Despite the fact that the power of Empress Zhang was both concentrated (she lacked rivals in the women's palaces) and enduring (lasting through the reigns of three male emperors), multiple paintings associated with her propagate iconographies of what is called "dominated" female power, that is, power asserted indirectly and/or invisibly.[4] Even as Empress Zhang used painting to express the covert and indirect nature of her power, this essay argues that, in contrast, *Two Women*, which should also be associated with her, asserted the overt, official power of courtly ladies, if not of the empress herself, perhaps after the death of her husband. By imaging painting in a way that recalls historical anecdotes about women painters, *Two Women* evokes female invention and self-expression; by imaging painting with respect to compositional templates for and iconographic contexts of male power, *Two Women* simultaneously appropriates male paradigms of sympathetic reception and aesthetic judgment for women. This essay ultimately suggests that *Two Women* represents the requisite qualities for and actual exercise of power by women at the Ming court in the early sixteenth century.

Women On Top? Empress Dowager Zhang and the Iconography of Dominated Female Power

In male-dominated societies, power is often demonstrated by picturing the male body. At the Ming court, from the turn of the sixteenth century, however, paintings of iconic female figures from Chinese myth, religion, and history proliferated. These images appeared during the lifetime of Empress Zhang, when she and other women gained increasing influence in the palace.[5] Surviving works that should, on the basis of their visual properties, be associated with Empress Zhang, and thus should be associated with one another, include: Wu Wei's (1459–1508) *Lady Carrying a Lute* and *Female Immortal*, the anonymous *Queen Mother of the West* attributable to Wu Wei or his circle, Du Jin's (1465–1509) *The Scholar Fu Sheng in a Garden*, the anonymous *Su Shi Returning to Court* (fig. 12-2) attributed to Zhang Lu (act. *c.* 1490 to 1563), and the anonymous *Two Women Looking at Paintings*, which should also be attributed to Zhang Lu.[6]

During the reign of Empress Zhang, pictures gave form to her power, some accrued through her own endeavors, but largely grounded in familial relations. A painted *Ordination Scroll* of 1493 attests to Empress Zhang's qualification as a Daoist priestess; its extraordinary magnificence and size reveals her political

and economic status even as it documents her attainment of power derived from religion.[7] An official portrait of Empress Zhang manifests her iconic imperial image; it was likely painted before 1505, the year in which her husband, Zhu Youtang (1470–1505), who reigned as the Hongzhi emperor (r. 1488–1505) died, and her son, Zhu Houzhao (1491–1521), ascended to the throne of China as the Zhengde emperor (r. 1506–21), at which point she began to exert power as Empress Dowager.[8] In 1521, when her son the Zhengde emperor died with no heir, Empress Dowager Zhang and Grand Secretary Yang Tinghe (1459–1529) chose his successor, her nephew Zhu Houcong (1507–67), who reigned as the Jiajing Emperor, supposedly in accordance with an edict dictated by the emperor on his death bed.[9]

Like preceding Ming empresses, Empress Dowager Zhang exerted significant influence at court, even though Taizu (r. 1368–98), the first Ming emperor, explicitly banned empresses and imperial concubines from participating in the government of the dynasty he founded.[10] Ming empresses seem not to have learned the lessons of the great woman scholar Ban Zhao (*c.* 45–116 CE), whose "Admonitions for Women" (*Nüjie*), which prescribed ideal female conduct, Taizu propagated for palace women.[11] Taizu admonished imperial women to serve as models of "maternal rectitude for the empire," yet instead they used their positions as mothers, grandmothers, and aunts to engage in politics for their progeny.[12] Their offspring, in turn, gave them still greater reason to involve themselves in court affairs with stakes so high that women's palaces burnt to the ground unexpectedly and court women died under suspicious circumstances.[13]

At court, during the lifetime of Empress Zhang, painting that imaged the indirectly visible agency of imperial women flourished alongside images of iconic female figures. An unsigned painting, *Su Shi Returning to Court* (fig. 12-2), is attributed to Zhang Lu;[14] it illustrates the effect of female political power, "imperial attendants, before [them] bearing Golden Lotus Lamps, escorting [the statesman, poet, and painter Su Shi (1037–1101)] back [to the Hanlin] Academy."[15] *Su Shi Returning to Court* does not, however, image its cause: the line of text in the picture concludes an anecdote about the rehabilitation

FIGURE 12-2 Attributed to Zhang Lu (1464–1538), *Su Shi Returning to Court* [*Su Dongpo Returning to the Hanlin Academy*], undated (China, Ming dynasty, late fifteenth to early sixteenth century). Handscroll; ink and color on paper, 32.4 × 629.9 cm. Collection: University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; On extended loan from the Sarah Cahill Collection. Photo: Benjamin Blackwell.

of Su Shi and other officials opposed to the reforms of the Prime Minister, Wang Anshi (1021–86).[16] Unseen by, but certainly not unknown to, an educated sixteenth-century viewer of the painting, is that Su Shi's return to court was effected by Dowager Empress Gao (1032–93, r. 1085–93), consort of the late Emperor Shenzong (1048–85, r. 1067–85), and mother of and regent for Emperor Zhezong (1077–1100, r. 1085–1100).[17]

It is the male painter who makes female power indirectly visible. The focus of the canonical passage about the return of Su Shi to court is the Empress Dowager telling Su of her role in his rehabilitation, with the power of the Empress Dowager overtly and explicitly stated in the text.[18] In contrast, the painter of *Su Shi Returning to Court*, long presumed to be Zhang Lu, illustrates only the last line of the longer passage, which notes the return of Su Shi to court but does not reveal the agency of the Empress Dowager in this event, at which she was not present.[19] By rendering the outcome of the political intervention of the Empress Dowager, without portraying the Empress Dowager herself, the power of the Empress Dowager is manifest in *Su Shi Returning to Court* even though she cannot be seen in the painting.[20] In the time of Empress Dowager Zhang, this painting of an eleventh-century anecdote recalled the historical precedent for her position, if not also evoking her ability to wield political power that was both directly and indirectly visible.

At the Ming court during the life of Empress Zhang, male artists acquired unusual proximity to imperial women. Zhang Lu, to whom *Su Shi Returning to Court* is attributed, studied in the Imperial University (*taixue*) during the reign of the Hongzhi emperor (1470–1505, r. 1487–1505). His fame came to rival that of the court painter Wu Wei (*c.* 1458–1508).[21] Subsequently, Zhang Lu's son, also a painter, married a Ming princess.[22] The importance of this event to the Ming imperial family is indicated by the fact that another member of the Ming imperial family, Zhu Ankan (act. seventeenth century), recorded the event in his biography of Zhang Lu in *A Sea of Ming Prose* (*Ming wenhai*).[23] As father-in-law to a Ming princess, Zhang Lu lived in close proximity to the centers of imperial female power at the Ming court.

The marriage of male artistry to imperial female power enabled a means of picturing the unseen agency of imperial women, producing, in *Su Shi Returning to Court*, a unique iconography of dominated female power. Whether or not, or how widely, that iconography was transmitted is not known. But the literatus and painting critic Xie Zhaozhe (1567–1624, *jinshi* 1592) famously remarked: "Eunuchs and women, whenever [they] see a person painting, forthwith ask what story [it illustrates]."[24] If Xie correctly understood the curiosity of women and eunuchs about the content and iconography of paintings, and if such curiosity existed in the women's palaces in the 75 years or so before Xie's birth, then figural paintings were the perfect medium for transmitting the new realities of female power.[25] During the reign of Empress Dowager Zhang, this medium, the reception of which was inflected by sex (i.e. by women and eunuchs, the second and third sex of traditional China), was its *gendered* message.[26]

Feminine Ingenuity: Lady Li and the Genesis of Painting Ink Bamboo

The idea of invention – of creating a new medium, or a class of things (as opposed to a single thing) – is, in male-dominated societies, often presumed to be a male prerogative. If, at the Ming court of *c.* 1500, women and eunuchs wondered what pictures portrayed, paintings rarely pictured such viewers contemplating a painting. Yet, the compositional center of *Two Women* pictures an ink bamboo handscroll, that is, a painting within a painting, flanked by two female figures; *Two Women* thus renders female engagement with painting.[27] This imaging of female engagement with painting is supported by four iconographic markers – the wintry setting, the fur-trimmed robes, the handscroll of ink bamboo, and the bamboo of the garden – which suggest that one of the women pictured is Guan Daosheng, famous for her work as a painter, especially of ink bamboo.[28]

The ability of women to conceive in alternative, non-biological ways was, in traditional China, usually limited to their excelling in the reproduction of, or innovation within, literary and artistic genres created and/or utilized by their male counterparts.[29] Guan Daosheng was widely known during the Ming dynasty when *Two Women* was painted: her reputation was in part based on knowledge of her transmitted by her husband Zhao Mengfu's literary anthology, the *Collected Works of the Songxue Studio* (*Songxuezhai wenji*), painting catalogues, and works by her, authentic and otherwise.[30]

Guan's reputation was also, in part, based on her inclusion in Xia Wenyan's (1296–1370) history of painting, the *Precious Mirror of Painting* (*Tuhui baojian*, preface dated 1365).[31] Remarkably, the *Precious Mirror* also propagated the notion that one Lady Li invented ink bamboo, a genre predominantly associated with men. The biography of Lady Li, which precedes that of Guan Daosheng in the *Precious Mirror*, states:

> Lady Li was a famous artist from Western Shu [the Western part of modern Sichuan province, including its capital city of Chengdu – to which this likely refers;[32] it is] not clear [if she had] descendants. [She] excelled in various [genres of] prose, [and was] particularly skilled [in] calligraphy [and] painting. Guo Chongtao (d. 926) [of the Later Tang Dynasty (923–36)] mobilized a punitive expedition against Shu [in 925], and conquered it. Lady [Li], because of [the presence of Guo] Chongtao's military officials, had become depressed, anxious, [and] unhappy. [One] moonlit evening, [she] sat alone [by the] southern balustrade; [when] the shadow of the bamboo danced [in the breeze, she] was able to delight [in it]. Thereupon [she] rose to wield [a brush, which she] moistened [with] ink [in order] to trace [the shadow of the bamboo] on the paper [pane] of the window. The next day [she] saw them [that is, the bamboo that she had painted on the window paper, and found her] raw intentions fully satisfied. And [so it is] said: "Naturally, in this world, [people] frequently imitated this [that is, Lady Li's technique of painting bamboo, and so] subsequently, there is [the genre of] ink bamboo."[33]

Here, this mid-fourteenth-century text credits (curiously for the first time, for which there is no historical explanation), a Lady Li (act. *c.* 925) with the invention of this painting genre. A reader of the entire text would thus find Guan Daosheng presented as an extraordinary female artist, who worked in a genre of painting invented by a woman, Lady Li.

By describing the historical and emotional contexts of Lady Li's innovation, the *Precious Mirror* provides a glimpse of one woman's creative process. In abnegating knowledge of Lady Li's descendants, the text placed her artistic creativity outside her capacity for biological reproduction, thus emphasizing her use of her body to create in alternative ways. This creative process had, at least according to the passage, a foundation in natural talent already disciplined, as exemplified by Lady Li's demonstrated skill at prose, calligraphy, and painting. A heightened emotional state, namely the distress caused by her vulnerability in the context of political cataclysm, is the expressive context of Lady Li's generic invention.

In noting Lady Li's reflexive, phenomenological engagement with the natural world, the passage presents the genius of Lady Li as expressed by her ability to realize her own intentions in painting. Lady Li is not described as an accidental genius, unwittingly creating something of value. Rather she is cast as an artist in perfect control of her talents. Furthermore, sensitivity to the natural world enabled Lady Li to take pleasure in bamboo – a plant that bends but does not break.

Lady Li's ingenuity does not rely solely on her emotive communion with the plant, but instead cleverly harnesses the optical properties of shadow. It is the use of a simple drawing aid that enhanced Lady Li's ability to render the bamboo by melding the verisimilitude of tracing with the personal expression of a brush wielded by a skilled calligrapher and painter. In this respect, the *Precious Mirror* styles the creativity of Lady Li in painting bamboo in terms different than those used to describe her male successors. The most famous male bamboo painter in the Chinese tradition, Wen Tong (1019–79), was famously described by the poet and bamboo painter Su Shi (pictured in *Su Shi Returning to Court*), as having his artistic achievement grounded in intuitive genius, manifest in his communion with the bamboo.[34]

Female invention, in male-dominated societies, only exceptionally entails creating new cultural forms to be reproduced and explored by male and female counterparts alike.[35] Yet, during the mid-fourteenth century, the *Precious Mirror* established Lady Li as precisely this kind of genius. The text coincided with the rising popularity of this painting genre, the celebrity of Guan Daosheng, and the practice of ink bamboo painting by other, less famous women, as well as many famous male painters and calligraphers of the Yuan dynasty, including Guan's husband Zhao Mengfu and their friend Li Kan (1245–1320). Even as a representation of an ink bamboo painting figured female invention by recalling Lady Li, it also evoked Guan Daosheng who, working within the genre of ink bamboo, created a powerful graphic language of self-expression.

Graphic Language: Guan Daosheng, Bamboo, and Self-Expression

Graphic language, a regularly structured system of visual marks and images made by an instrument normally used for writing, is, like generic invention, in male-dominated societies, often shaped by male dominance of literacy and its allied practice of writing. The ink bamboo handscroll at the center of *Two Women* makes the graphic language of Guan Daosheng a focal point of the larger work. Guan was said to have been "born, such that [her] intelligence surpassed [that of] others;"[36] she was also said to be so talented that "without studying, [she was] nonetheless able [in the use of] brush and ink, [as well as in composing] intricate phrasings."[37] Furthermore, Guan's sharp talents and untutored natural genius permitted her "to make ink bamboo paintings [in which] the idea [expressed by] her brush is pure and transcendent."[38] Indeed, the picturing of bamboo in the garden, surrounding the female figures, heightens the tension of object, depiction, and the graphic language of the painted image (and perhaps calligraphed text, hidden in the unrolled portion of the handscroll).

In societies like traditional China, in which male literacy is high and female literacy is low, there is little impetus for women to write, and by extension, there is a limited context for women to experiment with the tools of graphic representation.[39] Like Lady Li, Guan's natural genius permitted her to use her brush to define her world, fashioning a graphic language from the written word, the origins of which were gendered male in early texts.[40] Early accounts of writing in China, including those of Xunzi (335–238 BCE), his disciple Han Fei (280–233 BCE), and the *Huainanzi* (compiled in the second century BCE) ascribe its invention to the male sage Cangjie (mythistorical, *c.* 2650 BCE), while later texts claim that the marks left by birds and beasts on the soil inspired Cangjie to invent script.[41]

Gendering the origins of writing as male reinforces the importance of men in a male-dominated society, rendering women exceptional, such as Lady Li and Guan Daosheng, who mastered the non-pictorial media of graphic expression, notably, prose, poetry, and calligraphy. Mastering cool, limpid prose description in her letters, Guan crafted language in her poetry that gave form to her passions.[42] In response to a lyric (*ci*) poem said to have been written by her husband to ask her permission to take a concubine, she replied with a lyric poem "Thou and I – a Lyric" (*Ni nong wo nong ci*):

Thou [and] I,
Excessive [are our] passions, [and] many,
[And our] passions, many, abide,
Burning like a fire.
Grab a lump of clay,
Knead a "Thou,"
Mould an "I."
Take us, we two,

[And] smash us together;
Use water to blend [our parts],
Again knead a "Thou,"
Again mould an "I;"
Thy clay contains me,
My clay contains thee.
With thee, in life [I] share a coverlet,
In death [we will] share a single crypt.[43]

Frankly racy, intimate, and verging on the risqué, this poem is the most extreme example of Guan's graphic language. Wife of an aristocrat whose lineage included several noteworthy emperor-painters, who herself hailed from a famous family, Guan was remarkably explicit in expressing her ardor for her husband, committing to paper sentiments most unseemly by Confucian standards of the "pure and obedient" (*zhen shun*) or "chaste and righteous" (*jie yi*) wife.[44]

Whereas Lady Li harnessed her emotional distress to create, Guan Daosheng's language of poetic self-expression permitted her to express subtleties of her distinctly feminine emotional states, particularly in the context of her production of ink bamboo. A poem circulated on a painting, entitled "A Bamboo Sketch Sent to My Husband" (*Xie zhu ji jun mozhu*), reveals her subtle longing:

Publisher's Note:
Text not available
in the electronic edition

Historical records suggest that Guan and Zhao stayed together as Zhao moved to and from his official postings, separated perhaps in 1287 and again in 1289; afterwards, the couple separated only when Zhao traveled officially.[46] Bamboo is, however, a fast-growing plant, capable of growing up to 24 inches in a day, so Guan's musing need not imply long absence.[47]

In this work and others, Guan unites three modes for self-expression with the brush – writing, calligraphy, painting – normally associated with male literati, to engage bamboo, the dominant subject in her oeuvre. Bamboo is a perfect subject for expressing the cohesion of these graphic modes. The character for bamboo (竹), unlike some characters that generate meaning through phonetic associations, is a straightforward, pictographic rendering of this plant: the lower portion of the character represents two straight stalks of the plant, the upper portion of the character represents its jaunty leaves.[48] Consequently, the writing, calligraphing, and painting of bamboo all participate in the graphic replication of bamboo stalk and the angular leaves of the plant.

Beyond her development of the graphic language of bamboo, throughout the corpus of her poetry and painting, Guan Daosheng uses bamboo as a personal emblem that reflects, rather than represents, her presence.[49] Her poem, "Inscribed on My Own Painting of Bamboo" (*Zi ti hua zhu*), conceives of the

bamboo as animate and personified, thus acknowledging her presence, interacting with her.[50] So deeply felt was this relation that, in another poem, "Inscribed on a Painting" (*Ti hua*), Guan expressed her kinship with bamboo:

Publisher's Note:
Text not available
in the electronic edition

In the first couplet of the poem, Guan strolls with her own children, or at least some of them – she was mother to nine, five of whom may have been born to a previous wife – under the bamboo;[52] in the second couplet Guan adopts the bamboo as her children. Thus she asserts her intimate, emotional, and maternal relation to a plant so integral to her expression of intelligence, creativity, and self.

Even as Guan's poetry used bamboo as a personal emblem, her brushwork embodied bamboo – inscribing, through painting, and re-inscribing, through self-inscription, her presence on the pictorial support. Her sole surviving authentic work, *Bamboo Groves in Mist and Rain* (fig. 12-3) of 1308 gives form to a subtle lyricism in the gentle arcs of bamboo branches, and in the fine, decorative patterns of bamboo leaves fanned outward in the breeze. Like her male counterparts Zhao Mengfu and Li Kan, Guan handles the brush with consummate skill, demonstrated in her ability to modulate line, as in the leaves of the bamboo, and the long hemp-fibre strokes of the landscape forms. Also like her male counterparts, Guan's ability to compose a landscape is demonstrated in her subtle but intentionally abstract rendering. Her skill in using the brush to compose and execute a painting is complemented by her prose inscription at the left margin of the painting, which she both composed and calligraphed.

In Guan's pursuit of her own graphic self-expression, she is credited with inventing multiple, distinctly feminine subgenres of bamboo painting. In his epitaph for Guan, Zhao Mengfu notes that "[She] also has painted ink bamboos (*mozhu*) and pictures of bamboos [in] 'arranged' [that is, light] colors (*she se*)."[53] Guan is also known for inaugurating the painting of bamboo along riverbanks, like *Bamboo Groves in Mist and Rain*. Entirely monochrome, and to some extent

FIGURE 12-3 Guan Daosheng (1262–1319), *Bamboo Groves in Mist and Rain*, 1308 (China, Yuan dynasty). Handscroll; ink on paper, 23.1 × 113.7 cm. Collection: National Palace Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China. Photo: National Palace Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China.

abstract, *Bamboo Groves* nonetheless suggests the seductive illusionism of painting in light colors, while expressing the virtue and moral strength of bamboo as resilience, bending without breaking.[54] Works attributed to Guan, for example, *Bamboo* of 1309, suggest that she may also have painted works that strongly resembled the painting within a painting of *Two Women*.[55]

Despite her sex, records of Guan Daosheng's paintings and poems, and the anthologization of her poetic works blur boundaries of gender and authorship. The Tang poet Du Fu (712–70), in his poem "A Fine Lady" (*Jia ren*), describes his meeting with a gentlewoman who has fallen on hard times, living in a secluded valley, ending his poem with the line "[When] the sun sets, [she] rests [by] the tall slender bamboo" (*ri mu yi xiu zhu*);[56] Guan putatively composed a "Rhyme-Prose on Tall Slender Bamboo" (*Xiuzhu fu*), the subject of which alludes to Du Fu through its resonance with his poem.[57] Moreover, Guan's "Rhyme-Prose" also recalls a rhyme-prose by the famous male bamboo painter, Wen Tong, "Rhyme-Prose on Ink Bamboo" (*Mozhu fu*) in its choice of genre.[58] Guan's "Rhyme-Prose" was first anthologized in Zhao Mengfu's *Collected Works of the Songxue Studio*, where its author is not named; subsequently, it was recorded in the *Shiqu Catalogue of the Qing Imperial Collection* (*Shiqu baoji sanbian*) as inscribed on a bamboo painting by Guan, thus complicating clear understanding of authorship and gender.[59] Allusion, genre, and anthologization thus placed Guan's rhyme-prose in explicitly male contexts.

In her creation and use of graphic languages – expressive prose and poetry, calligraphy, and painting – Guan Daosheng communicated her relationship to her world, often through the emblem of bamboo, and defied expectations about gendered expression. A surviving inscription for a lost painting, supposedly painted in her husband's studio in 1310, notes Guan's ambivalence about her graphic language: "Well, to play [with] brush [and] ink [is a] thing [that] men [are] good at. [Yet] today I made this [painting]. [Is it] not very much [the case that I have] overstepped the bounds? Despicable, despicable."[60] Here, Guan reflects on the way in which a female artist transgresses expectations about gendered behavior, her literacy, calligraphy, and painting unsettling not only in their own right, but also because they equal the achievements of her male contemporaries. This is all the more striking because she was active in an era when male literati were common but lettered women few. Lettered women however, became audiences for her work.

Entre Nous: Women as Audiences for Paintings by Women

In male dominated societies, the presumption is that men dominate both artistic production and reception. *Two Women Looking at Paintings*, with its exquisite glimpse of two female figures intently examining a handscroll of ink bamboo, however, pictures the ability of women to serve as audiences of painting. It thus shockingly reinvents the traditional Chinese – and implicitly male – archetypal ideal of sympathetic aesthetic reception expressed in the term *zhiyin* (lit. "[he who]

FIGURE 12-4 Zhang Lu (act. *c.* 1490–1563), *Listening to the Qin*, undated (China, Ming dynasty, late fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries). Handscroll; ink and light color on silk, 61 × 31.4 cm. Collection: Museum of Asian Art, East Asian Art Collection, National Museums in Berlin (Inv. Nr. 1984–12). Photo: © Museum of Asian Art, East Asian Art Collection, National Museums in Berlin.

understands [the] music [of another]"), the *locus classicus* of which is found in the fourth century BCE text, *The Teachings of Master Lie* (*Liezi*):

> Bo Ya [act. fifth centuries BCE?] excelled in playing the zither, [Zhong] Ziqi [act. fifth centuries BCE?] excelled in listening [to the zither. When] Boya thereupon played the zither, intending to evoke a great mountain, Ziqi said, "Excellent! [you are] at playing the zither; [your music] is imposing like a great mountain. [When Boya again played the zither,] intending to evoke a rushing river, Ziqi said, "[Your music] is overflowing as though a rushing river." That which Boya conceived [of in his music], Ziqi certainly understood. [After] Zhong Ziqi died, Boya never played the zither again [for] the rest of [his] life.[61]

Here, the relationship of male artist and male audience was so powerful that, absent such an audience, the creative act was no longer worthwhile.

In *Listening to the Qin* (fig. 12-4), Zhang Lu rendered an auditory act of sympathetic appreciation. The image is at once paradigmatic and iconic, in its evocation of Boya and Zhong Ziqi, and universal, as the zither was the archetypal instrument of the lettered gentleman.[62] *Listening to the Qin* thus describes an historical anecdote and prescribes the ideal of reception. Picturing this act of sympathetic appreciation, moreover, suggests its visibility, and by extension its applicability to the visual and to painting.

Two Women Looking at Paintings bears an uncanny resemblance to *Listening to the Qin*. Except for their sex, the figural compositions of both paintings are virtually identical. Left-hand figures are shown in profile, right-hand figures in three-quarter view, heads separated by a head's width. Only slight variations distinguish the facial features; the women's features are more finely and delicately drawn than those of their male doppelgängers. Despite different use of colored pigment in the images, the quality of line and the representational conventions are almost identical, suggesting that both works were produced by the same workshop, if not the same hand, this similarity evident in the flourishes of quick brushwork that form the drapery folds of the sleeves, and in Morellian details such as ears and fingernails.[63]

Zhang Lu's *Listening to the Qin* and *Two Women* appear to be derived from the same compositional template, the male–male model of musical reception cross-dressed, through the act of painting, into a female–female image of pictorial reception. In these two paintings, it is the representation of codified gender norms, pictured as dress, which differentiates the sex of the figures.[64] *Two Women Looking at Paintings* does not represent men in drag.[65] Rather, by blurring the boundaries of sexed and gendered subjects, that is, by representing beautiful women (whose dress presumably indicates their biological sex) in poses evocative of the male artist–male audience relationship, the painting refashions the normally male–male trope of aesthetic appreciation as female–female.[66]

In picturing the reception of Guan Daosheng's work by another woman, *Two Women Looking at Paintings* recalls primary texts by and on Guan Daosheng, as well as copies of her paintings and poems, which indicate the repeated reception of her work by other women.[67] Guan inscribed *Bamboo Groves in Mist and Rain* (fig. 12-3):

> In the first year of the Zhida [era, that is 1308], in spring, on the twenty-fifth day of the third month, I made [this painting] for the Lady of the Qu Kingdom at Turquoise Wave Lake (*Bilang hu*) [while] in a small boat.[68]

In an era when painting was practiced mostly by men for other men, Guan, like her contemporary, the female orchid painter Huang Zhigui (act. late thirteenth–early fourteenth century), makes clear that her intended audience was another aristocratic woman, the Lady of the Qu Kingdom.[69]

Texts provide further evidence of female audiences for Guan Daosheng's painting, including at least one powerful woman at the Yuan court. The inscriptions of two surviving bamboo paintings attributed to Guan, as well as a catalogue record for a now lost painting of 1299, suggest that Guan painted bamboo for her sister, Guan Daogao (act. late thirteenth–early fourteenth century?), a poet.[70] A surviving poem, "Presented to the Empress per her Command to Inscribe the Plum Blossoms [that I] Painted" (*Feng Zhonggong ming ti suo hua mei*), the authenticity of which cannot be verified, suggests the reception of Guan Daosheng at the Yuan court by the empress herself.[71] Most significantly,

Zhao Mengfu, in his epitaph, notes that the Empress Dowager (act. *c.* 1285) – Dagi of the Qunggirad clan, mother of Ayurbarwada, Emperor Renzong (1285–1320, r. 1311–20) – received Guan in her Xingsheng Palace (*Xingsheng gong*).[72] Whether or not the Sino-Mongol princess Sengge Ragi (*c.* 1283–1331), Renzong's sister and an avid collector of Chinese Old Master paintings, knew Guan or her work is not clear.[73] In any case, surviving historical documents, namely *Bamboo Groves in Mist and Rain* and Zhao Mengfu's "Epitaph," make clear that other women served as audiences for Guan's paintings.

The stakes for establishing women as sympathetic audiences for women, exemplified by Guan Daosheng and her female audiences, were high: this is because the ability of women to be sympathetic audiences for other women not only refashioned the gender norms for the female sex and but also refigured established iconographies of imperial power, gendered male.[74] In traditional China, the ability to judge in government was imaged as the ability to exercise connoisseurship of art and music in an elegant garden setting, exemplified by the emperor-painter Huizong's *Listening to the Qin* inscribed by his Prime Minister Cai Jing (1047–1126).[75] In 1437, the year following the death of the Ming emperor-painter Xuanzong (r. 1426–35), whose practice of painting and collecting paintings gave him a superficial similarity to Huizong, the court painter Xie Huan (*c.* 1370–*c.* 1450) reprised this iconography.[76] *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden* (fig. 12-5) pictures a gathering of eight notables, including Xuanzong's grand secretaries Yang Rong, Yang Shiqi, and Yang Pu, assessing paintings as a visual metaphor for their ability to judge in government.[77]

Making overt exercise of female power visible in painting entailed re-presenting established male iconographies of power as female ones. *Two Women Looking at Paintings* appropriated both the ideal of male–male aesthetic appreciation, exemplified by Zhang Lu's *Listening to the Qin*, and the political metaphor of

FIGURE 12-5 After Xie Huan (*c.* 1370–1450), *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*, *c.* 1437 (China, Ming dynasty). Handscroll; ink and color on silk, 37.0 × 243.2 cm. Collection: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA; Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1989 (1989.141.3). Photo: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY.

artistic appreciation transmitted by Huizong's *Listening to the Qin* and Xie's *Elegant Gathering*. An historically knowledgeable sixteenth-century viewer of *Two Women* might also have been able to relate the image to historical anecdotes about powerful dowager empresses. Such a viewer might recall that the historical Empress Dowager of the Xingsheng Palace received Guan Daosheng; such a viewer might also recollect that the grand secretaries pictured in *Elegant Gathering* aided the earlier Ming Empress Dowager Zhang (d. 1442) in upholding the succession of her grandson as Emperor Yingzong.[78] Picturing the ability of women to paint and judge painting, bolstered by established iconographies of male power and historical anecdotes of the power of dowager empresses, served as an economical and explicit visual metaphor for the ability of women to engage in politics, and to make political judgments.

Figuring What Women Want: The Icon of the Woman Artist

Women at the Ming court, and empress dowagers in particular, rose to their status firstly as wives whose marriages gained them proximity to the emperor, and secondly as mothers, grandmothers, and aunts, whose offspring (or the offspring of their relatives) served as instruments through which these women projected power. These women perhaps conformed to gender roles traditionally assigned to women, beautifully articulated by Ban Zhao, daughter of the historian Ban Biao (3–54), and co-author with her brother Ban Gu (32–92) of *The History of the Han* (*Han shu*) in her "Admonitions for Women;" it is this text that Taizu, the first Ming emperor, prescribed while banning imperial women from exercising political power in his dynasty.[79] Ban enumerates "Four [Aspects of] Womanly Conduct":

> To defend incorruptibly [her] chastity, to remain single [per Confucian codes of] good conduct, to comport herself with modesty, [and] to act quietly with exemplary [behavior]: this [is what] is referred to [as] "womanly virtue" (*fu de*).
>
> To choose [her] words [and only] then to speak, not to utter foul language, to speak when appropriate, [and] not to weary others [with her conversation]: this [is what] is referred to [as] "womanly words" (*fu yan*).
>
> To wash [the hands and] to cleanse [away superficial] dust and dirt, to adorn [herself in what is] fresh [and] clean, to wash and bathe according [to] the seasons, [and her] body neither to disgrace [nor] defile: this [is what] is referred to [as] "womanly appearance" (*fu rong*).
>
> Single-mindedly to spin, not [unduly] to love frivolity [and] laughter, to regulate [and] arrange wine [and] food, to take up serving guests: this [is what] is referred to [as] "womanly work" (*fu gong*).
>
> As for these four [aspects of womanly conduct, they constitute] the great virtue of females.[80]

But at the Ming court, Empress Zhang and other imperial women also acquired and exerted power in ways unrelated to Ban Zhao's ideals. So powerful had palace ladies become during the lifetime of Empress Dowager Zhang that, in 1542, the year following her death, a group of palace ladies attempted to assassinate the Jiajing Emperor, an act that, in its planning and execution, transgressed all four of Ban Zhao's qualifications for womanly virtue.[81]

To powerful women at the Ming court in the time of Empress Dowager Zhang, the icon of the women artist figured feminine ideals found neither in canonical Confucian texts nor in more recent didactic works, which shared the values of the classics, written by and for court ladies.[82] Whereas Ban Zhao advocated female virtue, Lady Li figured female invention. While Ban sought gentle, ladylike speech, Guan Daosheng figured graphic self-expression. Just as Ban suggested feminine bearing, Guan Daosheng's female audiences figured the ability of women to appropriate an archetypally male act of sympathetic aesthetic appreciation. Ultimately, the similarity of the composition and content of *Two Women* to paintings that pictured the exercise of power by men meant that even as Ban Zhao advocated women's work, the icon of the woman artist together with her female audience figured aesthetic judgment, and by extension the ability of women to take political action. By imaging these foundations of female power not prescribed in Confucian texts, *Two Women Looking at Paintings* vividly captures the moment in the sixteenth century when women at the Ming court served as patrons of and audiences for both painting and political intrigue.

Notes

1 This essay is dedicated to Richard Barnhart for his fine teaching, including but not limited to women artists and Ming dynasty court painting, and to all my women students who enjoy looking at Chinese paintings. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted; my translations of poems previously published in "Guan Daosheng (1262–1319)," in Chang, *Women Writers of Traditional China*, are reproduced, in some cases with modifications, with the kind permission of Stanford University Press.

2 Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, 245.

3 On the proliferation of large-scale, hanging scroll paintings of beautiful, cultivated, and powerful women, see Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, 247; on Empress Zhang, see Zhang, *Ming shi*, 114:3528; *DMB* vol. 1, 76.

4 On Empress Zhang's lack of rivals, see *DMB*, vol. 1, 376. Empress Zhang's influence endured because she was successively the consort, mother, and "Imperial Aunt" (*Huanggu*) of three emperors. See *DMB*, vol. 1, 307–15, 375–80. On dominated power, see Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 41.

5 Zhang, *Ming shi* 115:3528; *DMB* vol. 1, 76.

6 For a color reproduction of *Lady Carrying a Lute*, see Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, 228, cat. 64; for a color reproduction of *Female Immortal*, see Little, *Taoism*,

276–7, cat. 94; for a color reproduction of *Queen Mother of the West*, see Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, 247, fig. 135; for a color reproduction of *The Scholar Fu Sheng in a Garden*, see Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, 284, cat. 88.

7 For a color reproduction of the *Ordination Scroll*, see Little, *Taoism*, 209–12, cat. 57; see also Thompson, "The Empress' New Clothes." On Empress Zhang's involvement with Daoism, see Thompson, "The Empress' New Clothes," and Li and Naquin, "The Baoming Temple," 132–40. This scroll, painted in brilliant and costly pigments, measures 54.6 cm high × 2,743.2 cm long.

8 For a reproduction of this portrait, see *DMB*, vol. 1, plate 6 (facing page 259), upper left. See also Zhang, *Ming shi* 114:3528.

9 *Wuzong shilu*, in *MSL*, vol. 69, 197:4b–5a (rpt. pp. 3680–1); Yang, *Shicao yulu*, 1b; *DMB* vol. 1, 313, 316; vol. 2, 1544. Specifically, his right to rule came in the form of succession edicts, including one issued by Empress Dowager Zhang. See *Wuzong shilu*, in *MSL*, vol. 69, 197:5a (rpt. p. 3681). The problems of this imperial succession erupted into what was known as "The Great Ritual Controversy." On this, see Fisher, "The Great Ritual Controversy in Ming China."

10 Yu, *Dian gu ji wen*, 2:32; Yang, "Female Rulers in Imperial China," 52.

11 Yu, *Dian gu ji wen*, 2:32.

12 An earlier Empress Dowager Zhang (d. 1442), mother of Emperor Xuanzong (Zhu Zhanji 1399–1435, r. 1426–35), upheld the right of her grandson, Emperor Yingzong (Zhu Qizhen, 1427–64, r. 1336–1449 as the Zhengtong Emperor, r. 1457–64 as the Tianshun Emperor) to the throne, even though he was then only eight years old, over that of her son and his uncle, Zhu Zhanshan, Prince of Xiang (1406–78): *DMB*, vol. 1, 280, 289–90; for a portrait of this Empress Dowager Zhang, see *DMB*, vol. 1, plate 4, upper left. This Empress Dowager Zhang putatively summoned the Grand Secretaries Yang Shiqi (1365–1444), Yang Rong (1371–1440), and Yang Pu (1372–1446) to the palaces and announced to them that Zhu Zhanji would be the new emperor: *DMB*, vol. 1, 289. Later, after the suspicious death of the mother of the Hongzhi Emperor (i.e., the later Empress Dowager Zhang's husband), his security was entrusted to his grandmother Empress Dowager Zhou (1430–1504): *DMB* vol. 1, 376. Thus his succession was dependent on the unseen power of a dowager empress.

13 *Shizong shilu*, in *MSL*, vol. 73, 49:7b (rpt. p. 1244). For an English-language account of this, and other extreme politics associated with Ming imperial women, see Geiss, "The Chia-ching Reign, 1522–1566," 461–5.

14 On this painting and its attribution, see Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, 131–2; Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, 313–18. For a discussion of four different painted versions of this subject, see Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China*, 41–9.

15 Tuotuo, *Song shi*, 338:10811.

16 On Wang Anshi, see Liu, *Reform in Sung China*.

17 Tuotuo, *Song shi*, 242:8625.

18 Tuotuo, *Song shi*, 338:10811.

19 Tuotuo, *Song shi*, 338:10811.

20 Empress Dowager Gao was not the only Song dowager empress to help Su. When he was in trouble because of a putatively seditious poem, he was saved by the intervention of Dowager Empress Cao (*c.* 1019–79, r. 1063–64): Tuotuo, *Song shi*, 242:8622. For an image of Empress Cao, consort of Renzong, see Fong, *Possessing the Past*, 145, plate 64.

21 On Zhang Lu studying in the Imperial University, see Zhu, *Huashi huiyao* 4:55b; Lan, *Tuhui baojian xucuan*, 1:3; Jiang, *Wusheng shishi*, 2:23; on the fame of Zhang Lu rivaling that of Wu Wei, see Xu, *Ming hua lu*, 1:7.

22 Zhu, *Ming wenhai*, 419:4b.

23 Zhu, *Ming wenhai*, 419:3a–6a.

24 Xie, *Wuzazu* 7:135; translation adapted from Oertling, *Painting and Calligraphy in the Wu-tsa-tsu*, 123, 194.

25 On paintings with subject matter suitable for female audiences, see Cahill, "Paintings for Women in Ming-Qing China?"

26 On the idea of the second and third sexes, and on their relationship to Ming dynasty China, see de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*; Herdt, ed., *Third Sex Third Gender*; Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China*, 37–9, 41, 43, 52; on the medium as the message, see McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 7–21.

27 Interestingly, whereas *Two Women* has as its compositional center a painted representation of an ink bamboo painting, Empress Zhang's *Ordination Scroll* insets a separately painted portrait of the empress into the larger scroll, like a photograph inserted into an official document in our own time, the differences in the colors of her portrait from the colors of the larger painting indicate that the portrait is a painting within a painting. Thus the play of painting within painting as the medium that represents the identity of the person with whom the painting is associated is found in two paintings made in the circle of Empress Zhang.

28 Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, 245. Specifically, the wintry setting evokes the period of Mongol rule in China, the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), during which Guan lived, construed contemporaneously as a wintry moment of barbarian domination; beyond protecting the figures against the cold, the fur-trimmed robes mark the women as aristocrats, appropriate to the identification of one of the figures as Guan, who was the wife of Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), prince of the last dynasty, prime minister of the Yuan, and renowned painter of multiple subjects (including bamboo), calligrapher, and poet. On Zhao, see McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322)*. The bamboo scroll pictured in the painting also represents the type of painting attributed to Guan, bamboo serving as an emblem of Guan herself. See Purtle, "The Poetry of Guan Daosheng and the Emblem of Bamboo"; Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, 245.

29 On this phenomenon, see Laing, "Wives, Daughters, and Lovers," 31–9; for an alternative cultural perspective, see, for example, Simonton, *Origins of Genius*, 215–16.

30 For mention of Guan in the *Collected Works of the Songxue Studio*, see Zhao, *Songxuezhai wenji* 7:16b–17a; Zhao, "Epitaph," *waiji*:23a–25b; for an overview of painting catalogues that mention Guan and her work, see Fu, *Lidai zhulu huamu*, 375a–376b; for overviews of works by or attributed to Guan that putatively circulated during the Ming dynasty, see Cahill, *Index*, 293–5; Fu, *Lidai zhulu huamu*, 375a–376b; Sirén, *Chinese Painting*, vol. 7, 119.

31 Xia, *Tuhui baojian*, 5:19a. The popularity of this text in the Ming dynasty was such that the late Ming historicist painter Lan Ying (1585–after 1664) wrote an addendum for it, the *Precious Mirror of Painting: Supplemental Compendium* (*Tuhui baojian xucuan*).

32 This should not be confused with the Western Shu Kingdom (405–13 CE).

33 Xia, *Tuhui baojian* 2:36b–37a; Tang, *Yutai hua shi*, 2:11.

34 Su Shi, *Jiju fenlei Dongpo xiansheng shi*, vol. 5, 11:28b; Bush and Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 212.

35 One excellent example of this is the invention of the novel by Murasaki Shikibu (*c.* 973–*c.* 1014 or 1025), author of *The Tale of Genji*.
36 Zhao, "Epitaph," *waiji*:23b; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix I, 1–19, esp. 1.
37 Zhao, "Epitaph," *waiji*:24b; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix I, 4.
38 Yang, "Vita of Zhao Mengfu," 11b; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix III, 25–6.
39 For a Euro-American perspective on these issues, see French, "Is there a Feminist Aesthetic?" 39–41.
40 In traditional China, men dominated the means and modes of cultural production, generating new forms rather than simply reproducing old ones, while women focused their agency on procreation. While it is unclear what narratives existed about the origins of painting during the lifetime of Guan Daosheng, no later than the second half of the sixteenth century, however, male literati, citing canonical texts, ascribed the invention of painting to a woman, Painter Lei. See Zhang, *Yiyao*, 1:2b; Shen, *Hua zhu*, cited in Sun, *Peiwenzhai shuhua pu*, 21:1b; Wang, *Shanhu wang shuhua lu*, 43:33a; Fang, *Tong ya*, 20:35a; see also Tang, *Yutai huashi* 1:1. The male literati Zhang Xuan (*juren* 1582) and Shen Hao (1586–1661) both based their understanding of the origin of painting on popular readings of Xu Shen's (d. 120 CE?) dictionary, *Expounding on Words, Explaining Characters* (*Shuowen jiezi*), which mentions Lei, but does not make explicit her invention of painting: Xu, *Shuowen jiezi*, 3b:19a. Zhang's text states: "Painter Lei, was the younger sister of [the legendary Emperor] Shun [who, if he lived, lived *c.* 2200 BCE)]. Painting originated (*shi*) with Lei. Consequently [she] is called 'Painter Lei.'"
41 Bottéro, "Cang Jie and the Invention of Writing," 141.
42 For an example of Guan's letter writing, see "Letter Home to my Third Elder Brother," in Chen, *Taiping qinghua*, 4:73–4.
43 This poem exists in several recensions, with many variations, large and small. I have translated the recension found in Liu, *Jiushi xinhua* (1957), 2–4. An earlier recension, which has been less popular in recent times, is reprinted in Liu, *Jiushi xinhua* (1931), 46–7. Published translations of this poem include: Rexroth and Chun, "Married Love," *The Orchid Boat*, 53; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix IX, 59, 62–3. Although it was uncommon, husbands and wives were sometimes buried in a single tomb in China of the Song dynasty and later: Stahl, "Su Shi's Orthodox Burials," 161–214. Zhao mentions their joint burial in his epitaph. Zhao, "Epitaph," *waiji*:25b; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix I, 6.
44 Zhao's forebear, the Song Emperor Huizong (1082–1135, r. 1100–26) was known as a painter. On Huizong as a painter, see Sirén, *Chinese Painting*, vol. 2, 69–89. Daosheng was the daughter of Guan Shen (act. mid-thirteenth century), a knight errant from Wuxing, Zhejiang, said to be a descendant of Guan Yiwu (d. 645 BCE), who served from 685 BCE as minister of the state for the state of Qi (1046–221 BCE) during the spring and autumn period (722–481 BCE). Zhao, "Epitaph," *waiji*:23a; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix I, 1. The terms "pure and obedient" (*zhen shun*) and "chaste and righteous" (*jie yi*) are the fourth and fifth of the six virtues prescribed for Confucian women in Liu, *Ancient Exempla* (*Gu lienü zhuan*). Liu, *Gu lienü zhuan*, *mulu*: 3b–5a.
45 Gu, *Yuanshixuan – guiji*, *renxia*: 2a. This same text, under the title "On an Ink Bamboo Sent to Milord Zi'ang [that is, Zhao Mengfu]" (*Ji Zi'ang jun mozhu*), is also anthologized in Chen, *Yuanshi jishi*, 36:666. Translation adapted from "On an Ink Bamboo Sent to Zi'ang [Zhao Mengfu]," in Purtle, "Guan Daosheng (1262–1319)," 127,

© 1999 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Standford Jr. University; for an alternate translation, see Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix VIII, 53.

46 Zhao, "Epitaph," *waiji*:23b–24a; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix I, 1–3.

47 Farrelly, *The Book of Bamboo*, 140.

48 Xu, *Shuowen jiezi* 5a:1a.

49 Purtle, "The Poetry of Guan Daosheng and the Emblem of Bamboo."

50 Chen, *Yuanshi jishi* 36:665; "Inscribed on My Own Painting of Bamboo," in Purtle, "Guan Daosheng (1262–1319)," 128.

51 Sun, *Gengzi xiaoxia ji* 2:19a; see also Tang, *Yutai huashi*, 2:21; Chen, *Yuanshi jishi* 36:666; translation from Purtle, "Guan Daosheng (1262–1319)," 128, © 1999 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Standford Jr. University.

52 On the number and birth mothers of the children raised by Guan and Zhao, see Ch'en, "Guan Daosheng he tade zhushi tu," 54–5.

53 Zhao, "Epitaph," *waiji*:25a; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix I, 5.

54 For an overview of the association of this subgenre of bamboo painting to femininity, see Weidner *et al.*, *Views from Jade Terrace*, 69–70.

55 For a color reproduction of *Bamboo* of 1309, see Weidner *et al.*, *Views from Jade Terrace*, 66–7, cat. 1.

56 Translation adapted from Hawkes, "A Fine Lady," *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*, 78–86.

57 *Shiqu baoji sanbian*, 7:3084; for an English-language translation of this poem, see "Rhyme-Prose on Tall, Slender Bamboo," in Purtle, "Guan Daosheng (1262–1319)," 129–31.

58 Wen, *Xinke shishi xiansheng danyuanji*, 935–7.

59 Zhao, *Songxuezhai wenji* 1:6a–7a; *Shiqu baoji sanbian* 7:3084. This phenomenon of obscuring or confusing the possible authorship of Guan is not limited to the "Rhyme-Prose on Tall, Slender Bamboo." *Yuanshixuan – guiji* includes four lyric (*ci*) poems by Guan, "To the Tune 'The Fisherman's Song'" (*Yufu ci*): Gu, *Yuanshixuan – guiji*, *renxia*:2a; for an English-language translation of this poem cycle, see "A Four-Stanza Cycle to the Tune *Yufu* ('The Fisherman's Song')," in Purtle, "Guan Daosheng (1262–1319)," 128–9. Three of these poems were originally anthologized in Zhao's *Collected Works of the Songxue Studio*, one attributed to Guan and two to Zhao. Zhao, *Songxuezhai wenji* 3:20b–21a. A later painting catalogue, *The Clear Water Pleasure Boat of Painting and Calligraphy* (*Qinghe shuhua fang*) notes that Zhao and Guan jointly inscribed these four poems on a painting, *Fisherman* (*Yufu tu*). Zhang, *Qinghe shuhua fang*, 10b:34b–35a; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," 9.

60 *Shiqu baoji sanbian* 7:3084; Weidner *et al.*, *Views from Jade Terrace*, 67, 68 n. 9. Guan's transgressions of normative gender were not limited to painting: her supervision of the commemorative rituals for her parents equally transgressed gendered understandings of propriety and conduct. Zhao, *Songxuezhai wenji* 3:24a, Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," 23–4, 26–8.

61 Liezi, *Liezi*, 5:150.

62 van Gulik, *The Lore of the Chinese Lute*.

63 On ears, see Morelli, *Italian Painters*, vol. 1, 37; on fingernails, 35; on both, 77–8. For more on connoisseurship and Morelli's relation to contemporary practice in Asian art history contexts, see Aitken, Davis, and van Dyke's essay in this volume (chapter 10).

64 For an explanation of the difference between sex and gender, see Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 16–25.

65 As in early modern Europe, female theatrical roles were played by men dressed as women, and in some cases, roles were also staged in which male actors playing female characters dressed as male characters in order to carry out some action not easily committed by a female. On this phenomenon, see Li, *Cross-Dressing in Chinese Opera*.

66 On sexed and gendered subjects, see Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 25–34.

67 Butler has noted that the performativity of gender cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, that is, the regular repetition of normative practice that makes (rather than is performed by) the subject: Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 93–5. Repetition of the male–male act of sympathetic aesthetic appreciation genders that act male, the act thus making men male; the female–female appropriation and subsequent repetition of that act complicated and expanded its gendered associations.

68 For a legible reproduction of this inscription, see Ch'en, "Guan Daosheng he tade zhushi tu," plate 7 (unpaginated, between pp. 84–5). Turquoise Wave Lake (*Bilang hu*) is located approximately 1.5 kilometers south of the county seat of Wuxing, Zhejiang, where Guan and Zhao lived. On Turquoise Wave Lake, see Zhang, *Zhongguo gujin diming dacidian*, 1111c.

69 On Huang Zhigui, see Wang, *Qiujian ji*, 11:6a–7a; Weidner *et al.*, *Views from Jade Terrace*, 20; Purtle, "Production of Painting, Place, and Identity," 443–51, esp. 447. Nothing further is known of the Lady of the Qu Kingdom.

70 These two surviving paintings attributed to Guan are: *Bamboo* of 1309, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and a spurious work dated 1313, now in the Tokyo National Museum. On the 1309 painting, see note 57 above; for a reproduction of the 1313 painting, see *Sōgen meiga shū*, vol. 3 (supplement), 59. For the catalogue record of the now lost painting of 1299, see *Shiqu baoji sanbian* 7:3084. Little is known about Guan Daogao, and some authors have suggested that she may be a fabrication. Guan Daosheng's parents had no male children: Zhao, "Epitaph," *waiji*:24a; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix I, 2. Moreover, Guan Daosheng's style name (*zi*) Zhongji means "Second Daughter," indicating that she was, in the absence of male children, the second daughter: Zhao, "Epitaph," *waiji*:23a; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix I, 1. While texts record Daogao's inscriptions, they do so for paintings that do not survive, making the authenticity of paintings and their inscription impossible to judge; the paintings putatively inscribed by Guan Daogao are all later copies, again, making it impossible to know the extent to which they either represent historical material or manufacture it. The earliest known mention of Guan Daogao occurs in a collection of essays first published in 1825: Qian, *Lü yuan cong hua*, 10:11b. Poems attributed to Guan Daogao are anthologized in *Yuanshi jishi*, which was first published in 1886. See Chen, *Yuanshi jishi* 36:664.

71 Gu, *Yuanshixuan – guiji*, *renxia*:1b; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix VIII, 52.

72 On the Empress Dowager receiving Guan in her Xingsheng Palace, see Zhao, "Epitaph," *waiji*:25a; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix I, 5. On Dagi and the Xingsheng palace more generally, see Song, *Yuan shi* 24:550–1, 114:2883–4; Toll, "Kuan Tao-sheng," Appendix I, 17–18 n. 69. On Dagi as a member of the Qunggirad clan see Song, *Yuan shi*, 22:477, 107:2713. On Dagi as mother of Ayurbarwarda, see Song, *Yuan shi*, 22:477.

73 In 1311, the year in which Zhao Mengfu was promoted to court (at which time he and Guan came to reside in Beijing), Princess Sengge received an increased stipend from the Xingsheng Empress Dowager, which may have enabled her to expand her art-collecting activities. In 1319, the year in which Guan Daosheng died, Princess Sengge invited a group of prominent male Chinese scholars to comment on her collections. In 1323, Princess Sengge hosted an "elegant gathering" for male scholars. Princess Sengge Ragi's position was unparalleled: in 1324, her daughter married Tugh Temür: Fu, "Princess Sengge Ragi," esp. 61–9.

74 Excellent studies on the projection of female imperial power include: Chen, "Empress Wu and Proto-Feminist Sentiments in T'ang China"; Guisso, *Wu Ts'e-t'ian*, 37–46, 66–8; Liu, "Empress Liu's Icon of Maitreya."

75 For a color reproduction of this painting, see *LiangSong huihua*, vol. 1, plates 44, 89. On this painting and the picturing of connoisseurship as a metaphor for governance, see Purtle, "Paintings by Emperor Huizong (r. 1101–1126) with inscriptions by Cai Jing (1047–1126)"; Cheng-hua Wang, "*Tingqin tu* de zhengzhi yihan."

76 Cheng-hua Wang, "Material Culture and Emperorship," 274–87.

77 Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, 74. Two versions of this painting are known; the one at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is likely a copy after Xie Huan, with the original in the Zhenjiang Museum collection. See Hearn, "An Early Ming Example of Multiples."

78 See notes 71 and 11 above.

79 See note 10 above.

80 Ban, *Nüjie*, in Fan, *Hou Han shu* 84:2789; translation adapted from Swann, *Pan Chao*, 86.

81 *Shizong shilu*, in *MSL*, vol. 82, 267:5b (rpt. p. 5284). For an English-language account of this, and other extreme politics associated with Ming imperial women, see Geiss, "The Chia-ching Reign, 1522–1566," 461–5.

82 In 1530, the Jiajing emperor published a short work entitled *Instructions for Women* (*Nü xun*), putatively written by his mother, which was issued together with a biography of Empress Ma (1333–82), wife of Taizu, the first Ming emperor, and the *Instructions for the Inner Quarters* (*Nei xun*) of Empress Xu (1362–1407), wife of the Yongle emperor (1360–1424, r. 1402–24). While this work might be understood as honoring Jiajing's lineage, it also serves as a text that both prescribes and describes ideal conduct by and for imperial women. For an English-language account of these texts, see *DMB*, vol. 1, 317; for an English-language biography of Empress Ma, see *DMB* 566–9; for an English-language translation of excerpts from Empress Xu's text, see Empress Ma, "Instructions for the Inner Quarters," trans. Theresa Kelleher, in de Bary, *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, vol. 1, 422–7.

References

Barnhart, Richard. *Painters of the Great Ming: The Imperial Court and the Zhe School.* Dallas, TX: The Dallas Museum of Art, 1993.

Bottéro, Françoise. "Cang Jie and the Invention of Writing: Reflections on the Elaboration of a Legend." In *Studies in Chinese Language and Culture*, edited by Christoph Anderl and Halvor Eifring, 135–55. Oslo: Hermes Academic Publishing, 2006.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Bush, Susan, and Hsio-yen Shih. *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1985.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York: Routledge, 1993.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Cahill, James. *An Index of Early Chinese Painters and Paintings: T'ang, Sung, and Yüan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

Cahill, James. "Paintings for Women in Ming-Qing China?" *Nan Nü: Men, Women, and Gender in China* 8 (2006): 1–54.

Cahill, James. *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368–1580*. New York: Weatherhill, 1978.

Chang Kang-i Sun and Haun Saussy, eds. *Women Writers of Traditional China: An Anthology of Poetry and Criticism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Ch'en Pao-chen [Chen Baozhen]. "Guan Daosheng he tade zhushi tu [Guan Daosheng and her 'Bamboo and Rock' in the Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei]." *Gugong jikan* 11 no. 4 (Summer 1977): 51–84.

Chen Jiru (1558–1639). *Taiping qinghua* [*Clear Words from a Peaceful Age*]. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936.

Chen Jo-shui. "Empress Wu and Proto-Feminist Sentiments in T'ang China." In *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China*, edited by Frederick P. Brandauer and Chün-chieh Huang, 77–116. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

Chen Yan (1856–1937). *Yuanshi jishi* [*Memoranda of Yuan Poetry*]. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936.

Clunas, Craig. *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

de Bary, William Theodore, ed. *Sources of East Asian Tradition: Premodern Asia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

DMB. *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644*, edited by L. Carrington Goodrich. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.

Fan Ye (398–445). *Hou Han shu* [*History of the Latter Han Dynasty*]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965.

Fang Yizhi (1611–71). *Tong ya* [*Comprehensive Glossary*]. In *WSKQSEV*.

Farrelly, David. *The Book of Bamboo*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1984.

Fisher, Carney Thomas. "The Great Ritual Controversy in Ming China." PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1977.

Fong Wen. *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996.

French, Marilyn. "Is there a Feminist Aesthetic?" *Hypatia* 5 no. 2 (Summer 1990): 33–42.

Fu Kaisen [John Ferguson]. *Lidai zhulu huamu* [*Catalogue of the Recorded Paintings of Successive Dynasties*]. Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1993.

Fu Shen. "Princess Sengge Ragi: Collector of Painting and Calligraphy." In *Flowering in the Shadows*, edited by Marsha Weidner, 55–80. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990.

Geiss, James. "The Chia-ching Reign, 1522–1566." In *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 7: *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part I*, edited by Frederick Mote and Denis Twitchett, 440–510. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Gu Sili (*jinshi* 1712). *Yuanshixuan – guiji* [*Selections of Yuan Dynasty Poetry – Supplemental Collection*]. N.p., 1798.

Guisso, Richard. *Wu Ts'e-t'ian*. Bellingham, WA: Western Washington University, 1978.

Hawkes, David. *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*. Hong Kong: Renditions, 1987.

Hearn, Maxwell K. "An Early Ming Example of Multiples: Two Versions of *Elegant Gathering in the Apricol Garden*." In *Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting*, edited by Judith G. Smith and Wen Fong, 221–58. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999.

Herdt, Gilbert, ed. *Third Sex Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*. New York: Zone Books, 1994.

Huang, Martin. *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Jiang Shaoshu (act. 1642–79). *Wusheng shishi* [*A History of Soundless Poetry*]. In *Huashi congshu* [*Compendium of Chinese Painting Histories*], edited by Yu Anlan, vol. 3. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1963.

Laing, Ellen Johnston. "Wives, Daughters, and Lovers: Three Ming Dynasty Women Painters." In *Views from Jade Terrace*, edited by Marsha Weidner, 88–91. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990.

Lan Ying (1585–after 1664). *Tuhui baojian xucuan* [*Supplement to the Precious Mirror of Painting*]. In *Huashi congshu* [*Compendium of Chinese Painting Histories*], edited by Yu Anlan, vol. 2. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1963.

Li Siu Leung. *Cross-Dressing in Chinese Opera*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006.

Li, Thomas, and Susan Naquin. "The Baoming Temple: Religion and the Throne in Ming-Qing China." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48 (1988): 131–88.

LiangSong huihua [*Painting of the Song and Southern Song Dynasties*]. In *Zhongguo meishu quanji: Huihua bian* [*Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Art Painting*], vols. 3–4. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988.

Liezi (act. fifth century BCE). *Liezi* (fourth century BCE), ed. Wang Qiangmo. Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1993.

Little, Stephen. *Taoism and the Arts of China*. Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000.

Liu Dabai (1880–1932). *Jiushi xinhua* [*Old Poems, New Discourses*]. Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1931.

Liu Heping. "Empress Liu's Icon of Maitreya: Portraiture and Privacy at the Early Song Court." *Artibus Asiae* 58 no. 2 (2003): 129–83.

Liu Tzu-chien. *Reform in Sung China: Wang An-shih (1021–1086) and His New Policies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959.

Liu Xiang (77–6? BCE). *Gu lienü zhuan* [*Ancient Exempla*]. In *WSKQSEV*.

McCausland, Shane. *Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322): Calligraphy and Painting for Khubilai's China*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010.

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1964.

Morelli, Giovanni (1816–1891). *Italian Painters: Critical Studies of their Works*. Translated by Constance Ffoulkes. London: J. Murray, 1892.

MSL. Mingshilu [*Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty*]. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1966.

Murasaki Shikibu (*c.* 973–*c.* 1014 or 1025). *The Tale of Genji*. Translated by Edward G. Seidensticker. New York: Knopf, 1976.

Oertling, Sewell. *Painting and Calligraphy in the Wu-tsa-tsu: Conservative Aesthetics in Seventeenth-Century China*. Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1997.

Purtle, Jennifer. "Guan Daosheng (1262–1319)." In *Women Writers of Traditional China: An Anthology of Poetry and Criticism*, edited by Kang-i Sun Chang and Haun Saussy, 126–30. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Purtle, Jennifer. "Paintings by Emperor Huizong (r. 1101–1126) with inscriptions by Cai Jing (1047–1126)." Unpublished seminar paper, Yale University, Fall 1989.

Purtle, Jennifer. "The Poetry of Guan Daosheng and the Emblem of Bamboo: Making Feminine a Masculine Tradition through Innovation." Unpublished seminar paper, Yale University, 1990.

Purtle, Jennifer. "The Production of Painting, Place, and Identity in Song-Yuan (960–1279) Fujian." PhD diss., Yale University, 2001.

Qian Yong (1759–1844). *Lü yuan cong hua* [*Collected Essays from the Lü Garden*]. N.p., 1825.

Rexroth, Kenneth, and Ling Chun. *The Orchid Boat: Women Poets of China*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1972.

Shen Hao (1586–1661). *Hua zhu* [*(Talking about) Painting (while Waving the) "Cow Tail"*]. Taipei: Xinxing shuju, 1970.

Shiqu baoji sanbian [*The Imperial (lit. "Stone Moat") Collection, Third Catalogue*]. In *Shiqu baoji* [*The Imperial (lit. "Stone Moat") Collection*], vol. 9. Reprint; Taipei: Guoli Gugong bowuyuan, 1969.

Simonton, Dean Keith. *Origins of Genius: Darwinian Perspectives on Creativity*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1999.

Sirén, Osvald. *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles*, 7 vols. New York: Ronald, 1956–8.

Sōgen meiga shū [*A Collection of Famous Paintings of the Song and Yuan Dynasties*], 2 vols. and a supplementary volume. N.p., 1930.

Song Lian (1310–1381) *Yuan shi* [*History of the Yuan Dynasty*]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976.

Stahl, Helga. "Su Shi's Orthodox Burials: Interconnected Double Chambered Tombs in Sichuan." In *Burial in Song China*, edited by Dieter Kuhn, 161–214. Heidelberg: Editio Forum, 1994.

Su Shi (1037–1101). *Jiju fenlei Dongpo xiansheng shi* [*Annotated and Classified Poems of Su Shi*]. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936.

Sun Chengze (1592–1676). *Gengzi xiaoxia ji* [*Records from the Summer of 1660*]. In *WSKQSEV*.

Sun Yueban (1639–1708). *Peiwenzhai shuhua pu* [*A Guide to Paintings and Calligraphy in the Peiwen Studio*]. In *WSKQSEV*.

Swann, Nancy Lee. *Pan Chao: Foremost Woman Scholar of China*. New York: Twayne, 1966.

Tang Souyu (act. nineteenth century). *Yutai hua shi* [*History of Painting from Jade Terrace*]. In *Huashi congshu* [*Compendium of Chinese Painting Histories*], edited by Yu Anlan, vol. 5. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1963.

Thompson, Lydia. "The Empress' New Clothes: A Daoist Ordination Scroll in the San Diego Museum of Art and Female Authority in the Ming Period." Unpublished paper presented at the Association of Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, April 2002.

Toll, Elizabeth. "Kuan Tao-sheng: A Study and Translation of the Primary Sources." Unpublished BA thesis, Harvard University, 1978.

Tuotuo (1313–55). *Song shi* [*History of the Song Dynasty*]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977.

van Gulik, Robert. *The Lore of the Chinese Lute: An Essay in Ch'in Ideology*. Tokyo: Sophia University, 1940.

Wang Cheng-hua. "Material Culture and Emperorship: The Shaping of Imperial Roles at the Court of Xuanzong (r. 1426–35)." PhD diss., Yale University, 1998.

Wang Cheng-hua. "*Tingqin tu* de zhengzhi yihan: Huizongchao yuanhua fengge yu yiyi wangluo [The Political Connotations of *Listening to the Qin*: Academic Painting Style and Meaning at the Court of Huizong]." *Guoli Taiwan daxue meishushi yanjiu qikan* 5 (1998): 77–122.

Wang Keyu (b. 1587). *Shanhu wang shuhua lu* [*Record of Paintings and Calligraphy from the Coral Net (Collection)*]. In *WSKQSEV*.

Wang Yun (1227–1304). *Qiujian ji* [*Collected Works of Wang Yun*]. In *WSKQSEV*.

Weidner, Marsha, ed. *Flowering in the Shadows: Women in the History of Chinese and Japanese Painting*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990.

Weidner, Marsha, Ellen Johnston Laing, Irving Yucheng Lo, Christina Chu, and James Robinson, eds. *Views from Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists, 1300–1912*. New York: Rizzoli, 1988.

Wen Tong (1019–179). *Xinke shishi xiansheng danyuanji* [*New Edition of the Comprehensive Collected Works of Wen Tong*]. Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1973.

WSKQSEV. *Wenyuange siku quanshu* [*Complete Library of the Four Treasuries (housed in) the Wenyuan Pavilion*]. Electronic edition. Hong Kong: Dizi Digital Publishing, 2002.

Xia Wenyan (1296–1370). *Tuhui baojian* [*Precious Mirror of Painting*] (preface dated 1365). In *WSKQSEV*.

Xie Zhaozhe (1567–1624). *Wuzazu* [*Five Miscellanies*]. Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 2001.

Xu Shen (d. 120 CE?). *Shuowen jiezi* [*Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters*]. In *WSKQSEV*.

Yang Lien-sheng. "Female Rulers in Imperial China." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 23 (1960–1): 47–61.

Yang Tinghe (1459–1529). *Shicao yulu* [*More Records of Shicao Documents*]. Kyoto, 1972.

Yang Zai (1271–1323). *Zhao Mengfu xingzhuang* [*Vita of Zhao Mengfu*]. In *Songxuezhai wenji* [*Collected Writings of Zhao Mengfu*]. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1970.

Yu Jideng (*jinshi* 1577). *Dian gu ji wen* [*Literary Quotations Transcribed*]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981.

Zhang Chou (1577–1643). *Qinghe shuhua fang* [*Pure River Pleasure Boat of Painting and Calligraphy*]. in *WSKQSEV*.

Zhang Lihe, ed. *Zhongguo gujin diming dacidian* [*Great Dictionary of Chinese Ancient and Modern Place Names*]. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1993.

Zhang Tingyu (1762–55), ed. *Ming shi* [*History of the Ming Dynasty*]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974.

Zhang Xuan (*juren* 1582). *Yiyao* [*Doubtful Splendor*]. In *WSKQSEV*.
Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322). *Songxuezhai wenji* [*Collected Writings of Zhao Mengfu*]. In *WSKQSEV*.
Zhao Mengfu. "Epitaph for the Lady of the State of Wei, née Guan." In *Songxuezhai wenji* [*Collected Writings of Zhao Mengfu*]. In *WSKQSEV*.
Zhu Ankan (act. seventeenth century). *Ming wenhai* [*A Sea of Ming Prose*]. In *WSKQSEV*.
Zhu Moyin (act. seventeenth century). *Huashi huiyao* [*An Outline History of Painting*]. In *WSKQSEV*.

Further Reading

Blanchard, Lara. "Chinese Paintings of Elite Women (*Shinü hua*)." In *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Love, Courtship, and Sexuality through History*, vol. 2: *The Medieval Era*, edited by William E. Burns, 53–4. Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 2008.
Blanchard, Lara. "Huizong's New Clothes: Desire and Allegory in *Court Ladies Newly Preparing Woven Silk*." *Ars Orientalis* 36 (2009): 111–35.
Blanchard, Lara. "Lonely Women and the Absent Man: The Masculine Landscape as Metaphor in the Song Dynasty Painting of Women." In *Gendered Landscapes: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Past Place and Space*, edited by Bonj Szczygiel, Josephine Carubia, and Lorraine Dowler, 33–47. University Park, PA.: The Center for Studies in Landscape History, The Pennsylvania State University, 2000.
Blanchard, Lara. "A Scholar in the Company of Female Entertainers: Changing Notions of Integrity in Song to Ming Dynasty Painting." *Nan nü: Men, Women, and Gender in China* 9 no. 2 (2007): 189–246.
Blanchard, Lara. "Visualizing Love and Longing in Song Dynasty Paintings of Women." PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2001.
Blanchard, Lara, and Kara Kinney. "Traces of Collaboration: Empress Yang's Captions for Xia Gui's *Twelve Views of Landscape*." *Critical Matrix: The Princeton Journal of Women, Gender and Culture* 18 (Fall 2009): 6–33.
Cahill, James. *Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
Cropper, Elizabeth. "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style." *Art Bulletin* 58 (1976): 374–94.
Davis, Natalie Zemon. *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.
Lee Hui-shu. "The Domain of Empress Yang (1162–1233): Art, Gender and Politics at the Southern Song Court." PhD diss., Yale University, 1994.
Liu Xun. "Visualized Perfection: Daoist Painting, Court Patronage, Female Piety and Monastic Expansion in Late Qing (1862–1908)." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (June 2004): 57–115.
McCausland, Shane. "Private Lives, Public Faces – Relics of Calligraphy by Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), Guan Daosheng (1262–1319) and their Children." *Oriental Art* 46 no. 5 (2000): 38–47.
Nochlin, Linda. "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *Art News* 64 (1971): 22–39, 67–71.

Plock, Phillippa. "Watching Women Watching Warriors: Nicolas Poussin's *Tancred and Erminia* and the Visuality of Papal Court Tournaments." *Art History* 31 no. 2 (2008): 139–58.

Rossabi, Morris. "Kuan Tao-sheng." *Bulletin of Song-Yuan Studies* 21 (1989): 67–84.

Roulston, Christine. "Framing Sensibility: The Female Couple in Art and Narrative." *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 46 no. 3 (2006): 641–55.

Sinn Yuk-ching [Xian Yuqing]. "Yuan Guan Zhongji zhi shuhua [The Calligraphy and Painting of Guan Daosheng]." *Lingnan xuebao* 3 (April 1934): 181–223.

13

Diasporic Body Double: The Art of the Singh Twins

Saloni Mathur

I

The London born artists Amrit and Rabindra Kaur Singh, the daughters of a Sikh doctor who immigrated to the north of England from the Punjab, are identical twins: they have the same DNA, they look and sound exactly alike, they wear the same clothing, and they received their training in art together.[1] Often referred to as "the Singh Twins," the sisters have adopted the language of Indian and Persian miniature painting to depict the complex urban and domestic landscapes of the contemporary world. The twins have exhibited their work to international audiences in Britain, Europe, India, and North America: a recent show, titled *Past-Modern: The Singh Twins*, featured more than 60 paintings, and was hosted by the University of California at Riverside in 2003 and the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool in 2005.[2] Significantly, Amrit and Rabindra's collaborative practice is not simply an innocent expression of an affectionate bond between sisters, but rather a self-conscious engagement with the notion of singular authorship and the cult of the individual that has pervaded post-enlightenment art historical tradition. Not since Diane Arbus' 1967 black and white photograph of identical twin girls in New Jersey has such a memorable rendering of sameness and belonging, normativity and exclusion, and identity and difference, been sustained so provocatively within the contemporary art world.

Brought up in a conservative Sikh extended family in Liverpool, the twins were instructed by their teachers at Liverpool University Art College to follow their own individuality and to be as dissimilar in their art practices as possible. Their adoption of a singular performance mode – collaborating on most of their

paintings, exhibiting together, referring to themselves as a single artist using the pronoun "she," and routinely signing each others' work – is in this sense a playful and explicit rejection of the normative conventions of their disciplinary training. Their turn to the formal vocabulary of the Indo-Persian miniature is similarly a response to the Eurocentrism they encountered in their art school education in England. The twins are by no means the first contemporary artists to take up the particular style of South Asian painting prevalent from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries commonly referred to as "miniature painting," nor are they invested in probing its limits in the manner of the Pakistani-born New York artist, Shahzia Sikander, also known for her experimentations with this tradition. The latter, by contrast, has increasingly moved away from the storytelling aspects of miniature painting, and towards a more radical dissection of the form through video, sound, and digital technologies evidenced by her various solo exhibitions in New York.[3] However, it is the twins' distinctive blending of the Indo-Persian miniature tradition with the more popular genres of twentieth- and twenty-first-century art practice in India – for instance, the mass produced phenomenon of photography, poster art, Hindu calendar art, and the urban kitsch of Bollywood cinema – which blurs the distinction between high and low in their acts of borrowing of South Asian visual forms. In fact, the twins do not merely borrow from India; they raid the mythological menagerie of the subcontinent. And the result is a compelling set of "twinnings" at stake: between Britain and India, high and low, past and present, modernity and tradition, original and copy, home and diaspora, and collective identity vs. individual subjectivity, to name only a few of the coordinates that structure their work.

The critics generally agree that the twins' recuperation of the miniature tradition represents a novel encounter between the past and the present, and that it undermines and begins to dismantle these binaries.[4] However, such a consensus among the critics also tends to overlook a more powerful dimension of their work, namely, the politics and practices of their performance *as twins*. In this essay, I approach the phenomenon of "twin-ness" as a complex prism through which to view their art practice, and seek to underscore the figure of the twin, or the double, as a motif through which to map a range of dualities crucial to contemporary subjectivity in the South Asian diaspora. I begin by tracing the trajectory of the twins' artistic development – from their formal training in western painting to their various appropriations of the Indian miniature tradition – and situate their practice within the larger phenomenon of "miniature revivalism" in the South Asian case. I then attend to the various ways in which the "political" enters their work, from the literal depictions of political figures and events, to the representation of multiple tensions between minority subjects and nation-states in Britain, India, and the United States, to the more subtle staging of gender roles within the sphere of domestic life. The issue of gender identity in the work of the twins is further complicated by the fact of their doubleness, and I turn at the end to examine their range of self-images as a unity, or as twins, to reflect on the crises of authenticity at stake more generally within what one writer has called our "culture of the copy."[5]

My suggestion is that the significance of their work rests ultimately in the strategic assertion of their status as identical twins, within both their painting and exhibition practices. Further, the strength of twin-ness in their case is not simply reducible to the currency of the figure of the twin within the cultural imaginary, or the long history of novelty that has attached itself to twins, although these may indeed be elements of their recent international visibility and success. Far from being a gimmick, what is meaningful about the peculiar politics of identity practiced by the Singh Twins is that it reorganizes the hierarchies through which such pairings as modern/traditional, original/copy, high/low, and home/abroad have historically emerged to structure colonial and postcolonial subjectivities. In spite of other limitations, vis-à-vis the liberal pluralism of the British nation-state in particular, I argue that it is the performative power of their twin-ness that exists in tension with the more optimistic celebrations of multiculturalism in their work, and gives their practice in the broadest sense its political distinctiveness and critical charge.

II

The formal evolution of their painting, and in particular, the stylistic turn to the Indo-Persian miniature tradition, is itself thematized in a series of four pictures, titled *Daddy in the Sitting Room*, 1987.[6] Executed while the twins were still in art school, these images were a direct response to the demand to conform to European aesthetic conventions that was part of their art school training. The first picture in the series depicts the interior of a European-style living room, in which a man, "Daddy," is sitting on a beige upholstered armchair reading a medical journal. The typical components of a British living room (a piano, the television, the stereo, and the bookshelves) intermingle with small markers of ethnic identity (a painting of Shiva/Vishnu on the left, a model of the Taj Mahal at the rear, a row of wooden elephants on the windowsill, a Persian carpet) to produce a rather unremarkable result. In the second picture, several stylistic aspects of miniature painting (bold colors, elaborate ornament, repeating patterns, and a flattening of perspective) are introduced to transform the exact same setting into a space that proclaims its "Indianness." In the third picture, this transformation is fully realized: a train of elephants march into the scene, a pair of *tablas* (drums) materialize next to the stereo, the picture of Vishnu bursts into form on the ceiling, and the actual Taj Mahal comes into view through the window. Here the bland sitting room explodes into a kitschy, spicy mix of colors, patterns, and motifs; the Indian elements are no longer visually assimilated into the room, but come instead to occupy fully the symbolic space of the interior. The series, in this sense, also expresses the desire of the diasporic subject who dreams of "home" from his location in the west and undertakes, through the operations of the imagination, a nostalgic cultural return. The fourth and final image in the series, by contrast, places the psychic drama of the individual within the context of the entire house, and represents the full arrival of the composition

in formal terms to the Indian miniature form. Using the rich ornamentation and flat perspective characteristic of the form, this painting shows the multiple narratives of an Indian wedding celebration: the men downstairs are playing music, dancing, and eating; upstairs the women assist with the preparation of the bride; the children add to the chaos and festivity throughout; one woman breaks up a fight on the stairwell; another scolds a little one further down; and yet another woman is depicted serving drinks to the men.

As in this image, many of the twins' paintings of domestic and extended family life contain within them a telling portrait of gender relations and women's status within the family. I will return to discuss the question of gender later in this essay: suffice it to say that this theme infiltrates their work so thoroughly that it is virtually impossible to keep at bay. First, however, it is necessary to survey additional samples of their work, and to explore in a little more detail their various inhabitations of the Indian miniature form.

Miniature painting in South Asia, a narrative tradition that encompasses both religious and secular storytelling practices while often blurring the lines between them, was itself a unique confluence of Persian, Indian, and European art when it was established in the sixteenth century during the period of Mughal rule in the subcontinent.[7] Significantly, miniature paintings, commissioned by Mughal rulers like Akbar (r. 1556–1605) and his successors, were produced collaboratively in the context of the imperial courts by a team of artists inhabiting a *karkhana* (workshop), some specializing in portraiture, others in birds and animals, and others skilled in ornamentation or the "border work" at the margins of the painting. In the context of the Mughal atelier, picture-making was characterized by a joint production process in which the ego of the individual artist was subordinated to the larger project. Far from an egalitarian structure, however, priorities and hierarchies were well established in the collaboration, and a rigid system of *ustaads* (masters) and apprentices also defined the Mughal karkhana.

The twins' visual practice is obviously very different from the rigor and demanding rituals of this classical court tradition: they do not grind their own paint pigments from plants and mineral substances, for example, nor do they construct their own brushes from the tail hair of squirrels. They do manage, however, to approach the *spirit* of the miniature tradition – its narrative modalities, its cosmopolitan secularism, its privileging of collective over individual authorship, its urban-generated view of the world – and their work is imbued with a particular desire to claim and articulate a relationship to this past. In this respect, they may be seen as part of a larger phenomenon of "miniature revivalism" that has emerged since the 1980s, a phenomenon in which Pakistani-born artists like Shazia Sikander and Imran Qureshi have figured prominently, but which is nevertheless transnational in character. The establishment of the Department of Miniatures during the 1980s at the National College of Art (NCA) in Lahore, Pakistan's premier art and design school, dramatizes both the importance of this tradition to contemporary art practice in the region, as well as its institutionalization and incorporation into the mainstream art establishment.[8] At the same time, the global character of the miniature revival is made clear by an exhibition of six artists of

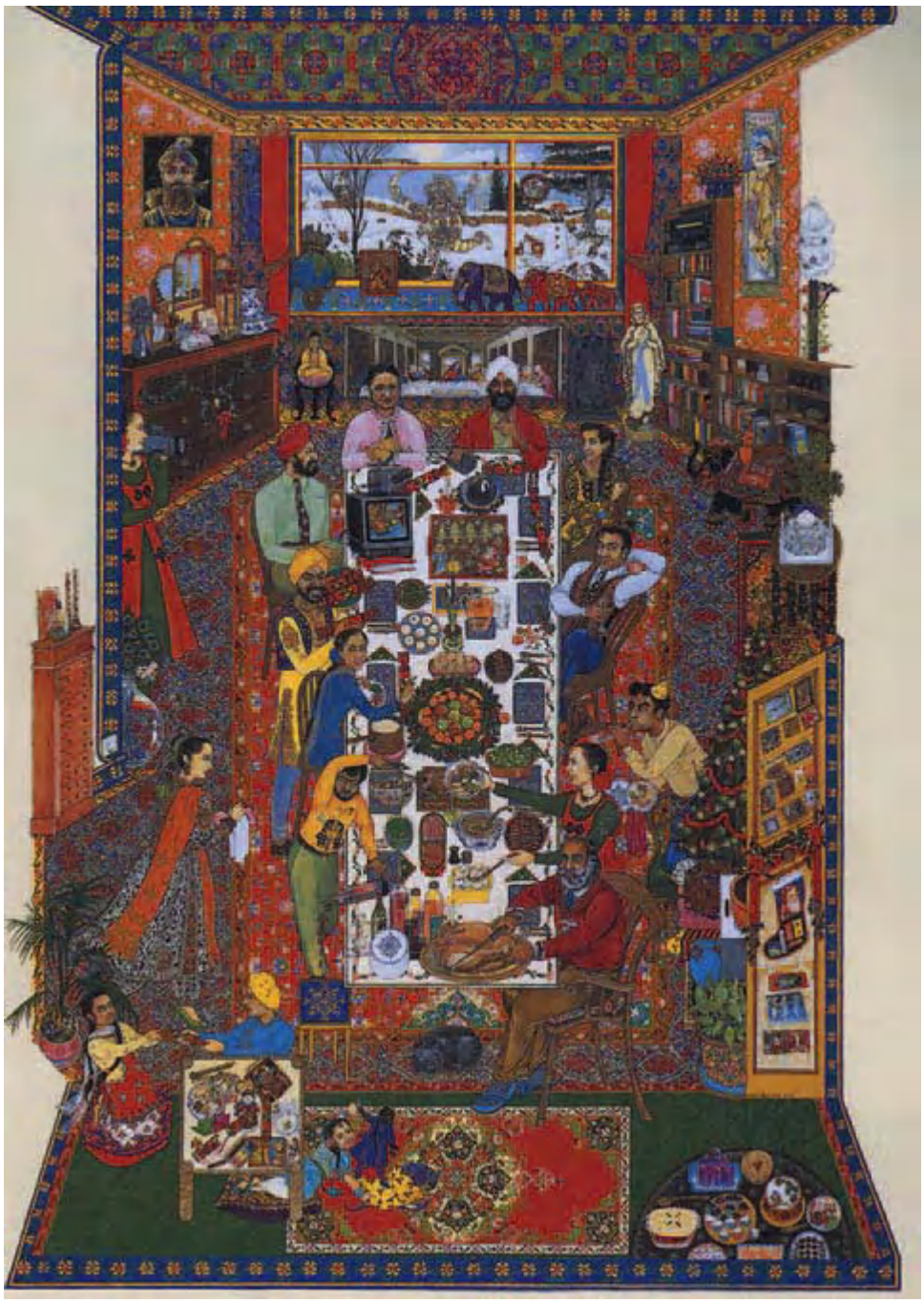

FIGURE 13-1 Amrit and Rabindra Singh, *The Last Supper*, 1994–5, poster color, gouache, and gold dust on mountboard, $17\frac{5}{8} \times 24\frac{1}{2}$ in (44.7 × 62.2 cm). Artwork © The Singh Twins, Amrit and Rabindra: www.singhtwins.co.uk.

Pakistani origin, entitled *Karkhana: A Contemporary Collaboration*. Originally held in a gallery in Rochdale, in the north of England in 2003 and subsequently traveling to the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Connecticut and the Asia Society in New York in 2005–7, this exhibit featured six Pakistani miniature painters, all of them trained at the NCA in Lahore, but currently living in New York, Chicago, Melbourne, Lahore and Faisalabad.[9] As Pakistani painter, critic and curator, Salima Hashmi, has written in her compelling account of this show, the initial impulse towards the miniature form may have originated in a desire for an "ancient future." But once resurrected and dusted off, the miniature in Pakistan "was set up, not for embellishment or re-interpretation, but for a deep subversion which embraces nostalgia on the one hand while laughingly challenging the baggage that accompanies it. It probes the center while accommodating the edges, teasing/daring a new uncomfortable vocabulary and voice into shape and place."[10]

What is distinctive about the Singh Twins' contribution to this larger climate of miniature revivalism is thus not simply the ironic humor that finds its way into most of their work. In this regard, they parallel their creative counterparts in the realm of literature or film who also thematize the experiences of the Indian diaspora – Salman Rushdie or Mira Nair, for example, known for their insistent humorous focus on the ironic juxtapositions of everyday life. It is rather the unapologetic manner in which they have harnessed this narrative genre from the Mughal era to serve the interests, expressions, desires, and sensibilities of diasporic subjectivity in the twenty-first century. In a delightful picture, titled *The Last Supper* (1994–5), for instance, we see the entire extended Punjabi family seated for Christmas dinner, complete with turkey and trimmings, a decorated tree, festive candles, cards, Christmas stockings, and crackers, in a raucous rendition of the historic last supper of Leonardo da Vinci's painting, which itself hangs at the back of the room (fig. 13-1). The guests here, however, seem unable to sit still for the occasion, and the television set (which is turned on, of course) at the center of the table, subverts once and for all any sense of piety associated with the original Christian feast. Similarly, the traditional snowman seen outside the window has been transformed into an Indian prince, and various icons of world religion (a Sikh guru, a statue of Buddha, a Hindu god, Ganesh, and the Virgin Mary) remind us of the radical syncretism of the ethnic family in relation to the ritual traditions of modern Euro-America. In a warm-season counterpart to this image, titled *Indian Summer at Dhigpal Niwas* (1994–5), the twins have also constructed a view of their family enjoying the ritual of a summer barbeque, transforming the park that is the site of their picnic – with Liverpool looming in the background – into a rich and sensuous Mughal-style garden. The level of detail and skill in their depiction of the trees, plants, birds, and animals that frame the scene is worth noting here, in part because such a "foliage frame" is yet another attribute of the Mughal miniature tradition.

Two more paintings along these lines – *Wedding Jange II* (1991) and *All That I Am* (1993–4) – also represent the twins' relationship to the micro-narrative modalities of the miniature form, where each picture reveals multiple stories within

FIGURE 13-2 Amrit and Rabindra Singh, *All That I Am*, 1993–4, poster color, gouache, and gold dust on mountboard, $17\frac{3}{4} \times 25\frac{1}{4}$ in (45.1 × 64 cm). Artwork © The Singh Twins, Amrit and Rabindra: www.singhtwins.co.uk.

a story, in this case deployed in an extended commentary about the drama of ethnic difference in England and the challenges of cultural assimilation in the west in general. The first picture shows a scene from a traditional Indian wedding: the groom is at the center on his white horse, and the guests are beginning their procession to the bride's house. As the artists have noted, the scene "could easily be mistaken for a village, or town, in India" but the backdrop of Liverpool – a Liverpool blanketed by a Persian carpet – "places events firmly on British soil."[11] On the left are two buses waiting to transport the wedding party, a practical adaptation by South Asian diasporic communities who travel to increasingly distant destinations for such rites. On the right are various English neighbors and passers-by, stopping to take in the spectacle of ethnic difference, some peering over the fence in a voyeuristic fashion. The composition thus sets up a division between two different cultural zones, east on the left and west on the right, with the tree serving as the symbolic boundary between them.[12] The second painting, titled *All That I Am* (1993–4) (fig. 13-2), is the twins' homage to their father's life, depicting various biographical episodes in chronological order from his birth and childhood in Amritsar, to his coming of age within Gandhian nationalism, his journey to Britain during the turmoil of Partition, his early struggles with poverty as a traveling salesman in Manchester, his eventual education and medical degree, and finally the large house he provides for the family and community, a picture of which he holds in his hand along with a copy of the infamous 1927 book by Katherine Mayo, *Mother India*, in the other. This book – a polemical argument in favor of British rule in India, and a harsh indictment of the "degraded" status of women in Indian society – was emblematic of a larger discursive struggle between imperialists and nationalists over the figure of the "native woman,"[13] and was widely condemned when it was published by leaders of both the nationalist and women's movements in India.[14] However, throughout the second half of the twentieth century the book continued to have a powerful role in shaping perceptions about India, and Indian women in particular; and it continues to symbolize for present-day observers the clash between imperialism and nationalism in the subcontinent, as well as the specific formations of modernity it engendered.

If the presence of *Mother India* in their father's hands evokes the cultural climate of contestation and struggle in which an earlier generation forged its migrations to the west, then such paintings are clearly successful in deploying the rich symbolism and micronarrative approach typical of Indian miniatures to articulate the varied subjectivities of the South Asian diaspora. But both of these paintings, *Wedding Jange II* and *All That I Am*, also betray an excess of faith in the liberal multiculturalism of the British nation-state – the former by valorizing the story of immigrant success, and the latter, by asserting an idealized image of a somewhat harmonious cultural divide. Other paintings, however, are more critical of the policies and practices of the British nation-state when it is situated in the context of international affairs. Their 1987 portrait of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, for instance, which shows Thatcher with her clutch handbag

FIGURE 13-3 Amrit and Rabindra Singh, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1998, poster color, gouache, and gold dust on mountboard, 29¾ × 39¾ in (75.5 × 101 cm). Artwork © The Singh Twins, Amrit and Rabindra: www.singhtwins.co.uk.

and sensible shoes, crossing the Atlantic to join a plasticky Reagan with his superficial smile, offers a more cynical view of the political alliances between Britain and the United States in the 1980s. The picture was inspired by a Mughal painting of 1618, *Jahangir Embracing Shah Abbas of Persia*, an opaque watercolor on paper attributed to the artist Abul Hassan.[15] The twins satirically reinterpret the heroic embrace of the political rulers in the earlier painting, substituting a donkey and a fox for the original vehicles of the lamb and the lion, and replacing the halo surrounding the head of Jahangir with a mushroom cloud, even as they maintain the same scale as the original (6 in × 8 in). Ten years later, the twins visited the United States and created the painting titled *Manhattan Mall*, depicting themselves with their uncle eating in a food court in the heart of mid-town Manhattan, in response to their American trip. In this image, the twins are pictured within the impressive cityscape of New York, which they take in like dazzled tourists. And yet, the icons of American freedom, capitalism, and financial power that surround them are undercut by the presence of a Native American family seated in the lower right margins of the scene. Dressed in traditional ceremonial clothing while eating a McDonald's hamburger and fries, the Native American father is shown hanging his head, as if in sorrow. Here, at least, the economic participation of immigrants in the nation-state – the so-called "American Dream" – is depicted in relation to the processes of exploitation inflicted upon the native inhabitants of the Americas.

Significantly, this theme of the subjugation of minorities within the nation-state is also taken up in relation to India, in a rather important painting titled *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, showing the storming of the Golden Temple compound in Amritsar by Indian troops (fig. 13-3). The picture, which uses the title of George Orwell's well-known novel to rename "Operation Bluestar," the operation in which the Golden Temple was attacked by the Indian army under order of the prime minister, Indira Gandhi, in June 1984, depicts a steep bank of soldiers firing from three sides, along with the scramble, panic, and chaos of the crowd, and the holy temple itself in a pool of blood. As the picture suggests, the horrible violence of this event, which led to the assassination of Indira Gandhi by two of her Sikh bodyguards, and a wave of anti-Sikh riots in northern India in the fall of 1984, has an important place in the consciousness of Sikhs around the world. For these events not only inaugurated a new era of violence in the relationship between the Sikh minority and the Indian nation-state, they also transformed the politics of Sikh identity in powerful ways, in particular, by revitalizing the idea of Khalistan, an independent Sikh state in the Punjab, within an emergent Sikh global imaginary.[16] Interestingly, the twins themselves had visited India for the first time shortly before these events, in 1980, when they first encountered the Mughal miniature tradition and gained their inspiration from it. Elsewhere they have acknowledged the important role of the Festival of India in Britain in 1982, an event that was widely contested during the 1980s and 1990s for its dispersal of exotic images of India, in exposing them to Indian art.[17] What is significant here, then, is not merely the highly mediated nature of the twins'

relationship to India as members of a second-generation Sikh community in Britain, one that is perhaps embodied in this painting by the distant or aerial view, emphasizing the sense of geographic separation from the atrocities carried out upon the Sikhs of Amritsar. What *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also makes visible are the vexed relationships between violence, "homeland," history, and diaspora that have constituted the formation of Sikh subjectivity from the early 1980s onward.

There is much going on in this painting: a group of blindfolded photographers in the top left corner symbolize the failure of the media in its representation of this event, and the seventeenth-century Sikh martyr, Baba Dip Singh, is shown in the lower left quadrant holding his severed head. In the bottom left corner, Indira Gandhi is depicted as a multi-headed demon (the other faces are those of Churchill, Clinton, and Thatcher), holding a platter containing the heads of Bhagat Singh, the anti-British freedom-fighter, and Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth religious leader within Sikhism, martyred in 1675. Also present in the frame is the Jallianwalla Bagh Monument, which honors the Indians who lost their lives in the infamous 1919 massacre by colonial troops in Amritsar. In other words, the multiple references to a specifically Sikh history interpolated into the composition places the events of 1984 in a long line of injustice and Sikh struggle, and expresses a form of diasporic consciousness that does not explicitly distinguish between the Sikh diaspora's relation to a homeland, on the one hand, and the fight for a separate Sikh state, Khalistan, on the other. As Brian Axel has argued, these equations are difficult in the Sikh case because the fight for Khalistan since the 1980s has largely been made on a diasporic landscape.[18] This is not to imply that all Sikhs are in favor of Khalistan, nor are all Khalistanis part of the diaspora. But it is to suggest that by largely avoiding these constitutive entanglements, the painting does not really help us to navigate the more troubling aspects of the dynamic between religious nationalism and diasporic identity within the politics of the subcontinent in recent years.

If *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does not situate the place of the struggle for Khalistan in the formation of a Sikh diaspora, or participate in the discussions about transnational militancy and terror that the Sikh experience generated during the 1990s, the picture does at least function within the larger body of work by the twins to offer a syncretic image of history and tradition, rather than a singular Sikh identity or destiny. Similarly, the "nation" is figured in the Singh Twins' *oeuvre* not as a singular locale called Britain or India, but rather as a set of multiple relationships between minority subjects and shifting geopolitical frames. Indeed, to speak of the "nation" in the work of the twins is to first ask the question, "which nation?" Their paintings focus on a range of dialectics between minority subjects and nation-states: some, like *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, emerge from a religious minority's experience of marginality within the formation of post-independent India, while others, like *Manhattan Mall* or *All That I Am*, are grounded in the situation of the ethnic immigrant subject within the multiculturalism of the United States and Britain. What is distinct in the end, however, about these paintings is the minoritarian view that they collectively embrace. Wide-ranging as they

are in politics and subject matter, the images nevertheless offer a compelling portrait of the tensions at stake in national belonging from the point of view of the minority subject. Nowhere does this become more pronounced than in their richly detailed labyrinths of domestic and daily life upon which the question of gender has been unequivocally staged.

III

To illustrate this, I return now to one of their earlier paintings, *Pupoo in the Kitchen* (1987), in which the domestic setting is the kitchen at lunchtime: 1 p.m., according to the clock on the left wall. Here, one of the twins, wearing *shalwar-kameez*, is depicted with her aunt, the woman in the red sari, preparing *roti* (bread), while their father, only partially present, reads the newspaper at the far edge of the frame. At the heart of the scene is the baby cousin, Pupoo, perched precariously in his walker in the midst of the activity, an affectionate rendering of the baby's place in the home. Here, too, one can see the early evolution away from European perspectival techniques and towards the flattening of the picture plane and prevalence of ornamentation that characterizes the miniature form (4 in × 5 in).[19] A later painting, the 1987 *Interior with Dome*, expands and explodes this earlier stylistic foray into a bold, affirming narrative of the household and its interior ceremonial life. In the top right corner beneath the symbolic sanctity of an elegant dome, we see a Sikh wedding ceremony taking place: elsewhere in the house, we see women celebrating, dancing, gossiping, and generally tending to the children (in one case, bathing them in a palace balcony-turned-bathtub). In the bottom right of the frame, a family celebrates the festival of Diwali with a feast and candle-lighting ceremony, while a young Sikh man plays the soundtrack from *Mother India*, this time not the Katherine Mayo book, but the popular Hindi film classic of the 1950s that articulated the pairing of womanhood with nationhood at the dawn of the modern nation-state. What do we make of these gendered encodings, such as the multiple references to *Mother India*, that occur throughout this body of work? And what kind of portrait of Indian women in the diaspora are the twins asking us to accept? Amrit and Rabindra have stated emphatically that an important goal of their work is to dispel the negative stereotypes of Indian women prevalent in the British media, and to offer a "positive image of traditional culture" in return. Paintings like these, according to them, show "the importance of women in Indian culture as grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and aunts," and as "nurturers of the next generation."[20] And yet other paintings, like *Morning Chai* (1991), where the dutiful daughter brings the morning tea to her father, and *Tel* (1997), in which the women perform the ritual functions to a groom while the uninterested men play pool inside, seem to consign women to the status of the bearers of tradition or to the role of participants within patriarchal households at best. "In our opinion," the twins have responded, "the domestic role of women as being derogatory is a conclusion that stems from a

western ideal of feminism that dictates that a women's worth is defined by her economic contribution to society over all else."[21] While this may indeed be true, it seems important still to note that in affirming and valorizing the domestic place of women in Indian families, paintings such as these – on the surface at least – do not appear to be concerned with the thornier questions of power between women and men, or the tensions within South Asian ideologies of domesticity, that have emerged through the experience of diasporic migration.

And yet, when we inquire beneath the surface of "positive" versus "negative" depictions of women, in part to evade the limited discursive parameters that often characterize discussions of the twins' work, we find a great deal more ambiguity where gender is concerned, especially when considered in relation to their twin-ness. Another painting, for instance, titled *Les Girls* (1993–4), shows the twins with their other biological sister and several girlfriends, listening to music and chatting in the easy atmosphere of their own room, while three younger cousins play dress-up on the floor. The comfort of the all-female environment, the relaxed body language, the exchange of secrets and giggles, the identification with Marilyn Monroe on the wall: all of these qualities make the work a powerful tribute to female friendship and the strength of bonds that shape the discourses of femininity, often outside the pervasive presence of men. Elsewhere, in a separate series of eight paintings titled *Facets of Femininity*, commissioned by the Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham, we see the twins conduct a more focused inquiry into explicitly feminist thematics. Invited by the Barber Institute to respond to *The Blue Bower*, the 1865 masterpiece by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the Singh Twins drew from a period in British art history, the Victorian pre-Raphaelite movement, to interpret constructions of womanhood in the twenty-first century in eight iconic cases, including Margaret Thatcher, Eva Perón, Princess Diana, and Geri Haliwell, also known as "Ginger Spice." Although a detailed account of this series is not my purpose here, suffice it to say that these images also demonstrate the twins' heightened sensibility vis-à-vis the social and historical constructedness of womanhood, and the powerful role of representation itself in the fashioning of female identity.

However, the most radical portrayal of female subjectivity offered by the Singh Twins lies in the representation of their own identities as twins – what I referred to at the outset as their twin-ness – which is not a stable, fixed identity, but one that varies a great deal across their painting and performance practices. Amrit and Rabindra are monozygotic (or identical) twins, that is, they were born of a single fertilized egg that split into two embryos. From a genetic perspective, they are quite literally clones. There is no doubt that the phenomenon of twins, especially identical ones, has a complex place in our cultural imaginary. In various ways, twins have often served as metaphors for the human condition, and they have tended to inspire works of art more often than they have produced it.[22] In the social sciences, there is a long history of turning to twins to understand human behavior: twin studies, for instance, have been at the center of psychological research and the nature/nurture debate since its emergence in the late nineteenth century,

and continue to be seen today as a powerful methodological tool for observing the effects of environment on personality and human behavior.[23] Indeed, the political contexts of twins and twin research, from Sir Frances Galton's early twin studies shaping the eugenics movement in the United States, to Josef Mengele's infamous experiments with some 3,000 twin sets at Auschwitz, and the more recent arguments about race and intelligence in America by the authors of *The Bell Curve*, are an important part of the way twins function within our modern cultural imagination.

While often caught in the political standoff between environmental vs. genetic determinism, twin studies have nevertheless revealed that the problem of identity and its articulation exists as a unique and complicated set of refractions for twins. As one writer has put it, twins have an "intimate lifelong mirror in which to reflect – and to whom to express – their sense of individuality."[24] In the realm of life writing, the depth of the psychological bond between twins, occasionally bordering on the pathological, has presented a challenge to the conventions of biography and autobiography, and the assumptions inherent in these genres about the boundaries of an autonomous self.[25] In some extreme cases, like that of the so-called "silent twins," June and Jennifer Gibbons – the Barbadian-Welsh sisters, who developed a strange language that excluded all others, and whose mutual dependence, reclusiveness, and shared fantasy life, heightened by a sense of isolation in a racist community, ended in a criminal career – the boundaries of the self become blurred, making self-representation a literal problem.[26] Amrit and Rabindra, by contrast, have a range of ways they perform as selves, and strive for a certain balance in their performance between their identities as individuals, on the one hand, and as twins on the other, despite the fact that others cannot tell them apart. In fact, the misrecognition that often occurs gives the sisters a social advantage, and they possess what one writer has called the "shiftiness" of twins in their ability to manipulate their similarities and differences to the unknowing beholder.[27] As Rabindra explained in an interview:

> Being twins, it was wrongly assumed that one of us was always copying the other and that we were not developing independently as artists . . . Our tutors didn't seem to understand that in being twins, we were being ourselves in a way that was natural to us and that to make a conscious effort to be different from one another would have been totally false to who we were as artists and individuals. It was there and then that we started to analyze our twin-ness and thus our distinctiveness. So we started to wear the same clothes and to project ourselves as one artist, exhibiting and working on paintings together.[28]

Amrit and Rabindra's projection of themselves as a single artist, a politicized response to the limitations of their art school experience, may appear upon first glance to resemble the work of other artistic duos, like the British artists, Gilbert and George, who, although unrelated, have presented themselves as a symbiotic unit in their "living sculptures" and large photo-image wall works since the late

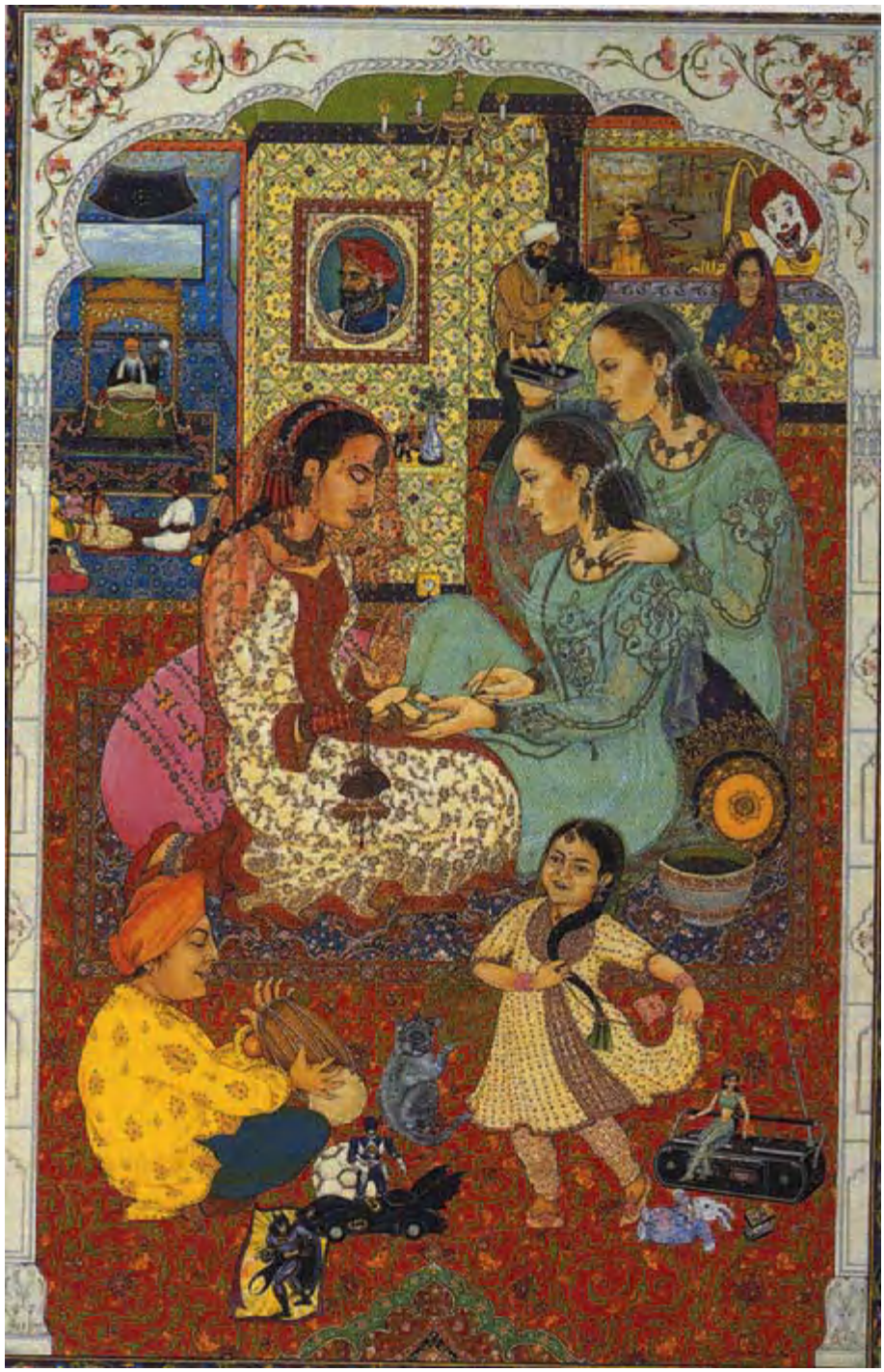

FIGURE 13-4 Amrit and Rabindra Singh, *Nyrmala's Wedding II*, 1995–6, poster color, gouache, and gold dust on mountboard, 20 × 30 in (50.8 × 76.2 cm). Artwork © The Singh Twins, Amrit and Rabindra: www.singhtwins.co.uk.)

1960s.[29] They may also be likened to the American-born Starn Twins (Mike and Doug Starn), who played with the notion of twinning by using mirrored motifs and stereoscopic double formats in their deconstruction of the medium of photography during the 1980s.[30] But what distinguishes the Singh Twins from these earlier artists is the way in which racial, cultural, and gender differences play together in their self-representation. I suggest that, somewhat paradoxically, the full enactment of the Singh Twins' autonomy and agency as individuals – in particular, as young women and minorities in a dominant white society – emerges in their range of self-images as a unity, or as twins. The sisters portray themselves in their work as if on a spectrum of symbiotic likeness and difference, and the "shifty" portraiture that emerges reveals the role-playing and mimicry that is at stake in the construction of identity itself. At times, for example, as in *Nyrmala's Wedding II* (1995–6), they depict themselves as identical yet autonomous (one is painting *mehndi*, or henna designs, on the bride's hand, while the other takes a photograph, fig. 13-4). But they remain deeply connected to one another, and through the physical touch of a hand, they are almost like an extension of one another. At other times, as in *Les Girls* (1993–4), they are dressed the same, but clearly figured as different individuals, with different mannerisms and personalities, and separate postures in their relationships to others. Still elsewhere, as in the 1998 painting, *Follow the Leader*, they present us with the riddle of alterity (which one is which?) by showing themselves as exact copies, perfect replicas, precise reproductions of each other: here even the spoon the sisters are holding is cocked in exactly the same position. Significantly, this painting chronicles the twins' visit to Lugano, Switzerland, for a group exhibition: it shows the twins having a meal outside the exhibition gallery with a number of artists, friends, and curators, with the Swiss town unfolding behind them. It shows, in other words, their public or professional "self" (the singular is deliberate here), in contrast to their private, more intimate, personal "selves" (in the plural). Finally, in one last picture, titled *Our Father* (1995), the twins show themselves as mirrored reflections positioned on either side of their father, clearly an affectionate tribute to the man, one that nevertheless excludes their mother from the scene (fig. 13-5). And yet, the presence of the halo signals an exaggeration of sentiment, and reveals the title *Our Father* as an ironic ploy.

It is this sense of irony and play that makes one feel in the presence of the twins and their artwork that the sisters are winking at each other behind our backs, that they retain the power to control both the representation and performative articulations of their subjecthood and its unnerving dualities. Moreover, such an intervention occurs within an onslaught of references in their painting to fast food, television, and popular culture more broadly, a reminder of the conditions of consumer society, a world defined by the "culture of the copy," according to Hillel Schwartz, or an excess of simulacra and simulation generating a "hyperreality," in Jean Baudrillard's terms.[31] For Schwartz, the prevalence of twins in advertising culture – from the "Toni twins" to the "Doublemint Gum" campaign – is in part because they mirror a world defined by consumer culture, and act as templates to the processes of consumption itself.[32] In the sisters' paintings,

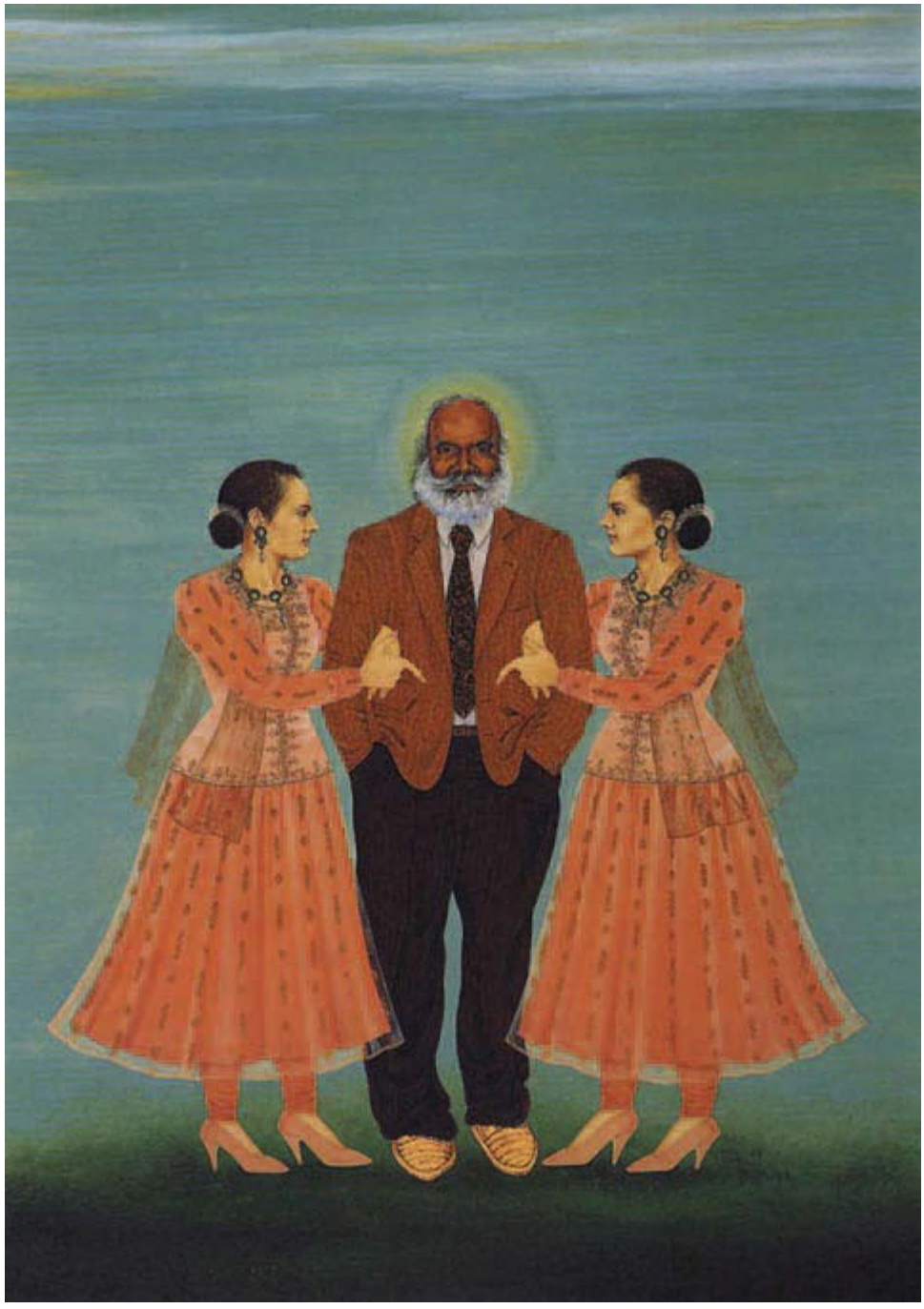

FIGURE 13-5 Amrit and Rabindra Singh, *Our Father*, 1995, poster color, gouache, and gold dust on mountboard, $21\frac{1}{2} \times 31\frac{1}{2}$ in (54.6 × 80 cm). Artwork © The Singh Twins, Amrit and Rabindra: www.singhtwins.co.uk

the presence of photography in particular, in the form of both still and video cameras which appear in works like *The Last Supper*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *Manhattan Mall*, and *Nyrmala's Wedding II*, also evokes Walter Benjamin's seminal discussion of the problem of "aura" in an era of photographic reproduction, "that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction."[33] The questions of originality in the work of art that Benjamin and others explored at the beginning of the twentieth century are reflected in uncanny ways in the sisters' own doubleness, and the way they elude the viewer's attempts to discern original, copy, imposter, or fake. In this way, the twins come to enact physically some of the most troublesome tensions of the postmodern era and its discourses of cloning, reproduction, and mimesis: as Benjamin stated apocryphally about the disintegration of the aura, "this is a symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art."[34] And yet, the Singh Twins' representations of their identicality also acknowledge, however minimally, the existence of differences between them, and do not therefore invoke a simple duplication of identity and experience, or a reproduction that depends upon an original, but rather two partial, parallel, and symbiotically lived lives. Against the backdrop of a society of duplicates and replication, the twins articulate their identities as part of an ongoing dialectic of sameness and difference, and remind us that, as Schwartz has put it, "it is within an exuberant world of copies that we arrive at our experience of originality."[35]

By performing together as a single artist, and by revisiting Indian miniature painting and its historical processes of collaboration, the Singh Twins have most certainly succeeded in destabilizing the autonomy of the individual author. If their detailed renderings of Sikh domestic and community life do not expose an interiority per se, in spite of the viewers' desire for this, they do offer instead little theaters of sociality through which the cultural and gendered subject is formed. However, the theme of female subjectivity in this case is inseparable from the complexities of their identities as twins. By projecting themselves on a slippery continuum of sameness and difference, in both their painting and performative practices, the Singh Twins have retained a certain autonomy of representation, and deployed their twin-ness in compelling ways. They provoke us to reconsider the question of originality in a world dominated by reproduction and copies, in part by a reversal of the equation itself: for the twins, to be different is to behave as the same. In doing so, they demonstrate an unusual agency, and unsettle our conception of the boundaries between individuals. I have argued that the affirmative, celebratory, and indeed more normative aspects of their work vis-à-vis the liberal multiculturalism of the nation-state, the traditional gender roles of an Indian home, or the unselfconscious nationalism of a Sikh diaspora, should be measured against these more subtle subversions of normative individuality and the self-consciousness of their power and performance *as twins*. The twins allow you to see that *they* know that they remain enigmatic to everyone but themselves. In this dynamic there is something rather powerful at work, and it leaves its trace most compellingly in their art.

Notes

1 This text was first published by the College Art Association in the Summer 2006 issue of *Art Journal*. © Saloni Mathur. Reprinted by permission.
2 See, for example, *Past-Modern* and *Twin Perspectives*.
3 "Miniaturizing Modernity"; Desai, *Conversations with Tradition*, 6–17; Goodbody, "From Lover to Foe."
4 Davis, "Interview"; Pal, "From a Declining Tradition"; Quilley, "Past the Post"; Singh, "The Two in One Effect"; Swallow, "To a Modern Revival.".
5 See Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy*.
6 See *Twin Perspectives*, 30–3.
7 The term "miniature," which was adopted by scholars to describe the tradition of Indo-Persian painting, originally referred to the use of red ink, or *minium*, in the painting, and not to size. Today, some scholars prefer other terms like "manuscript painting," which more accurately describes the practice (not all miniature paintings are small). On the technique and its etymology, see Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts*. See also Chatterjee, *From the Karkhana to the Studio*; Mason, *Intimate Worlds*; Mitter, *Indian Art*.
8 The NCA in Lahore was formerly the Mayo School of Art, a major colonial institution established by the British in the 1870s as part of their efforts to introduce art education in the subcontinent, and was directed by John Lockwood Kipling (father of Rudyard Kipling) for its first two decades. See Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*; Tarapor, "John Lockwood Kipling"; *"Official" Chronicle of the Mayo School of Art*.
9 Nasar, *Karkhana: A Contemporary Collaboration*.
10 Hashmi, "Geneaologies of the New in Discourse with Tradition," 12.
11 *Twin Perspectives*, 40.
12 See *Twin Perspectives*.
13 Chatterjee, "The Nationalist Resolution"; Mani, *Contentious Traditions*; Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"
14 On the place of *Mother India* in the history of Indian nationalism and feminism, see Sinha, "Introduction."
15 See Beach, *The New Cambridge History of India: Mughal and Rajput Painting*.
16 See Axel, *The Nation's Tortured Body*.
17 On the controversial status of the Festival of India, see Richard Kurin, "Cultural Conservation through Representation," and Wallis, "Selling Nations."
18 Axel, *The Nation's Tortured Body*.
19 *Twin Perspectives*, 34–7.
20 *Twin Perspectives*, 36.
21 E-mail communication with Amrit and Rabindra Singh, May 3, 2005.
22 Lash, *Twins and the Double*.
23 See Segal, *Entwined Lives*, and Wright, *Twins*.
24 Couser, "Identity, Identicality, and Life Writing."
25 Couser, "Identity, Identicality, and Life Writing."
26 Wallace, *The Silent Twins*.
27 Lash, *Twins and the Double*, 6.
28 *Past-Modern*, 48.

29 See Dutt, *Gilbert and George*, and Farson, *Gilbert and George*.
30 See Grundberg, *Mike and Doug Starn*; Starn and Starn, *Attracted to Light*.
31 Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulations*; Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy*.
32 Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulations*; Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy*.
33 Benjamin, "The Work of Art."
34 Benjamin, "The Work of Art."
35 Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy*, 212.

References

Axel, B. *The Nation's Tortured Body: Violence, Representation, and the Formation of a Sikh Diaspora*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.

Baudrillard, J. *Simulacra and Simulations*. Translated by S. F. Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

Beach, M. C. *Mughal and Rajput Painting. The New Cambridge History of India* I.3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Benjamin, W. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations*, edited by H. Arendt, 219–53. New York: Schocken Books, 1973.

Brown, M. *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust Publications, 1994.

Chatterjee, P. "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question." In *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*. edited by K. Sangari and S. Vaid, 233–53. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1990.

Chatterjee, R. *From the Karkhana to the Studio: Changing Social Roles of Patron and Artist in Bengal*. New Delhi: Books and Books, 1990.

Couser, G. T. "Identity, Identicality, and Life Writing: Telling (the Silent) Twins Apart: Autobiographies of Identical Twins." *Biography* 26 no. 2 (2003): 243–60.

Davis, B. "Interview with the Singh Twins 2002." In *Past-Modern: Paintings by the Singh Twins*, 41–9. Southampton, UK: Millais Gallery/Southampton Institute, 2002.

Desai, V. *Conversations with Tradition: Nilima Sheikh and Shahzia Sikander*. New York: Asia Society, 2001.

Dutt, R. *Gilbert and George: Obsessions and Compulsions*. London: Phillip Wilson Publishers, 2004.

Farson, D. *Gilbert and George: A Portrait*. London: Harper Collins, 1999.

Goodbody, B. "From Lover to Foe and Back Again." *Art Asia-Pacific* 43 (2005): 58–62.

Grundberg, A. *Mike and Doug Starn*. New York: H. N. Abrams, 1990.

Guha-Thakurta, T. *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Kurin, R. "Cultural Conservation through Representation: Festival of India Folk-life Exhibitions at the Smithsonian Institution." In *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, edited by I. Karp and S. Lavine, 315–43. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991.

Hashmi, S. "Genealogies of the New in Discourse with Tradition: Revisiting the Miniature Tradition." Unpublished paper. Presented at the conference *Our Modernities: Positioning Asian Art Now*, Singapore: National University of Singapore, February 19–22, 2004.

Lash, J. *Twins and the Double*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993.

Mani, L. *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Mason, D. *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection*. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2001.

"Miniaturizing Modernity: Shahzia Sikander in Conversation with Homi K.Bhabha." *Public Culture*, 11 no. 1 (1999): 146–51.

Mitter, P. *Indian Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Nasar, H., ed. *Karkhana: A Contemporary Collaboration*. London: Green Cardamom, 2005.

Pal, R. "From a Declining Tradition." In *Twin Perspectives: Paintings by Amrit and Rabindra Kaur Singh*, 8–13. Liverpool: Twin Studio, 1999.

"Official" Chronicle of the Mayo School of Art: Formative Years Under J. L. Kipling, 1874–94. Lahore: NCA Publications, 2003.

Past-Modern: Paintings by the Singh Twins. Southampton: Millais Gallery/Southampton Institute, 2002.

Quilley, G. "Past the Post: Modernism and Postmodernism in the Art of the Singh Twins." In *Past-Modern: Paintings by the Singh Twins*, 13–20. Southampton: Millais Gallery/Southampton Institute, 2002.

Schwartz, H. *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles*. New York: Zone Books, 1996.

Segal, N. *Entwined Lives: Twins and What They Tell Us about Human Behavior*. New York: Plume, 2000.

Singh, K. "The Two in One Effect." *Art India: The Arts News Magazine of India* 8 no. 1 (2003): 56–7.

Sinha, M. "Introduction." *Mother India*, by K. Mayo, 1–62. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000.

Spivak, G. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by C. Nelson and L. Grossberg, 271–311. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

Starn, M., and D. Starn. *Attracted to Light*. New York: Powerhouse Books, 2003.

Swallow, D. "To a Modern Revival." *Twin Perspectives: Paintings by Amrit and Rabindra Kaur Singh*, 14–19. Liverpool: Twin Studio (1999).

Tarapor, M. "John Lockwood Kipling and British Art Education in India." *Victorian Studies* 24 no. 1 (1980): 000–00.

Twin Perspectives: Paintings by Amrit and Rabindra Kaur Singh. Liverpool: Twin Studio, 1999.

Wallace, M. *The Silent Twins*. New York: Penguin, 1987.

Wallis, B. "Selling Nations: International Exhibitions and Cultural Diplomacy." In *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, edited by D. Sherman and I. Rogoff, 265–81. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

Wright, L. *Twins and What They Tell Us about Who We Are*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1997.

Part V

Challenging the Canon

14

Re-evaluating Court and Folk Painting of Korea

Kumja Paik Kim

Misconceptions

As Korea has become more visible on the world stage, global interest in the country and its art has steadily grown, especially since the 1950s. On their first encounter with the glowing colors of some Korean paintings, people often find themselves quickly captivated by the works' charming decorative qualities. But when they find out these paintings are called *minhwa*, meaning folk painting in Korean, they become puzzled: why are paintings so skillfully executed in rich colors, clearly revealing the hands of extremely well-trained artists, called folk paintings? Typically, the category of folk painting excludes works produced by highly trained professional painters. Their puzzlement is justified because many Korean paintings introduced to the west as folk paintings are not, in fact, folk paintings but rather court paintings.

This widespread misconception began in the early part of the twentieth century with some collectors in Japan and the west who became fascinated with Korean paintings rendered in vivid palette. To them these Korean paintings seemed to deny known rules of pictorial art. Armed with an unbounded admiration for them but without having access to Korean scholarship, both historical and personal, which would have explained the various roles these paintings played in the cultural context of Korean society, the early enthusiasts designated a large body of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century unsigned Korean paintings rendered in bright colors collectively as minhwa (Japanese: *minga*), or folk painting.[1]

Korean scholars and collectors accepted this designation without pointing out the obvious mistake of putting all such paintings into the category of minhwa. Perhaps Korean scholars felt gratified by non-Korean collectors' genuine enthusiasm

and admiration for the enchanting qualities found in the colorful paintings. In any event, the term minhwa, applied by non-Koreans, indiscriminately designated brightly colored Korean paintings, regardless of who produced them or how they were used. This appellation did not meet much opposition within Korea, perhaps because Koreans could interpret the word *min*, meaning people, in the contemporary sense of the post-1945 masses. Since the word min evokes the word *gukmin* (*guk*: country, hence Korea; *min*: people), it could be taken to mean all Korean people, regardless of social standing, and therefore minhwa could refer to all Korean paintings rendered in bright colors. This broader interpretation of folk painting appears not to have caused much concern within Korea, except for a query or two made by a few inquisitive minds.[2]

For centuries in Korea, court, religious, and folk paintings had been produced in a bright palette following the age-old tradition of *chaesaek-hwa* (*chae*: brilliant; *saek*: color; *hwa*: painting).[3] The chaesaek-hwa tradition stayed vibrant by accommodating the needs of the court, Buddhist temples, and ordinary people; however, it gradually became eclipsed by the tradition of ink painting, *sumuk-hwa* (*su*: water; *muk*: ink; *hwa*: painting). Ink painting gained esteem especially during the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910) among amateur, or scholar, painters and art critics as a form of self-cultivation and self-expression. That the chaesaek-hwa tradition predated the ink painting tradition by many centuries in Korea is illustrated by the extant colorful tomb murals in the Pyeongyang area dated between the fourth and seventh centuries CE and extant Buddhist paintings from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[4]

By examining published research on various court records dealing primarily with the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), this essay will first explore the paintings in bright colors produced by artists in the service of the Joseon court for ceremonial and celebratory purposes in styles favored by the court. In addition to looking at the style and courtly functions of these paintings, I will also examine the range of themes and symbolic meanings of these works. This examination will be followed by a discussion on non-courtly paintings in bright colors, which could be rightly called Korean folk paintings. An attempt will be made to point out who painted them, what their stylistic characteristics are, and what purpose they served in Joseon society.

Painters at the Joseon Court

As in the previous dynasties, Korea's last dynasty, Joseon, had a group of professional painters serving the court and meeting its ceremonial, ritual, and decorative painting needs. These professional painters, called *hwawon* (court painters), were employed at the Bureau of Painting belonging to the Ministry of Rites.[5] They were highly talented and formally trained artists selected from a group of aspiring painters, many of whom had been receiving instructions at the Bureau of Painting as trainees. Their abilities were judged in categories of painting: bamboo; landscape; figure; birds and animals; and flowers and grass.

Passing specified examinations was required to become a court painter and to be promoted even after becoming a court painter. Excelling in these categories continued to be important for court painters until the end of the dynasty in 1910.

During the eighteenth century, King Yeongjo (r. 1724–76) initiated a new system in which the five most talented painters were selected from the entire group of court painters at the Bureau of Painting to work directly under his command to meet his needs. These five top painters were called the *jabi daeryeong hwawon* (court painters-in-waiting).[6] In 1783 his grandson and successor, King Jeongjo (r. 1776–1800), expanded the system by increasing the number of the court painters-in-waiting from five to ten and made their position permanent within the Joseon bureaucracy. Unlike the regular court painters whose workplace was located outside the palace and who took care of routine painting assignments for the needs of the court, the court painters-in-waiting worked inside the Changdeok Palace where the king resided, and their activities were directly supervised by the king and his scholar-officials at the Gyujang-gak, or Royal Library. King Jeongjo had Gyujang-gak initially built in 1776 to house his grandfather King Yeongjo's voluminous manuscripts as well as other sovereigns' writings, but during King Jeongjo's reign, it became the vital center for new ideas and political power.

One of the privileges of the court painters-in-waiting was the opportunity to participate in quarterly painting competitions for additional rewards and prestige. This privilege fostered their competitive spirit, pushing them to become better painters, and allowed them to gain material rewards far exceeding those of the regular court painters. The system that began in 1783 of giving the court painters-in-waiting special privileges and allowing them to work inside the palace lasted until 1881. During those 98 years there were 103 court painters-in-waiting who worked in the palace. Their names, all the topics (approximately 800) given at their quarterly painting competitions, and the ranking or comments they received are meticulously recorded and carefully preserved in the *Naegak Illyeok* (*Daily Record of the Gyujang-gak*).[7]

According to the *Daily Record*, King Jeongjo not only increased the number of court painters-in-waiting from five to ten, but also increased the painting categories or themes in which they had to be accomplished from five to eight. Although altering the existing categories of "bamboo" to "plum and bamboo" and "flowers and grass" to "grass and insects" could be considered minor adjustments, the three new added categories of "genre," "building," and "Scholar's Accoutrements" had a major impact in the history of Korean painting. When the time came to select five new painters-in-waiting, King Jeongjo permitted all the court painters at the Bureau of Painting to participate in the special examination which took place on the sixth day of lunar month 11, 1783. They were asked to choose subjects of their own from the categories of landscape, building, figure, birds and animals, grass and insects and genre, and then submit four works, two of which should be in *jinchae* (*jin*: true; *chae*: color) and the other two in *damchae* (*dam*: light; *chae*: color). The term jinchae must have meant strong mineral colors, while damche referred to lighter tones.

Although amateur or scholar painters used light colors in an extremely restrained manner, paintings in soft colors can also be decorative, creating a delightfully cheerful effect equal to paintings rendered in vivid colors.[8] King Jeongjo disapproved of his artists painting in a bold expressionistic or abstract manner as scholar painters might do; he expected them to demonstrate their mastery of craftsmanship at the highest level. He required that they represent forms in a meticulously executed, and, in some cases, naturalistic manner with careful attention to detail, even though he himself indulged occasionally in ink painting as self-expression. The painters were encouraged to paint the forms with fine brush outlines in a precise manner and to capture the quality of decorative opulence that the court taste demanded by carefully filling in the forms with either vivid or softer colors. It can be safely assumed, therefore, that the tradition of chaesaekhwa (painting in bright colors) included both painting modes, that is, painting in strong mineral colors as well as painting in light colors, but both executed in the same meticulous courtly manner.

"Scholar's Accoutrements" Paintings

King Jeongjo had a special interest in paintings of "Scholar's Accoutrements" (*munbang*). Paintings of the category munbang were often called *chaekka* or *chaekkeori*, referring to the specific objects closely associated with scholar's life represented in them. Such objects included books, of course, but also brushes, ink stones, ink sticks, paper, seals, antiques, and various curios which scholars were known to have enjoyed collecting and wanted to have in their studies or rooms.[9]

Jeongjo's attraction to it can be substantiated by the fact that this was the one of three new categories he added in which court painters had to be accomplished. Additionally, it was one of the categories he chose for the first quarterly competition, held almost immediately after the selection of the additional five new court painters-in-waiting. All ten court painters-in-waiting (five from the first group that had served King Yeongjo and five from the new group selected by King Jeongjo) participated in it on day 27 of lunar month 11, 1783. Thus began the Joseon court custom of the quarterly competitions or examinations called *nokchwi-jae*, set up specifically to reward the talented court painters-in-waiting, that lasted until 1881. For the first competition the categories of figure, building, birds and animals, "Scholar's Accoutrements," and genre were given, and the painters were to select their own topics from these categories and submit four completed paintings after three days, two in strong colors and the other two in light colors. King Jeongjo personally picked the scholars' accoutrements subject again as the competition topic for the court painters-in-waiting in the late lunar twelfth month, 1784.[10]

King Jeongjo's enthusiasm for the paintings of the "Scholar's Accoutrements" apparently was widely known among his officials. According to the eighteenth-century literatus Yi Gyu-sang (1727–99), chaekka were always painted in color

FIGURE 14-1 "Scholar's Accoutrements," eight-panel folding screen, by Yi Eung-nok, ink and colors on paper, nineteenth century, Korea, Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, 1998.111.

using newly introduced western techniques of perspective and shading which made objects appear as if they were real, and the court painters were the first ones to paint them.[11] Hence, from the very beginning this theme was closely associated with the court painters and was produced always in color using techniques of linear perspective and chiaroscuro (fig. 14-1). King Jeongjo, who often advocated forward-looking ideas in his policies, enthusiastically accepted the "Scholar's Accoutrements" paintings, perhaps not only because the books he cherished were the focus of this theme but also because the objects were painted in a new realistic manner.

Other scholar-officials who had a close relationship with King Jeongjo also wrote about his enthusiasm for "Scholar's Accoutrements" paintings. O Jae-sun (1727–92), for instance, wrote that in 1791 King Jeongjo, in the presence of his officials, turned to look at the "Scholar's Accoutrements" painting placed behind his chair in Changdeok Palace's Seonjeong Hall, where he carried out his daily royal duties. He then commented with a smile that even though the books in the painting looked real, they were only painted books. The king went on to say that through his encounter with the "Scholar's Accoutrements" paintings, he had finally come to understand an ancient saying about one's spirit being uplifted by merely entering a study and touching the books even when one didn't have time to sit down to read. Ever since he had ascended the throne, King Jeongjo, who had a reputation of being a studious prince and a learned ruler, no longer had time to indulge in his pastime, but he now felt some comfort

in seeing the books in the "Scholar's Accoutrements" painting in his office even though they were only painted books. He even made sure that the titles of his favorite Confucian classics were clearly written on the books in the painting. Nam Gong-cheol (1760–1840), who was favored by the king because Nam's father had been the king's teacher when he was still the crown prince, also made a similar comment in 1798 about the "Scholar's Accoutrements" paintings produced for the king.[12]

There are still more accounts regarding how much King Jeongjo liked the scholar's accoutrement paintings. Gim Hong-do (1745–before 1818), King Jeongjo's favorite painter, famous for his paintings of immortals, genre scenes, and landscapes, was also known to have been outstanding in scholar's accoutrement paintings rendered using western techniques of illusionism. It is not difficult to imagine that Gim Hong-do might have been one of the first court painters who painted this subject matter on King Jeongjo's order. In the competition that took place in the ninth lunar month, 1788, the court painters-in-waiting were given no specific subject matter, and instead they were told to select their own topic. But when their works were submitted, King Jeongjo was deeply disappointed in the paintings, especially those by Sin Han-pyeong (1735–1809) and Yi Jong-hyeon (1748–1803). These two painters, who were known for their skill in the "Scholar's Accoutrements" paintings, had not painted on this topic as the king apparently had expected them to do. King Jeongjo's disappointment lay in the fact that even though they were told to paint on the topic of their own choice, they should have known what he would have preferred them to paint.[13]

The *Daily Record of the Gyujang-gak* provides evidence that the popularity and importance of chaekkeori painting continued after King Jeongjo's reign. From 1783 to 1881 the "Scholar's Accoutrements" subject was given 38 times as the topic of quarterly competitions for the court painters-in-waiting, and 64 painters received recognition for their works on this topic.[14] There was even a family of court painters-in-waiting spanning three generations who became associated with chaekkeori paintings. The aforementioned Yi Jong-hyeon (1748–1803), one of the painters-in-waiting who was recognized by King Jeongjo for his skill in this genre, established his family tradition by handing down his skill to his son Yun-min (1774–1832). Yun-min in turn handed the family tradition down to his son Hyeong-nok (1808–after 1874) who also excelled in this genre.[15] Yi Jong-hyeon's younger son and Yun-min's brother Su-min (1783–1839) also served as court painter-in-waiting and is known to have painted chaekkeori paintings. Su-min's son, Taek-nok, was given the king's permission to substitute for his father in the examination on the late lunar seventh month, 1835, suggesting that Taek-nok was also a competent painter on this subject. Additionally, many painters whose fame rested on their works on other themes, such as landscape and genre, also painted "Scholar's Accoutrements" paintings. Such painters include, among others: Gim Eung-hwan (1742–89), Yi In-mun (1745–1821), Gim Deuk-sin (1754–1822), Yi Han-cheol (1808–80), Jang Han-jong (1768–after 1815), Baek Eun-bae (1820–1900), and Yu Suk (1827–73).[16]

Before long the "Scholar's Accoutrements" paintings became popular not just in the palace, but even among Confucian scholars of the Joseon dynasty who prided themselves on their austere and frugal lifestyle. That they did not react negatively to the luxurious paintings in vivid colors might have been because the focus of the early chaekka and chaekkeori paintings favored by King Jeongjo had been the books on the shelves. Since King Jeongjo insisted that the books on the shelves be his favorite Confucian classics with their titles clearly written, Joseon scholars must have felt comforted in noticing in the paintings the same books that they themselves also treasured. As King Jeongjo had been, they must have been equally intrigued with newly introduced European painting techniques that made the painted objects appear astonishingly life-like.

Paintings for Auspiciousness: The Themes of "Ten Longevity Symbols," "Flowers and Grass," "Peonies," and "Lotuses"

No other dynasty or period in East Asia was as conscientious as the Joseon dynasty of Korea in keeping records of various happenings at the court. In addition to the *Daily Records of Gyujanggak*, there are records called the *Uigwe* (Books of the Royal Ceremonies), which contain treasure troves of important information in regards to Joseon customs and society.[17] When a major event was to take place, the court set up a *Dogam* (ad hoc superintendency) to be in charge of a specific ceremony or event. An official was appointed to head up the superintendency, and staff for this temporary bureau were chosen and assigned to specific duties according to their expertise. The *Books of the Royal Ceremonies* carefully record the names of people assigned to each ceremony or event, items needed, items to be made and decorated, and dates of purchase. The items assigned to the court painters or the court painters-in-waiting included painting designs on lacquer boxes, palanquins, and banners, as well as paintings of requested topics on folding screens. For art historians, these Joseon dynasty books are significant not only because their authors kept meticulous records of everything including the smallest items used for each ceremony, but also because they included pictorial records together with the names of painters and the subject matters of paintings.

Although all court books, including the *Books of the Royal Ceremonies*, produced prior to the devastating Japanese invasions of 1592 and 1597 have perished, over 3,400 such books postdating 1600 have survived. Among them are books chronicling 20 royal weddings, which took place between 1627 and 1906. These books, titled the *Garyedogam Uigwe* (*Books of the Royal Wedding Ceremony*), were prepared by the superintendency.[18] They not only contain the smallest details that went into the preparation of each wedding, but also every item that had to be painted. More importantly for this essay, the names of 234 painters who carried out painting assignments for 20 royal weddings are recorded together with the subject matters of the folding screens.[19] For instance, for the royal

wedding of Crown Prince Sohyeon in 1627, four ten-panel folding screens were commissioned to be painted in color on the subjects of the ten longevity symbols, the flowers and grass, peonies, and lotuses. Since any extant screens, like other works painted for the court and palace, are unsigned and undated, and since the written records do not list the specific painter for each screen, it is difficult to know who was the painter of each specific subject. However, the records do tell us that six court painters had been assigned to the 1627 wedding and among them were Yi Jing (1581–1674) and Gim Myeong-guk (1600–after 1662), whose names are familiar to Korean art historians. The 1627 *Books of the Royal Wedding Ceremony* even included a memorandum requesting that the number of painters be increased since the folding screens and various banners needed for the wedding all had to be painted in color and completing even one folding screen would take 15 days.[20]

For the 12 royal weddings that took place between 1627 and 1744, the four subject matters most frequently on the list to be prepared were the ten longevity symbols, flowers and grass, peonies, and lotuses. The books on the eight royal weddings that took place between 1802 and 1906 show that folding screens continued to be produced and that among the participating court painters-in-waiting were Yi In-mun (1745–1821) and Gim Deuk-sin (1754–1822),[21] whose fame today rests on their landscape and genre paintings respectively, not for the subject matters requested for the royal weddings.

Paintings featuring the subjects of longevity symbols, flowers and grass, peonies, and lotuses have been presented in the past as folk paintings; however, as the records described above make clear, folding screens featuring these subjects are not folk paintings but in fact court paintings. Even without the significant information found in the *Books of the Royal Wedding*, their status as court painting themes is verified because the four subjects had been traditionally produced also as the *sehwa* (New Year's Day paintings). Korea had an ancient custom of ushering in New Year's Day with auspicious paintings, which were displayed on that day to ward off illness and misfortune, and to bring prosperity and blessings throughout the year. During the Joseon dynasty, one of the major responsibilities of the court painters-in-waiting who worked in the palace, as well as the court painters belonging to the Bureau of Painting, had been to produce New Year's Day paintings. A court record dated 1785 mentions that 30 court painters and ten court painters-in-waiting were required to produce New Year's Day paintings, which had to be submitted to the court on day 20 of lunar month 12. The ten painters-in-waiting had to submit 30 paintings each, and the 30 court painters were asked to submit 20 paintings each. The reigning king used these paintings as New Year's gifts to his direct family and royal relations, meritorious ministers, elderly officials, and deserving families of current and former officials. In 1408 the Bureau of Painting was ordered to suspend the production of New Year's Day paintings for three years in compliance with King Taejo's mourning period;[22] this record indicates that the ancient custom of the New Year's Day painting was in effect from the very beginning of the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910).

The best-known New Year's Day paintings represent the ten longevity symbols, which, as mentioned earlier, were also painted for the royal weddings. The ten longevity symbols were the sun, clouds, water, rocks/mountains, cranes, deer, tortoises, pine, bamboo, and mushrooms of immortality. They are part of a large body of auspicious symbols used as decorative motifs in various art forms throughout East Asia and have their origin in China. But selecting these particular ten symbols out of a vast pool of lucky symbols and forming them into a singularly auspicious group is definitely a Korean idea. This group of ten auspicious symbols became part of firmly held Korean folk beliefs in longevity. Cranes, deer, tortoises, and mushrooms of immortality have their connections to Daoism, while pine and bamboo relate to Confucianism, and the sun, clouds, rocks/mountains and water to Shamanism. In the most sumptuous versions depicting this topic, trees laden with peaches are also included to allude to the peaches of immortality believed to ripen every 3,000 years in the garden of the Queen Mother of the West (fig. 14-2).[23]

The Koreans had used the "Ten Longevity Symbols" paintings even during the earlier Goryeo dynasty (918–1392), as suggested by a poem by Yi Saek (1328–96) describing the New Year's Day screen painted with ten longevity symbols he received from the king. Yi writes that this screen, which he had displayed to usher in New Year's Day, still looked new in his room in October. Yi goes on to say that during his long illness, he became extremely preoccupied with living long and wrote a poem on each symbol represented on the screen: the sun, clouds, water, rocks/mountains, cranes, deer, tortoises, pine, bamboo and mushrooms of immortality.[24] The early Joseon dynasty scholar-official Seong

FIGURE 14-2 "Ten Longevity Symbols," ten-panel folding screen, *c.* nineteenth century, Korea, Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), National Palace Museum of Korea, Seoul, Hoehwa 74.

Hyeon (1439–1504) also wrote a poem on this theme. In 1502 he also received a "Ten Longevity Symbols" painting from the king to usher in New Year's Day. But unlike Yi Saek, Seong Hyeon's ten symbols included the moon in the place of clouds and the streams in the place of water.[25]

From the poems of both Yi Saek and Seong Hyeon, we can surmise that the ancient custom of receiving the "Ten Longevity Symbols" screens from the kings and using the screens to usher in New Year's Day continued during the late Goryeo and the early years of Joseon. As time went on, however, the function of the "Ten Longevity Symbols" screens appears to have been expanded beyond merely ushering in the New Year. Many surviving court records indicate that from the seventeenth through the early twentieth centuries they were not only used to usher in New Year's Day, but also served important functions at royal weddings, royal banquets celebrating major birthdays, such as the sixtieth birthdays of the queens and the dowager queens, and other auspicious royal events.[26] The bright mineral colors of blue, green, and red used for the paintings were not only well suited to create an opulent banquet setting but also served to enhance a festive mood of the celebratory occasions.

Judging from the extant screens, it appears that general rules regarding composition and palette have been followed in painting the "Ten Longevity Symbols." Although no two exact copies have been discovered so far, usually the sun is placed on the upper left of the pictorial surface, while clouds, distant mountains and cranes either flying or sitting on pine branches occupy the entire upper part of the large eight- or ten-panel screens. Water, mushrooms of longevity, deer, and tortoises are placed in the lower part. Forms in this utopian world are carefully outlined in black and covered with intense mineral colors. The mountains and rocks are painted in vivid blues and greens, and the sun and mushrooms of longevity in striking red. Luminous yellow and gold lines often added over the black contour lines of the mountains and rocks further enhance the dream-like quality of the imaginary land of longevity.

The large folding screen was not the only format used for the longevity symbols paintings produced for the palace. Sometimes the sliding door panels were decorated in this theme, as at Changdeok Palace. The composition on the four sliding door panels illustrates that the general compositional rules described above are followed in the placement of forms; however, these rules appear not to have been rigid. In some cases, the artist has placed the large sun half hidden by clouds and some pine branches on the far right door panel instead of on the upper left side, as in most folding screens. Additionally, deer are missing in many of these door panels. Numerous undulating fine brush lines in black and white, rendered with confidence and precision, sometimes turn into weightless clouds covering the upper half of the door panels. These fluid, thin brush lines used in repetition provide some of the best evidence that this and many other "Ten Longevity Symbols" screens were made by extremely accomplished painters whose hand and mind were in complete harmony. Because an emphasis is placed on cranes flying amid clouds and resting on pine branches, this type of longevity symbols painting is titled the "Longevity Symbols with Cranes." As can be seen in the four-panel

longevity symbols painting at Changdeok Palace, a certain degree of freedom was exercised in the selection of longevity symbols as well as of formats.[27]

Paintings of "Gwak Ja-ui's Life"

Although the "Ten Longevity Symbols" continued to be popular throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for the royal weddings that took place between 1802 and 1906 the topic was replaced by another theme dealing with the life of Guo Ziyi.[28] Guo Ziyi (697–781) was a famous general, known in Korea as Gwak Ja-ui or Gwak Bun-yang, who served the Xuanzong (r. 713–56) and Suzong (r. 756–62) emperors of Tang China. During the An Lu-shan rebellion from 755 to 763 he successfully took back Changan and Luoyang. The Suzong emperor is believed to have said Gwak gave him "a second lease of life." He received many honors for his service and loyalty as well as the respect of his peers. His life exemplified success, honor, wealth, many children, happiness, and longevity.[29]

The idealized version of "Gwak Bun-yang" or "Gwak Ja-ui's Life" was painted in bright colors often on large eight- or ten-panel folding screens featuring a magnificent compound filled with mansions and splendid buildings. The scenes, rendered meticulously in aerial view, show Gwak enjoying a feast surrounded by women, children, officials, guests, and entertainers. Vignettes from other paintings popular in Korea such as paintings of the Queen Mother of the West, 100 boys, and an elegant gathering appear to have inspired the composition teeming with figures grouped in space cells created by buildings, walls, gardens and trees. It is believed that no Chinese prototype representing Gwak's life existed, as might be imagined, and that this subject matter gained popularity in Korea due largely to the publication of Gwak's life story written in Korean.[30]

On three different occasions during the nineteenth century "Gwak Bun-yang's Life" was given as the topic of the competition for the court painters-in-waiting. Gwak is believed to have been blessed with many sons and daughters and countless grandchildren, and it is possible that his good fortune in having many offspring might have had a strong appeal to the Joseon court steeped in Confucian ideals that placed a high priority on having many children, especially sons. Toward the end of the nineteenth century the subject matter of Gwak's life story and the theme of 100 boys were sometimes combined into a single subject matter called "Gwak Bun-yang and 100 Boys," further evidence that his appeal stemmed from his many offspring.[31]

Paintings of "The Banquet by the Green Jasper Pond"

The works that equal the paintings of Gwak's life in their compositional complexity, their attention to spatial illusionism, and their lavish surface effect were those entitled "The Banquet by the Green Jasper Pond." While Gwak's life story

represented Confucian ideals, "The Banquet at the Green Jasper Pond" points toward the Korean immersion in Daoist ideals. It represents the legendary banquet of the Queen Mother of the West (Korean: Seowangmo; Chinese: Xiwangmu) by the Green Jasper Pond located in her legendary residence on Mt Kunlun, much idealized by Daoist believers. This is the land of the peaches of immortality that are believed to ripen every 3,000 years.

According to the *Daily Record of the Gyujanggak*, "The Banquet at the Green Jasper Pond" was also one of the themes court painters-in-waiting produced during the nineteenth century.[32] The fascination with the Queen Mother of the West appears to have been a long standing one in Korea, judging from Choe Chi-won's (858–910) mention of her in his collection of writings, *Gyewon Pilgyeong* (*Brush Plowings in the Cinnamon Garden*), penned between 874 and 885 during the Unified Silla dynasty (668–935). The Queen Mother of the West is also known to have been a poetic theme in the government examinations during the Goryeo dynasty, and her story became increasingly popular during the late Joseon dynasty.[33]

In late Joseon paintings of this subject, the queen is typically depicted with King Mu (r. 345–61) of the Chinese Zhou dynasty who visited her at her residence. The queen and King Mu formed the focal point of the famous legendary outdoor banquet scene, in which they are lavishly served by elegant attendants and entertained by musicians and dancers. Parts of palace buildings and balustrades give a hint of grand architectural structures of her residence, but emphasis is definitely given to natural surroundings including tall trees, rocky formations, and the waves and clouds on which the immortals, the Queen's invited guests, are shown arriving. Some arrive riding on cranes and deer rather than the waves and clouds. The rocks and mountains are outlined with fine lines in black and filled in with deep blues and greens, as in the "Ten Longevity Symbols" paintings. Gold lines over the contour lines of the rocks and mountains make the scene appear more dazzling, and red colors on clothing, furniture, musical instruments, and buildings further enhance a feeling of opulence and festiveness.

Although the Queen Mother of the West originated and was revered in China, appearing in Chinese paintings and ceramic designs, it was in Korea her theme became conceptualized on such a grand scale.[34] The use of the folding screen format in rendering this theme, her abode in a monumental natural setting, the complex composition, the presence of the Queen Mother and King Mu and immortals arriving to attend the feast of the peaches of immortality on her birthday are among many features that made the paintings of this theme a dazzling pictorial story pulsating with excitement. A folding screen depicting this subject matter was used at the celebration of the crown prince's appointment in 1800.

Peony Paintings

For royal weddings from 1672 to 1906 the "Peony" folding screen was consistently listed among those requested. In East Asia the peony is the king of flowers,

FIGURE 14-3 "Peonies," eight-panel folding screen, *c.* nineteenth century, Korea, Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), National Palace Museum of Korea, Seoul, Hoehwa 105.

symbolizing wealth, honor, and glory. Peonies, with their lush leaves, are considered a harbinger of good fortune. In Korea they also carry a close association with Queen Seondeok's (r. 632–47) legend. It is said that when Seondeok was a child of seven, her father King Jinpyeong (r. 579–632) received a box of peony seeds and a peony painting sent by Taizung (r. 627–49), the emperor of Tang China. When she saw the painting, she commented that the peonies, although they looked splendid, must not have much fragrance because no butterflies or bees were around them. Peonies, therefore, are equated with Queen Seondeok's wisdom and insight, and carry that additional symbolism in the minds of most Koreans.

Unlike the paintings of the "Ten Longevity Symbols," "The Life of Gwak Bun-yang," and "The Banquet by the Green Jaspar Pond" that are painted as a single continuous composition on large multi-paneled folding screens, the peony paintings, while on equally large multi-paneled folding screens, are painted by treating each panel as separate and independent (fig. 14-3). The flowers are painted in different colors of deep red, white, cream and pink. They are meticulously outlined and carefully colored, and the inner part of each petal is touched with slightly deeper hues. The unusually large flowers filling the panels to their full height and the repetition of similarly rendered panels convey a sense of overpowering strength, while also emphasizing the flatness of the pictorial surface. At the same time the repetition of panels dominated by fully blooming peonies can be read as a metaphor for the increased number of prayers for bringing a multitude of blessings, leaving no room for even the smallest amount of bad luck to creep in. The multi-paneled folding screens ablaze with showy flowers exuding a sense of explosive energy served an important role, especially at royal weddings, not only as part of the dazzling backdrop, but also to re-emphasize the symbolism of the peonies.[35]

Lotus Paintings

Lotuses also appear on the list of folding screens requested for royal weddings between 1627 and 1906. Because its stem rises tall above the muddy water to bring forth an untainted flower, the lotus has long been associated with Buddhism as a symbol of purity. Buddhism teaches that humans, like the lotus, can achieve enlightenment while living in the dusty world of humanity. The lotus is also an attribute of the Buddhist deity of compassion, Gwaneum bosal (Sanskrit: Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara). Soon after the introduction of Buddhism to Korea in the late fourth century the lotus began to appear as a motif in Korean art. As Buddhism took its root in Korea and the belief in Amita (Sanskrit: Buddha Amitabha) spread, it was believed that the souls of those who had complete faith in the power of salvation of Amita would be reborn on lotus flowers in Amita's Paradise of the Pure Land.

In time, the lotus also came to be a powerful symbol in Korean folk beliefs, symbolizing love, fecundity, abundance, and prosperity. Because a lotus root spreads to produce many offshoots, each carrying a single flower with a seedpod producing many seeds, the lotus was one of the most auspicious motifs for traditional bridal accoutrements. It was depicted on the bride's robes, personal ornaments, ceramic, metal, and lacquer wares, and paintings. Scholars of the Joseon dynasty also had special feelings for the lotus flower because of its exceptionally noble form on a long straight stem and the sense of untainted purity associated with the flower. They often included a lotus pond or two in the plan and design of their mansions, as illustrated in many paintings. Lotus ponds were also integral parts of the design of royal palace compounds, as can be still seen at the Gyeongbok and Changdeok Palaces in Seoul.

It comes as no surprise, then, that in such cultural and social contexts the lotus screen would be frequently placed on lists of the essential items to be prepared for royal weddings.[36] They were ordinarily painted on large 10- or 12-panel folding screens in continuous compositions, using soft colors. A large pond with lotus flowers in various stages of blooming, buds, seedpods, and luxurious leaves typically dominates the scene. To indicate that lotuses grow in a pond, artists render water reeds alongside the lotuses and place different species of fish and shellfish in the lower part of the composition. To enhance the air of auspiciousness, pairs of birds are included in the upper part. The impression conveyed in the lotus screens is one of an idyllic world in peace, harmony, and abundance. Unusually, although conceived as a single continuous pictorial composition on a large format, through careful planning each panel of the lotus screens also works independently.

The "Five Peaks Screen"

It is safe to say that from the beginning of the dynasty, long before "Scholar's Accoutrements" paintings became popular, the Joseon court considered the

FIGURE 14-4 "Five Peaks" or "Sun and Moon and Five Peaks," six-panel folding screen, *c.* late nineteenth century, Korea, Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), National Palace Museum of Korea, Seoul, Hoehwa 112.

"Five Peaks Screen" to be the most important subject matter of court painting. Symbolizing the unchanging and eternal authority and dignity of the sage ruler blessed with Heaven's mandate, a version of the "Five Peaks Screen" was placed behind the sovereign. Currently 24 screens on this theme are known to have survived.[37] It was customary to place the "Five Peaks Screen" behind the king in the throne hall of the Joseon palaces, such as the Geunjeong-jeon hall in the Gyeongbok Palace and Injeong-jeon hall in the Changdeok Palace (fig. 14-4). The "Five Peaks Screen" stood not only behind the king's throne in the palace halls where important domestic and international ceremonies and affairs were conducted, but also behind the king's chair in a room in an adjacent building where he regularly carried out his daily official work. Records show that the "Five Peaks Screen" had to accompany the king during his travels so as to be readily available to be placed behind his chair at temporary stops as well as at the final destination, and that it had to be placed behind the royal portraits while they were being newly painted or copied. Even after the king's death, this screen had to be placed in the royal funeral hall by his coffin and then accompany the coffin during the funeral procession, so as to be available at rest stops before reaching the final destination.[38]

Although, like court documents, palace paintings predating 1592 were looted or perished during the Japanese invasions of 1592 and 1597, it can be surmised that the "Five Peaks Screens" had been in use from the early part of the Joseon dynasty. First, one document from 1614 records how the portrait of King Taejo, which had been removed in order to protect it from destruction during Japan's invasions, was brought back to the newly built portrait hall. Currently his portrait

is displayed with the "Five Peaks Screen" behind it, and no surviving records suggest that the "Five Peaks Screen" was added later on. Second, in the *Diary of Royal Secretariat*, passages written on June 3 and 27, 1637, concern the selection of the silk and the completion of coloring for two "Five Peaks Screens" to be displayed in the royal portrait hall located outside the palace.[39] Again, these passages contain no indication that these events were other than customary. Third, seven books survive of *Court Rites on the Painting or Copying the Royal Portraits* dating to between 1688 and 1902. Each book documents one painting project. For all seven royal portrait painting projects, the "Five Peaks Screens" figure prominently.[40]

It can be assumed that the court painters assigned to produce the "Five Peaks Screens" had access to earlier sketches, the screens in good condition still standing behind the king's throne and the king's chair, or an old and worn example which they were asked to replace. Although there are no exact copies of the "Five Peaks Screen," in the placement of forms, general composition rules appear to have been observed, as was the case with screens on other topics frequently painted for the court. The main motifs of the "Five Peaks Screens" are the sun, the moon, and five mountain peaks, together with two waterfalls, wavy water, and two pine trees on each side of the rocky promontories. As a result, the theme is also referred to as "The Sun and Moon and Five Peaks," because the sun is always on the upper right with the moon on the upper left. Of the five peaks, the central peak is prominently taller and more massive than the two flanking peaks. Two waterfalls, one on each side, begin with short twists at the top before they fall straight to the body of the water below. The water is rendered with curving stylized waves occupying at least one third of the space in the lower part. The entire composition is harmoniously brought together by a pair of pine trees placed on the right and left of the promontories jutting out diagonally at both corners of the pictorial surface.

Typically, the contours of the five mountains and their rocky interior formations are carefully drawn with wire lines of even thickness and are painted in bright blue and green colors. Waves are indicated by repeated stylized curving lines. The trunks of two pine trees rising at the right and left borders are red with small green dots indicating moss spots. Their many branches appear in the same tone of red enveloped in green with no pine needles elaborated. It can be assumed that the "Five Peaks Screens" painted in saturated blue, green and red colors date after 1874. These bright colors, called western blue, western green and western red, were introduced in Korea after the invention of aniline dye by English chemist, William Henry Perkin, in 1856. Although in 1874 King Gojong warned his court painters against the use of western pigments because he felt they were too jarringly bright and quite different from traditional deep mineral colors that brought out the quiet beauty, painters continued to use the significantly less expensive chemical pigments.[41] The "Five Peaks Screens" painted with western pigments in the late nineteenth century feature not only strong saturated colors, but also more flattened and stylized two-dimensional forms.

Paintings for High Officials

Yi Gyu-sang (1727–99), commenting on the high officials' fascination with the "Scholar's Accoutrements" paintings, states that there was no high official during King Jeongjo's time without this screen in his study.[42] It was widely known that high officials at the court often commissioned court painters or court painters-in-waiting to paint their favorite themes for their personal use. Since palace and court paintings were usually unsigned and undated, "Scholar's Accoutrements" screens bearing seals on the bookshelves showing names, such as that of Yi Hyeong-nok and Yi Eung-nok, both court painters-in-waiting, suggest the possibility that they were commissioned by high officials.[43]

After 1783, when King Jeongjo made the court painters-in-waiting work inside the palace, it can be assumed that they would have frequently encountered high officials. Such a work environment provided more opportunities for officials to have contact with their favorite court painters-in-waiting and to ask them to paint the subjects of their liking to satisfy their personal needs. It is highly probable, therefore, that many of the extant folding screens on the themes favored at the court, such as "Scholar's Accoutrements," "Ten Longevity Symbols," "Peony," "Lotus," "Five Peaks," and so on, that are now in museums and private collections, had been painted by court painters or court painters-in-waiting at the request of high officials. The large screen format, complex and skillful composition, forms painted with precise thin lines revealing the accomplished handling of the brush, and rich colors are characteristics of court painting. Screens with no provenance but showing these characteristics ought to be considered "court style" paintings,[44] not folk paintings, until the provenance of extant paintings, especially the folding screens, can be ascertained. They may have been painted for court rituals or for high officials' personal use, but their style is that of the court painters.

"Folk Painting"

The Korean word minhwa, meaning "the people's painting" in the minds of the Koreans, loses all its native allusions once it is translated into another language. In the English-speaking world, for instance, this word minhwa is translated as folk painting, defined as a type of painting produced for ordinary people by painters with inherent talent but with little or no formal training. In Korea the painters who were born with artistic talent but did not have an opportunity to pursue formal instruction became either itinerant painters, who traveled from village to village, painting for their clients while staying as their houseguests, or commercial painters who had workshops in cities. Both of these types of painters were as much in demand as the court painters and court painters-in-waiting.

The popularity of the itinerant and commercial painters and the importance of their works depend on several factors. First, until recent years, to withstand

extremely severe winters, folding screens in different sizes were essential items for every Korean household. As these screens became moldy after a few hot and damp summers, they had to be replaced. Second, it was a Korean custom, from the royalty to the commoners, to be prepared for New Year's Day with paintings which could be pasted or hung on the entrance doors, pillars, and walls for the talismanic purposes of expelling evil, misfortune, and pestilence. These works were smaller paintings, often painted on single sheets of paper in bright colors, and featured a variety of subject matters, of which the tiger paintings are best known.[45] Just as the court painters and court painters-in-waiting met the needs of the court, those painters with no connection to the royal court's Bureau of Painting made New Year's Day paintings to meet the needs of the masses. Third, perhaps the most important reason for their popularity might be attributable to a universal human desire to have what others have. As court officials desired to have paintings on the various themes painted for the palace, so did the ordinary people crave to have what royalty and court officials had. Meeting their demands and needs were the tasks of itinerant and city painters, and what they produced for ordinary people were folk paintings.

It appears that the Gwangtong-gyo area, present day Gwanggyo, located at the entrance to Cheonggye-cheon in Seoul, was bustling with merchants selling books, calligraphy, and paintings throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[46] These merchants carried paintings in all formats, ranging from large folding screens to modest-sized single sheets. The paintings included the entire range of subject matters favored at court, as well as many more subjects, including robust paintings that would please the taste of the plebeians.

Because they deal with similar subjects and both types feature clearly outlined two-dimensional forms, flat space, and a bright palette, Korean court painting and folk painting might look similar at first glance. A careful examination however, reveals a vast distance between court and folk painting. Initially folk painters were indebted to court painters not only for the subject matters, but also for their use of brilliant colors, simplified forms, and flat space. However, court painters and court painters-in-waiting had to abide by traditional rules in their use of colors, in their depiction of the forms and in their complex compositions. Most of all, they had to demonstrate their mastery of the brush through their handling of precise fine brush lines embodying the discipline and control that could be achieved only through many years of intense study and training. Folk painters, on the other hand, had the freedom to change colors at whim and flatten forms in variously exaggerated ways to express their personal aesthetic preference. In sum, Korean folk painting can be characterized by smaller painting formats whether in single sheets or folding screens, simple pictorial composition, bold abstraction of the forms and flamboyant color combinations (fig. 14-5). Viewed from a critical perspective, widely admired qualities in Korean folk paintings, such as spontaneity, ruggedness and boldness, might have resulted initially from the painters' desire to please and dazzle their clients. Their charming, unpretentious, and child-like qualities

FIGURE 14-5 "Deer in a Fantastic Mountain Scene," *c.* nineteenth century, Korea, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), ink and colors on linen. Gift of the Asian Art Foundation, B67D14. © Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.

captivated the attention of modern and contemporary audiences whose aesthetic taste had been nurtured by western paintings breaking conventional rules and emphasizing qualities of child-like innocence.

Conclusion

A treasure trove of information is now available on Joseon court paintings. As this essay has shown, Joseon dynasty court records such as the *Naegak Illyeok* (*Daily Record of Gyujanggak or Royal Library*), *Garyedogam Uigwe* (*Books on Royal Weddings*), and others elucidate in minute detail the activities of the court painters-in-waiting and court painters from 1783 to the end of the Joseon dynasty in 1910. Listed in these records are not only the years and occasions for which paintings were produced, the names of court painters-in-waiting involved in each project, and the materials needed to complete each assignment, but also the specific painting themes requested by the court. We can therefore confidently state that large folding screen paintings with no signature on themes such as the "Scholar's Accoutrements," "Ten Longevity Symbols," "Flowers and Grass," "Peonies," "Lotuses," "The Life of Gwak Bun-yang," "The Banquet by the Green Jaspar Pond," and so on had been painted by the court painters-in waiting at the request of the court for special occasions. Additionally, the screens on the same topics that have hidden seals might have been commissioned by high officials and painted by the court painters or court painters-in-waiting.

Time has come now to stop considering all Korean paintings in vivid palette as folk paintings. Each work must be given a close visual analysis in regard to the complexity of composition, the mastery of brush methods, the quality of colors, and the size of the painting. Moreover, in the interconnected world we find ourselves in today, it might be useful for scholars writing in their native language to keep in mind how their use of certain words will hold up when translated into another language or languages.

Notes

1 For the folk art movement begun by Yanagi Soetsu together with Bernard Leach, Hamada Shoji and others in the early twentieth century, see Yanagi, *The Unknown Craftsman*; *The Exhibition of Minga*; Yanagi, "Chosen no Minga [Folk Painting of Korea]," 272–3.

2 For broad interpretations of Korean folk painting, see Zo (Jo), *Hanguk ui Minhwa* [*Korean Folk Painting*]; Kim, *Minhwa* [*Folk Painting*]; Zo (Jo) and Kim, *Minhwa* [*Folk Painting*]. Some of the terms that have been suggested to designate Korean folk painting are Gyeorye Geurim, Minjung-hwa and Daejung-hwa. For concerns raised, see Ahn, "Hanguk Minhwa Sango [Scattered Thoughts on Korean Folk Painting]," 101–5; Ahn, "Uri Minhwa ui Ihae [Understanding Korean Folk Painting]," 150–5.

3 Kim, *Splendor and Simplicity*. Kim Hongnam introduced several paintings (pls 1, 19, 22, 23, 32) in striking colors produced for the court in the collection of Changdeokgung Palace in this exhibition. See also Kim, *Hopes and Aspirations*. This exhibition was organized to show that all Korean paintings in vivid colors should not collectively be called folk painting, minhwa. In order to make the exhibition audience friendly, the original exhibition title *Hopes and Aspirations: Korean Chaesaekhwa* was changed to *Hopes and Aspirations: Decorative Painting of Korea*. Although it was explained in the first paragraph of Kumja Paik Kim's essay that "decorative painting" was coined to designate "*chaeseak-hwa* (*chae*: brilliant; *seak*: color; *hwa*: painting)," the message did not catch as many people's attention as hoped for.

4 For the tomb murals of the Goguryeo kingdom dating between the fourth and seventh centuries, see Kim, *Art and Archaeology of Ancient Korea*, 389–99; Kim, *Byeokhwa* [*Murals*]; Jeon, *Goguryeo Gobun-Byeokhwa Yeongu* [*A Study on Goguryeo Tomb Murals*]; Veit, *Kunst aus dem Alten Korea: Goguryeo*. For Buddhist paintings of the Goryeo dynasty dating between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Kim, *Goryeo Dynasty: Korea's Age of Enlightenment, 918–1392*, pls 1–21.

5 *Hwawon* [*hwa*: painting; *won*: member], court painters, were employed at the Bureau of Painting. Although the court painters did not work inside the palace but worked within a short distance from the palace, they were under the command of and employed at the Bureau of Painting (Dohwa-seo) belonging to Ministry of Rites (Yejo) and headed by Minister of Rites (Yejo Panseo).

6 I am indebted to the research conducted by Gang, *Joseon Hugi Gungjung Hwawon Yeongu* [*Court Painters of the Late Joseon Dynasty*]. In this essay I am using the term "court painter-in-waiting" for *jabidaeryeong hwawon* [*jabi*: prepare; *daeryeong*: wait; *hwawon*: court painter], separating these painters who had special privileges and responsibilities from regular "court painter" who were called *hwawon*.

7 The *Naegak Illyeok* (*nae*: inside; *gak*: cabinet; *Il*: day; *lyeok*: calendar or diary), can be translated as the *Daily Record of the Gyujang-gak*. See Gang, *Joseon Hugi*. For the specific dates, see Gang's vol. 2 comprised of a meticulous compilation of dates, months, years that competitions were held, topics given, names of painters, and their scores as well as the statistics on painting activities during the reign of each king.

8 For the birds and flower paintings in light colors, see Yi, *Garyedogam Uigwe wa Misulsa* [*Joseon Dynasty Books of Royal Wedding in Art Historical Perspective*], pls. 808, 809; Pak, *Joseon Sidae Gungjung Girok-hwa Yeongu* [*Pictorial Records of the Palace during the Joseon Dynasty*], pls. 71, 78–6, 81–1.

9 For an in-depth study on the scholars' accoutrements and the western painting techniques used to paint them, see Black with Wagner, "Court Style Ch'aekkori."

10 From the time of King Jeongjo in 1783 to 1881, court painters-in-waiting numbered ten and they participated in the quarterly competitions each year in the spring, summer, fall, and winter. Each quarterly competition was comprised of three examinations, ten days apart. After the last examination of each quarterly competition, the scores from the three examinations were added up to select the two top winners who were handsomely rewarded. For more detailed explanations, see Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 1, 496–8, 588–9; vol. 2, 116.

11 Yi, *Ilmonggo* [*il*: one; *mong*: dream; *go*: draft or manuscript], vol. 30, "Hwaju-rok [Painting section]." Yi's original manuscript and translation appear in Yu Hong-jun, *Hwain Yeoljeon*, Appendix, 323–31. This section of the *Ilmonggo* contains Yi's critiques of the works by painters active during the reigns of King Yeongjo (1724–1776) and King Jeongjo (1776–1800); Yu, *Hwain Yeoljeon* [*Biography of Painters*], 323–31; Yu, "Danwon Gim Hong-do Yeongu Note," 109–22. The colors used for "Scholar's Accoutrements" paintings are described as *jinchae* [*jin*: true; *chae*: color].

12 For the entire text and translation of King Jeongjo's comment in the *Ildoek-nok* section of the *Hongjae Jeonseo* written by O Jae-sun, and Nam Gong-cheol's comment in the *Geumneung-jip* [*Collection of Nam Gong-cheol's Writing*], see Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 1, 591–3. The *Ildeoknok* section which forms part of *Hongjae Jeonseo* [*Collection of King Jeongjo's Writings*] includes King Jeongjo's conversations with his officials.

13 Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 1, 589–90; *Naegak Illeok* [*Daily Record of the Gyujang-gak*], vol. 102, September 18, 1788.

14 Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 2. See the charts in this volume.

15 Black with Wagner, "Court Style Ch'aekkori," 28.

16 Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 1, 521; vol. 2, 147 and 335–44.

17 *Ui* means ceremonies; *gwe* means rule or law. See Yi, *Garyedogam Uigwe*. I am indebted to Professor Yi Song-mi's in-depth research on the Joseon royal weddings and the folding screens produced for the ceremonies.

18 *Garyedogam Uigwe* [*garye*: royal wedding; *dogam*: ad hoc superintendency; *Ui*: ceremony; *gwe*: rule or law].

19 See note 17.

20 Yi, *Garyedogam Uigwe*, 280–344.

21 Yi, *Garyedogam Uigwe*, charts 5, 6, and 7, 300–44; Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 1, 425–30, 538–43.

22 Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 1, 514; Kim, *Minhwa ui Wollyu* [*The Origins of Folk Painting*], 63, 103, 142. King Taejo (1335–1408; r. 1392–8) is the posthumous name of Yi Seong-gye, the founder of the Joseon dynasty.

23 Rutt, *New Edition of James Scarth Gale's History of Korean People*, 100–1; Yi and Kim, *Hanguk Hoehwasa Yong-eojip* [*Collection of Terms in the History of Korean Painting*], 122–3, 169–70.

24 Yi Saek mentions the ten longevity symbols screen in the collection of his writing titled *Mokeun-jip*. Mokeun is Yi Saek's pseudonym. Kim, *Hopes and Aspirations*, 15; Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 1, 432–4.

25 Seong Hyeon's collection of writing is titled *Heobaekdang-jip* [*Collection of Writings by Seong Hyeon*]. Heobaekdang is Seong Hyeon's pseudonym. The title of Seong's poem is "Susa saehwa sipjangsaeng [Receiving from the king the New Year's

Day painting of the ten longevity symbols]"; Kim, *Hopes and Aspirations*, 15; Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 1, 432–4.

26 How the ten longevity symbols screens are used can be seen in celebration scenes illustrated in Pak, *Joseon Sidae Gungjung*, 309, 418, pls. 83-5, 83-8, 83-11, 86-2, 86-3, 86-4, 98-3.

27 See Kim, *Splendor and Simplicity*, pl. 19, 118–19.

28 Yi, *Garyedogam Uigwe*, 300–3.

29 For a short biography of Guo Ziyi, see Giles, *Chinese Biographical Dictionary*, 410–12; see also Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 1, 218–20. Kuo Ziyi is also known as Kuo Fenyang (in Korean Gwak Bun-yang), with Fenyang referring to his princely title, the "Prince of Fenyang." In China he is known as the god of happiness.

30 Yi and Kim, *Hanguk Hoehwasa Yong-eojip*, 21–2.

31 Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 1, 166, 218, 220, 236, 243. The subject matter connected to Gwak Bun-yang as the topic of examination to the court painters-in-waiting was given in 1834, 1860, and 1873.

32 Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 1, 153–5, 219, 413.

33 Yi and Kim, *Hanguk Hoehwasa Yong-eojip*, 169–70.

34 Williams, *Outlines of Chinese Symbolism and Art Motives*, 226–8; Bartholomew, *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art*, 214.

35 Kim, *Splendor and Simplicity*, 35–57. Kim Hongnam has pointed out that the screens of peonies were also used for special rituals conducted after funerals at the court in her article, "Joseonside Gung-moran-byeong Yeonggu [Joseon Dynasty Palace Peony Screens]."

36 The lotus screen was on the list of paintings to be produced for the royal weddings that took place in 1627, 1638, 1651, 1671, 1696, 1718, 1727, and 1744. See the chart in Yi, *Garyedogam Uigye*, 300–2.

37 Yi, "The Screen of the Five Peaks," 467–519. Please refer to this English-language article regarding the production, iconography, stylistic analysis of the Five Peaks Screen.

38 Yi, "The Screen of the Five Peaks," 479–80.

39 Yi, "The Screen of the Five Peaks," 487–90. King Taejo is the posthumous name of the founder of the Joseon dynasty. His portrait is in the Gyeonggi-jeon hall in Jeonju, North Jeolla province. His "Yi" family root can be traced to the city of Jeonju.

40 Yi, "The Screen of the Five Peaks," 471–80.

41 Yi, "The Screen of the Five Peaks," 506–7.

42 Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, 593–4. For Yi's entire text and translation of this section, see Yu Hong-jun, *Hwain Yeoljeon*, Appendix, 323–31.

43 For the "Scholar's Accoutrements" screen with Yi Hyeong-nok's seal, see Kim, *Splendor and Simplicity*, pls. 32, 52–53; for Yi Eung-nok's seal, see Black with Wagner, "Court Style Ch'aekkori," 18; for Yi Eung-nok's screen in color, see Kim, *The Art of Korea*, 57, 179. Fig. 14-1 shows this screen.

44 The term, the court style "Scholar's Accoutrements," was first used by Kay Black. See Black with Wagner, "Court Style Ch'aekkori," 23–35.

45 Kim, *The Art of Korea*, 30–4. The *Saehwa*, or New Year's Day painting, produced to be pasted and hung on the entrance doors of the house, the doors of grain storage, pillars, walls, etc. is a vast and fascinating field that should be dealt with as a separate topic.

46 Kim, *Hopes and Aspirations*, 16; Gang, *Joseon Hugi*, vol. 1, 278–9; Kim, *The Art of Korea*, 30–4.

References

Ahn, Hwi-joon. "Hanguk Minhwa Sango [Scattered Thoughts on Korean Folk Painting]." In *Minhwa Geoljak-jeon* [*Masterpieces of Folk Painting*], 101–5. Seoul: Hoam Art Museum, 1983.

Ahn, Hwi-joon. "Uri Minhwa ui Ihae [Understanding Korean Folk Painting]." In *Ggum gwa Sarang* [*Dreams and Love*], 150–5. Seoul: Hoam Art Museum, 1998.

Bartholomew, Terese Tse. *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art.* San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2006.

Black, Kay E., with Edward W. Wagner. "Court Style Ch'aekkori." In *Hopes and Aspirations: Decorative Painting of Korea*, edited by Kumja Paik Kim, 23–35. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 1998.

The Exhibition of Minga: Folk Painting of the Yi Dynasty of Korea. Tokyo: House of Japan, 1979.

Gang Gwan-sik. *Joseon Hugi Gungjung Hwawon Yeongu* [*Court Painters of the Late Joseon Dynasty*], 2 vols. Seoul: Dolbyeogae, 2001.

Giles, Herbert Allen. *A Chinese Biographical Dictionary.* London: Bernard Quaritch, 1898.

Kim Cheol-sun. *Minhwa* [*Folk Painting*]. Hanguk ui Mi series 8. Seoul: Jungang Ilbosa, 1978.

Kim Hongnam. "Joseonside Gung-moran-byeong Yeonggu" [Joseon Dynasty Palace Peony Screens]. *Misulsa Nondan*, vol. 9. Seoul: Hanguk Misul Yeonguso, 1999.

Kim Hongnam. *Splendor and Simplicity: Korean Art of the Eighteenth Century.* New York: The Asia Society Gallery, 1993.

Kim Kumja Paik. *The Art of Korea: Highlights from the Collection of San Francisco's Asian Art Museum.* San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2006.

Kim Kumja Paik. *Goryeo Dynasty: Korea's Age of Enlightenment (918–1392).* San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2003.

Kim Kumja Paik. *Hopes and Aspirations: Decorative Painting of Korea.* San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 1998.

Kim Won-yong. *Art and Archaeology of Ancient Korea.* Seoul: The Taekwang Publishing Co., 1986.

Kim Won-yong. *Byeokhwa* [*Murals*], Hanguk Misul Jeonjip [*Collection of Korean Art*] series 4. Seoul: Donghwa Chulpan-sa, 1974.

Kim Yong-gwon. *Minhwa ui Wollyu: Joseon Sidae Sehwa* [*The Origins of Folk Painting: Joseon Dynasty New Year's Day Painting*]. Seoul: Hagyeonsa, 2008.

Jeon Ho-tae. *Goguryeo Gobun-Byeokhwa Yeongu* [*A Study on Goguryeo Tomb Murals*]. Seoul: Sagyejul Chulpan-sa, 2000.

Pak Jeong-hye. *Joseon Sidae Gungjung Girok-hwa Yeongu* [*Pictorial Records of the Palace during the Joseon Dynasty*]. Seoul: Iljisa, 2000.

Rutt, Richard. *New Edition of James Scarth Gale's History of Korean People* (with a Biography of James Scarth Gale). Seoul: The Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, 1972.

Veit, Willibald. *Kunst aus dem Alten Korea: Goguryeo.* Berlin: Museum fur Ostasiatische Kunst, Staatliche Museum zu Berlin, 2005.

Williams, C. A. S. *Outlines of Chinese Symbolism and Art Motives.* Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Ltd., 1942.

Yanagi Soetsu. Essay in *Chosen no Minga* [*Folk Painting of Korea*], edited by Cho Cha-yong, Ogyu Shinzo, Itami Jun, Hong Seon-pyo, and Chong Pyongmo, 272–3, with English translation. Seoul: Seoul Museum of History, 2005.

Yanagi Soetsu. *The Unknown Craftsman*, adapted by Bernard Leach, foreword by Shoji Hamada. Palo Alto and Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1972.

Yi Song-mi. *Garyedogam Uigwe wa Misulsa* [*Joseon Dynasty Books of Royal Wedding in Art Historical Perspective*]. Seoul: Sowadang, 2008.

Yi Song-mi. "The Screen of the Five Peaks of the Joseon Dynasty." In *Joseon Wangsil Misul Munhwa* [*Art and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty Royal House*], edited by Yi Song-mi, Hwang Jeong-yeon, Yi Seon-ok, Yi Pil-gi, Yi Ye-seong, Gang Gwang-sik, Gim Jeong-suk, Yun Jin-yeong, Bak Dong-su, Gang Byeong-hui, 467–519. Seoul: Daewonsa, 2005.

Yi Song-mi and Kim Jeong-hui. *Hanguk Hoehwasa Yong-eojip* [*Collection of Terms in the History of Korean Painting*]. Seoul: Dahalmedia, 2003.

Yu Hong-jun. "Danwon Gim Hong-do Yeongu Note [A Note on the Study of Danwon Gim Hong-do]." In *Danwon Gim Hong-do*, 109–22. Seoul: National Museum of Korea, 1990.

Yu Hong-jun. *Hwain Yeoljeon* [*Biography of Painters*]. Seoul: Yeoksa Bipyeong-sa, 2001.

Zo Zayong (Jo Ja-yong). *Hanguk ui Minhwa* [*Korean Folk Painting*]. Seoul: Emille Museum, 1978.

Zo Zayong (Jo Ja-yong) and Kim Cheol-sun. *Minhwa* [*Folk Painting*], vols. I and II. Seoul: Yegyeong Saneopsa, 1989.

15

Conflict and Cosmopolitanism in "Arab" Sind

Finbarr Barry Flood

Introduction

In 1962, the historian A. B. L. Awasthi wrote, "the Turkish conquest of India began with the Arab conquest of Sind."[1] The sentiment expresses a common teleology according to which Muslims, irregardless of their ethnicity, linguistic identities, or specific sectarian affiliations, acted in concert across more than five centuries to affect a "slow progress of Islamic power" in South Asia as D. R. Bhandarkar had put it three decades earlier.[2] Despite these attempts to invest Arab expansion into Sind in the early eighth century as the Ur-moment of "Muslim" conquest, the period of Arab dominion in Sind has commanded remarkably little serious attention by historians of art and architecture. Over the past decades several articles, dissertations, and at least one book have addressed the history of Arab rule in Sind or the religious identities of those who lived under it during the eighth through tenth centuries. By contrast, the material culture of the period has been neglected. Where it is mentioned, it is usually relegated to a footnote in historical surveys of Indo-Islamic art and architecture, an evolutionary dead end in a trajectory that leads inexorably towards the glories of Mughal art.

Sind is a region located at the southern end of the Indus valley in what is today Pakistan, extending roughly from the ancient city of Multan in the north to the Indus delta and Indian Ocean in the south (fig. 15-1). During the heyday of the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad in the ninth and tenth centuries, the region was connected by both land and sea to the mercantile and urban centers of

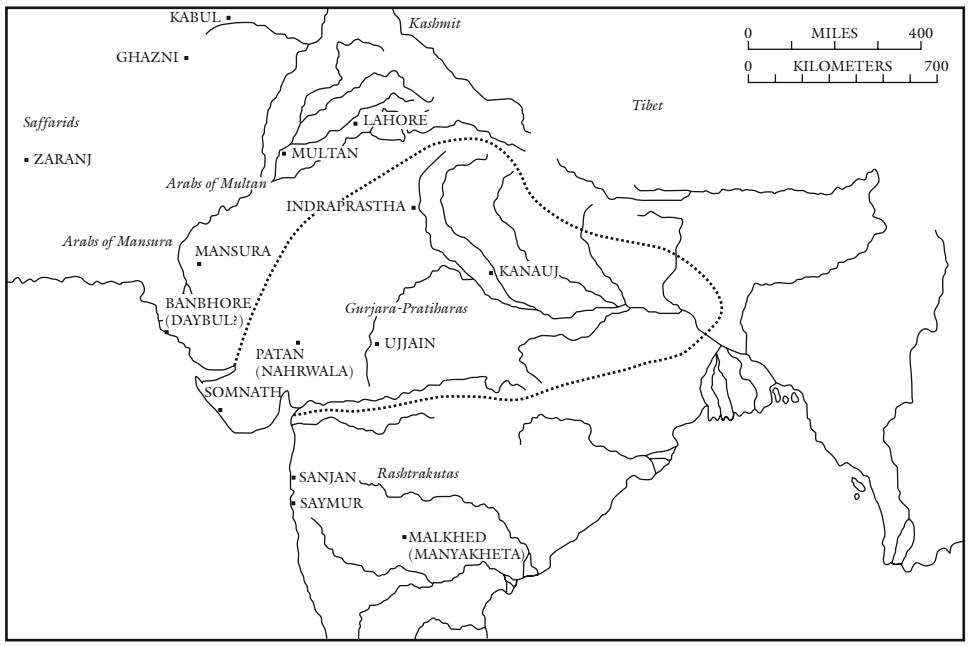

FIGURE 15-1 Map showing the major political formations of South Asia during the ninth and tenth centuries.

Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq in the west and peninsular India in the east. The neglect of early medieval Sind in modern scholarship belies its importance to the financial, moral, and political economies of the Abbasid caliphate. Between the eighth and tenth centuries, a vast array of materials, among them agricultural technologies, booty, gifts, loot, manufactured goods, raw materials, and taxes circulated westwards from Sind to the central Islamic lands along both maritime and terrestrial routes. In addition, I will argue below that Sind itself was a major center of artistic production during this period, producing some of the earliest and most important and spectacular examples of early Islamic ivory and metalwork to survive from any region of the Abbasid caliphate. Although fragmentary, the extant material attests to the role of Sind as a nexus between the heartlands of the caliphate and the Rajput polities that flourished during this period beyond its eastern frontiers.

The artifacts that attest to these connections have, however, largely been ignored by modern scholarship. The reasons for this neglect are various. The perception of the region as peripheral, remote from major artistic and cultural centers, is an enduring one, attested as early as the tenth century, when the Jerusalemite geographer al-Maqdisi wrote that although Sind was provided with elegant cities, it was reached only "after the dangers of the land and the terrors of the sea, after hardships and mental stress."[3] Since then, earthquakes and constant shifts in the course of the river Indus have obscured the architectural traces of the Arab period, known only through recent archaeological excavations and surveys,

many poorly published. In addition, the failure or inability to recognize the Sindi provenance of certain artifacts that survive in modern museum collections has further effaced the artistic history of Sind, a point to which I will return below.

Another reason for the neglect of Sind, I suggest, is that those few artifacts that may be confidently identified as of Sindi provenance straddle the divide between what modern scholars define as "Islamic" and "Indic" cultures, and are therefore not easily accommodated within the taxonomies that have ordered modern scholarship on South Asia since its inception under colonial rule in the nineteenth century. It is, however, precisely this elusive quality that lends the art and architecture of Sind its interest, not only as remnants or a "lost dimension" of Abbasid art, but also in their simultaneous claim to what are usually thought of as distinct cultural identities. In this sense, the material from early medieval Sind, however fragmentary, provides a convenient site from which to begin rethinking the categorical structures upon which modern understandings of the past are invariably based. In doing so, it not only poses a challenge to the canons and taxonomies of modern art history, but calls into question the logic of stasis and singularity that underlies contemporary notions of a medieval "clash of civilizations."

Historical Background

Despite sporadic incursions into Sind in the late seventh century, it was during the reign of the Umayyad caliph al-Walid I (r. 705–15) that an expedition under the general Muhammad ibn Qasim succeeded in bringing the major settlements of southern Sind under Arab control.[4] Detailed accounts of the relevant campaigns are preserved by the Arab historian al-Baladhuri (ninth century) and in the *Chachnama*, a thirteenth-century Persian history of the campaigns in Sind apparently based on a lost Arabic original.[5] Subsequently, governors administered the Indian territories in the name of the Umayyads and, after 750, the Abbasid caliphs who were to rule from their new capital of Baghdad. From around 850, a series of rebellious governors gave way to self-styled amirs who ruled two quasi-independent polities in the cities of Multan and Mansura in the upper and lower Indus delta. Although the amirs of Mansura claimed descent from the Prophet's contemporary Habbar ibn Aswad, and are consequently known to modern scholarship as the Habbarids, they dressed like Indian kings, and struck coins to an Indian rather than an Iraqi standard.[6]

The emergence of the Sindi amirs reflects a decline in the centrifugal authority of the Baghdad caliphate, especially in its eastern territories. Although they enjoyed de facto independence, the Sindi amirs courted caliphal favors and tokens that conferred legitimacy on their rule, often using gifts of Indian exotica to negotiate their fractious relationship with Baghdad.[7] In the 960s, however, the amirs of Sind abandoned the fold of Sunni orthodoxy, realigning themselves with the Shiite dynasties then in the ascendant in Egypt and Iran rather than the beleaguered Abbasid caliphate.

In addition to chronicles and histories of these events, an unusual number of accounts of the cultural and economic life of Sind and al-Hind were left by tenth-century geographers, sailors, travelers, and by the sedentary scholars who derived vicarious benefit from their experiences. In fact, the ninth and tenth centuries saw the production of more Arabic geographical accounts of India than any subsequent period; the dependence of later writers on them attests to Sind's role as a transregional nexus before 1000. Many of these texts are highly entertaining compilations of sea-faring tales with an anecdotal flavor that weave together maritime lore, tales of the fabulous, ethnographic observation, and historical detail. In works such as the *Akhbar al-Sind wa'l-Hind* (*News of Sind and al-Hind*), compiled in 851 (237),[8] and the *Kitab 'aja'ib al-Hind* (*The Book of the Wonders of al-Hind*, *c.* 955 [343–4]), India is depicted as a world of wonders (*'aja'ib*), much as it had been to western writers from the time of Herodotus onwards.[9] Some texts offer first-hand accounts of Sind and peninsular India; the anecdotalist and geographer al-Mas'udi (d. 957 [346]) traveled to India, and his description of his voyage provides invaluable insights into the nature of the trade that underwrote the economies of Sind and al-Hind, and the cultures of the territories that it encompassed and traversed.[10]

Connecting regions as diverse as the Atlantic coast of Europe and the Indian Ocean littoral of India, what has been dubbed the "Arab Common Market" fostered the development of supralocal systems of exchange that cut across (while not necessarily transcending) ethnic, linguistic, political, and religious boundaries.[11] The circuits along which merchants, pilgrims, and travelers moved were of two kinds: maritime and terrestrial. Through the first, the ports of China, Sind, Gujarat and the western coast of India were linked with their counterparts in the Persian Gulf, Arabia, and the Red Sea in the west, Basra and Siraf being pre-eminent among them. The best-known of the Sindi ports, and the only port subject to excavation is the site of Banbhore, a walled city that many scholars identify with Daybul, the port of Mansura, a new eighth-century Arab foundation near the ancient city of Brahmanabad, and one of the two major centers of political authority in Sind.

From the ports of Sind, both riverine and terrestrial routes led into the interior of the Indus valley, to the land-locked urban centers of Mansura, and Multan, an ancient foundation renowned for its Sun Temple (fig. 15-1). These cities and their satellites were among the most ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse cities of the Abbasid caliphate, polyglot centers containing ethnically and religiously heterogeneous populations, in which not only currencies and languages but also religious practices and elite traditions intermingled.

From either city, merchants, travelers, and goods could connect to the terrestrial corridors that led west, to the desert region of Makran and on to Iran, or by the slower but more hospitable routes that led via mountain passes and valleys to Sistan and Zamindawar in southern Afghanistan or to the emporia and political centers of Ghazni and Kabul further to the northeast. From here, the journey could be continued to Khurasan, the wealthy and culturally dynamic region of eastern Iran, or north into Transoxiana and Central Asia.

Alternatively, travelers might take south-easterly routes that led along the coast towards the coastal emporia in the domains of the two major political formations that dominated peninsular India to the east: the Rashtrakuta rajas of the Deccan, who claimed overlordship of peninsular India as a whole, and the Gurjara-Pratiharas of Kanauj who ruled over large areas of north India, including areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan that abutted the eastern edges of Sind (fig. 15-1). The relationship of the Sindi amirs with the latter was marked by hostility and periodic conflict, but the Arabs of Sind had excellent relations with the Rashtrakuta rajas, whose coastal cities were home to communities of Arab and Persian Muslims, some of whom ruled as governors in the name of the Rashtrakutas.[12] Excavation of these port cities over the past decade has produced material evidence for trade with the Persian Gulf; at Sanjan north of Mumbai, these finds include a cluster of Abbasid luster bowls and *dirhams* that evidently made the journey by the maritime routes from Basra or other Iraqi ports.[13] The presence of Indian merchants and sailors in these Gulf ports (in which they worshiped at their own shrines) is hardly surprising, since an Indian mercantile diaspora existed in the emporia of the Red Sea as early as the first centuries of the Christian era.[14] During the ninth and tenth centuries, the activities and renown of the Sindi merchants evidently stretched to East Africa, an association attested not only by the production there of coins similar to those being minted in the amirates of Sind, but also by the persistence of Swahili traditions concerning the denizens of Daybul, the port of Mansura, whose role as a "place of mythic origins" reflects its importance to the Indian Ocean trade before its decline around the eleventh or twelfth century.[15] Conversely, sizable communities of Muslim Arabs and Persians from Basra, Baghdad, Oman, Siraf, and Yemen existed in the territories of the Rashtrakutas and Gurjara-Pratiharas. Their presence is well documented epigraphically and textually, and through the survival of a *mihrab* (prayer niche) of this period, now embedded in the exterior walls of Gwalior fort in north central India.[16]

Monuments and Objects

The relationship between the circulation of commodities, concepts, forms, and languages in the cities of Sind is exemplified by the monetized tokens through which long-distance trade was enabled. Silver coins were struck by the Arab rulers of Mansura and Multan from the mid-ninth century, when the amirs of both cities assumed de facto autonomy and flows of Abbasid coins seem to have ceased. The tiny coins known as *dammas* or *dramas* (from the Greek *drachm*) weigh around 0.5 of a gram. Coins of similar size and weight produced in neighboring Gujarat and elsewhere in north India during the seventh and eighth centuries are likely to have provided the models for the Sindi dammas. In addition to their use of an Indian denomination standard, the coins of the Sindi amirs lack dates, as is typical of contemporary north Indian coinage, but make use of Arabic text like contemporary Abbasid coins. These Sindi coins may in their turn have inspired coins of similar type that are found in the Islamic emporia of southern Arabia

FIGURE 15-2 Obverse and reverse of eight bilingual dammas from Multan, private collection. Not to scale.

and East Africa during the ninth and tenth centuries, a reminder of the way in which these transregional trade contacts inflected the material culture of the Indian Ocean littoral.[17] It is worth pointing out that during this period, the Abbasid caliph of Baghdad was striking gold and silver commemorative coins based on Afghan silver tokens that circulated westwards as far as the Baltic, their circulation and imitation in no way impeded by the image that they bore of Nandi, the mount of the Hindu deity Shiva.[18]

The complex imbrications of "Indic" and "Islamic" cultures in Arab Sind are underlined by variant issues of these silver dammas produced in Multan (fig. 15-2). These coins await detailed study, but even a preliminary examination indicates their ability to provide significant insights into the economic, political, and religious life of Multan.[19] On their obverse, the Multani coins all bear Arabic inscriptions that include religious phrases and the proper names of the Multani amirs, whose names are otherwise unknown.[20] By contrast, the reverse inscriptions of many these coins are inscribed with Sanskrit texts, which invoke a wide array of Hindu deities. On one of the Multani coins, the Prophet Muhammad is implicitly presented as the avatar of Allah, a notion made more explicit a century or two later in two bilingual (Arabic and Sanskrit) *tanka*s struck at Mahmudpur (Lahore) in 1026–7 (419) in the name of Mahmud of Ghazni, the "idol-breaker."[21]

The Sanskrit invocation of the primal boar (*Adivaraha*) on some of the Multani coins was probably inspired by a series of alloyed silver coins issued by the Gurjara-Pratihara ruler Bhoja (*c.* CE 836–82), coins that a tenth-century Rashtrakuta inscription refers to as the *shrimadadivaraha damma*. The Rashtrakuta coins differ from the Multani dramas in their metrology, but both bear the inscription *shrimad adivaraha* (the *biruda* or epithet of Bhoja) on one side with an anthropomorphic depiction of the boar incarnation of Vishnu on the other, replaced by Arabic text on the Multani dammas.[22] These parallels with the coinage of the Gurjara-Pratiharas of Kanauj suggest that the amirs of Multan were constructing their numismatic self-representations with one eye on their powerful eastern neighbors. Moreover, although the precise chronology of the series has yet to be established, the relationship to Gurjara-Pratihara coinage enables the dates of the Multani bilingual dammas to be bracketed between roughly 840 (225) (when the Bhoja coins appear) and 965 (354), when the amirs of Multan began minting coins of a different type, inscribed with Arabic texts that advertised their new-found allegiance to the Fatimid Ismailis of North Africa.[23] They are thus the earliest bilingual (Arabic–Sanskrit) Islamic coins produced in South Asia.

The numismatic evidence from Multan supports the impression of differences in the ethnic and linguistic composition of Mansura and Multan conveyed in the Arabic geographies, differences that preclude any attempt to define a unitary Sindi "Arab" culture. It is, for example, reported that the loincloth (*izar* or *mi'zar*) that was favored by the Muslim and non-Muslim populations of Gujarat also prevailed among the male population of Multan, but not among that of Mansura, where Iraqi fashions were dominant.[24] Reported differences in linguistic usage point in the same direction. The use of Arabic, Sindi, and comprehensible Persian

(*farsiyyat mafhumat*) is indicated at Multan, reflecting its position as a terminal for the Khurasan trade.[25] The presence of Sanskrit on Multani coins attests to further dimensions of elite literacy that lay outside the interest or knowledge of the Arab writers upon whom we depend for most of our information. By contrast, Arabic and Sindi were the languages of Mansura, hinting at differences in the ethnic composition of the merchants who came to trade in both cities, and the patterns of circulation specific to each sphere.

Theorists of cultural borderlands see them as "pregnant with possibilities" that find expression in the emergence of new cultural practices characterized by improvisation and recombination, by juxtaposition, syncretism, and translation.[26] This is true of the coinage issued by the amirs of Multan, which combines elements of syncretism (a constellation or juxtaposition of elements belonging to different linguistic systems and systems of belief) and translation (an attempt to represent the beliefs of one tradition in terms of another). Both phenomena raise interesting questions about the religious life of Sind, which at the time of the conquest in the early eighth century contained a religiously heterogeneous population consisting of Buddhists, Brahmans, Pashupata Shaivites, and some Vaishnavites.[27] Brick stupas (monumental Buddhist reliquaries) still dot the landscape of southern Sind, some of them showing signs of ritual use as late as the tenth century. Similarly, a tenth-century bronze image of Surya, the sun god, found at Brahmanabad near Mansura, attests to continuity in the cult whose temple at Multan was one of the most important pilgrimage sites of north India until its destruction by Ismaili missionaries in 965 (354). This was the most celebrated of a number of Hindu temples that stood within the territories of Arab amirates.[28] The continued existence of certain temples is in line with the reported policy of Muhammad ibn Qasim, the conqueror of Sind, who built mosques in the conquered cities, but afforded their non-Muslim populations the de facto status of *dhimmi*s (protected subjects) similar to that enjoyed by the Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and other "people of the book," who paid *jizya* (poll-tax).[29]

The window opened by these coins onto the complex cultural affiliations and religious affinities of the Arab elite of Multan conforms with what little is known from textual sources, which contain hints of a rather agglomerative and pragmatic attitude to idolatry, identity, and religious practice among both the Sindi elites and the general population.[30] For example, al-Maqdisi (tenth century) mentions a merchant from Khurasan who, being captivated by two idols in Sind, gave himself over to idol worship only to rejoin the fold of Islam once he returned to Nishapur in Iran.[31] Conversely, there are reports of Indic and Turkic rulers in western Afghanistan, the Kabul valley and Sind converting to Islam and adopting Arabic names during the eighth and ninth centuries only to apostasize when the appeal or power of the Arab center waned.[32] Both phenomena suggest that neither social nor religious identity was immutable but was culturally constructed according to considerations of piety, power, utility, and so forth that reflect both established cultural values and the choices made by human agents. There

are, in addition, hints that those who identified as Muslims were by no means averse to paying their respects at Hindu temples, raising interesting questions about the relationship between doxis and praxis in the construction and articulation of religious identity. Materialized in the Multani coins, this pietistic cosmopolitanism is a limitrophe phenomenon characteristic of other Islamic frontier societies.[33]

The dialectic between the contemporary cultural conventions of both Baghdad and Kanauj to which the Multani coins bear witness is no less apparent in the congregational mosques that formed the centers of Islamic religious life in the cities of Sind. These were large hypostyle mosques, consisting of a pillared prayer-hall preceded by a courtyard, surrounded by an irregular two-bay colonnade in the case of the congregational mosque at Bhanbhore/Daybul, the principal port of Mansura.[34] Measuring 150 by 250 feet, the Mansura mosque itself was almost double the size of the Friday mosques of Banbhore and Siraf, the major trading emporium in the Persian Gulf from whence many traders sailed to the Indian ports, and was distinguished from the wood and clay structures in the city by its construction from baked brick and stone.[35]

In addition to these large congregational mosques (*jawami*), smaller neighborhood mosques (*masajid*) constructed from brick and wood, and with two to four columns supporting their flat roofs, were excavated at Mansura.[36] Recent surveys of the Indus delta have brought to light a number of these small oratories, built from stone, square in plan, and with four interior pillars creating a nine-fold division of interior space. The best preserved example, that at Thambo Wari or Thuman Jo near Thatta in southern Sind, has been dated to the tenth or eleventh century, although it may be slightly later.[37] The mosque was raised on a plinth (a feature associated with the temple architecture of western India), with exterior walls about 25 feet in length and four internal pillars that once supported a flat roof composed of stone slabs. Its nine-fold internal division represents a regional variant on a type of small nine-bayed mosque found throughout the Islamic world at this date. Its appearance in Sind points to the maritime connections of the region, for contemporary mosques of similar form are found in the coastal emporia of Egypt. In regions of the eastern Islamic world where brick was the dominant structural medium, these nine-bayed mosques are usually domed. Here, the basic form is executed in the local stone medium and trabeate (post and lintel) idiom of the Indus delta. The decoration of the mosque is also redolent of negotiations between the local and translocal, for while the multi-sectional pillars that supported the roof and the carved creeper ornament that frames the entrance to the mosque are entirely Indic in form and decoration (the former initially being identified, erroneously, as spolia), it had a concave stone mihrab carved with Arabic texts.

A particularly noteworthy feature of both major congregational mosques and the smaller oratory at Thambo Wari is that the evocation or execution of arch forms was clearly a desideratum, regardless of plan, although arch forms are not generally included in the regional idioms of Sind and neighboring Gujarat.

The mihrab of the Banbhore mosque was, for example, provided with a stone frame cut to approximate an arch form. Similarly, at Thambo Wari (and in some of the earliest mosques in neighboring Gujarat), the arch comprising the mihrab was carved from monolithic blocks of stone, transforming a structural feature into a sign.[38] The endeavor suggests an association between specific forms and cultural identity; the deployment of Arabic script and a strictly aniconic decorative vocabulary in the Sindi mosques (in contrast to the stupas and temples of the region) points in the same direction.

The aniconic decoration of Sindi coins and mosques should not, however, be taken as evidence for the abjuration of the richly figural traditions of north Indian art on the part of Arab patrons. Among the objects recovered from Mansura are four spectacular cast bronze door handles or knockers which shed further light on the kinds of mediations and negotiations manifest in both the coins and mosques of Sind. The four bronzes each measure about 20 inches in diameter, weigh around 70 pounds, and consist of three distinct sections soldered or bolted together: a central three-dimensional boss featuring an anthropomorphic or zoomorphic head; an inscribed silver plate, and a hexafoil knocker that hangs from the lower jaw of the face (fig. 15-3).[39] The rim of each bears an inscription incised in angular Kufic script. The bronzes were recovered from the *dar al-imara* (gubernatorial palace) of Mansura, and are believed to have adorned its entrance. The marginal inscriptions on the bronzes all bear the name of amir Abd Allah ibn Umar, the Habbarid ruler of Sind. Abd Allah was the second of the Habbarid amirs, is named on some of the copper and silver coinage of Mansura, and is known from travelers' accounts to have been ruling around 883 (270).[40] The bronzes can thus be dated to the early 880s at the latest.

This dating is particularly remarkable, since in both quality and scale, there is nothing from the contemporary Islamic world with which to compare the Mansura bronzes. At present, the early history of Islamic metalwork is represented by a generally unimpressive array of bronze ewers and incense burners from the eastern Mediterranean and Near East. The Mansura bronzes have the potential to rewrite this history. As products of a geographically peripheral region of the caliphate, it has been assumed that some or all of the Mansura bronzes were imported from Iraq.[41] The devastation wrought by the Mongol conquest of Iraq in the thirteenth century means that in both quality and scale, there is, however, little to compare with the Mansura bronzes from the contemporary Islamic world, and nothing from Abbasid Iraq, so that the "high" cultural forms taken as a given are being intuited from the very bronzes that apparently show their diffusion.

There is no a priori reason to assume that some or all of the components of the bronzes were imported from the central Islamic lands. The existence of a major metalworking industry in early medieval Sind is indicated by finds such as a three-foot brass Brahma image from Mirpur Khas, and references to the coppersmiths' bazaar in tenth-century Multan suggest that Sind was a major metalworking center before and after the Arab conquest.[42] In addition, the appearance of the

FIGURE 15-3 Four bronze door-knockers excavated at Mansura, from Khan 1999. Department of Archaeology and Museums, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Habbarid amir's name on the bronzes, and parallels between the style of their zoomorphic and anthropomorphic faces and the terracotta figural ornaments found on Sindi stupas and temples (specifically the ubiquitous lion-faced *kirtimukha* or *simha*) suggests that some or all of their components were manufactured locally.[43]

Recent reimaginings of the relationships between centers and peripheries acknowledge the cultural and political power of artistic or political centers (the two are not necessarily coincident), but see peripheries as potentially more productive by virtue of their role as a nexus between different artistic and cultural networks, and the consequent availability of potential models that may not circulate in the center.[44] The material from Sind presented here is a case in point. Despite the likelihood that some or all of their components were of local manufacture, the content and form of the texts inscribed on the Mansura bronzes point to a relationship with Abbasid "tradition" that is surprisingly complex. For example, the inscriptions on the anthropomorphic bronzes terminate with a quotation from Koran 2:137: "God will suffice you against them, for God hears and knows everything." This was a contemporary slogan of the Abbasid caliphs, inscribed on the iron pole that held their banner.[45] To understand why this slogan might have been chosen, it is necessary to consider the way in which the Habbarid amirs came to power in Mansura. Abd Allah, the amir named on the Mansura bronzes, was only the second of the Habbarid amirs to have ruled at Mansura. Habbarid rule had been secured by his father, Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Habbari, in 854 (240) when he rebelled and seized Mansura, deposing the Abbasid governor during one of the many disputes between Arab tribes of Hijazi and Yemeni origin that wracked the province.[46] In these circumstances, the use of Abbasid slogans on the doors of the amir's palace may have been intended as an attempt to obscure the distinction between the *de facto* autonomy wielded by the Habbarids and the *de jure* authority of the Abbasid caliph. Highlighting the ambiguities of their position, for example, the Sindi amirs continued to give the Friday sermon (*khutba*) in the name of the Abbasid caliph, a traditional sign of communal allegiance, although the amirs of Multan are said to have submitted to the sovereignty of no one.[47] It is also worth noting that the rise of the Habbarids was part of a broader ninth-century phenomenon of fragmentation; during the same period the rebellious governor of Egypt, Ahmad ibn Tulun (d. 884 [270]) also modeled the court culture of his breakaway capital on that of the Abbasid caliphs.

A further indicator of a relationship to the wider Islamic world lies in the script used to execute the Arabic legends on the Mansura bronzes. This comprises a foliated variant of angular Kufic script that became common in the Islamic world only in the tenth century. The precocious use of this script in the official texts of the amirs of Mansura is confirmed by its use in an incised stone foundation (or restoration) text dated 906–7 (294) recovered from the congregational mosque at Daybul/Banbhore, which mentions the son of amir Abd Allah named on the Mansura bronzes.[48] In contrast to most contemporary inscriptions in the wider Islamic world, which are carved in relief, the Banbhore texts are (like those on the Mansura bronzes) incised, following the standard practice for north Indian inscriptions. We can thus be confident that they were executed locally.

The early appearance of foliated script in Sind is undoubtedly related to the circulation of artisans and/or artifacts by the maritime routes. Foliated scripts are employed in Egypt as early as the 820s, and also make an early appearance

in the Hijaz, the site of the holy shrines of Mecca and Medina,[49] suggesting that the hajj may have been a factor in their dissemination. The appearance of foliated Kufic script in a series of ninth-century funerary inscriptions found on the route between the royal city of Anuradhapura and the coast of Sri Lanka confirms the early dissemination of foliated script around the Indian Ocean littoral.[50] One of these is dated 817–18 (202), preceding the Sindi examples by several decades. In addition, the epigraphic formulae used on the Sri Lankan stele are identical to those found on contemporary Arabian and Egyptian tombstones, pointing once again to maritime connections with these regions. As far as I am aware, the Sindi and Sri Lankan bronzes and stele provide the only examples of foliated Kufic found at this date outside of the eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea regions, a very concrete illustration of the effects of circulation and mobility across and around the Indian Ocean.

In addition to being a center for metalworking, there is abundant evidence that Sind was also a major center of ivory production both before and after the Arab conquest. The Jerusalemite geographer al-Maqdisi lists ivory among the manufactured goods and raw materials exported from Mansura, and al-Istakhri and Ibn Hawqal both mention that the Sun Temple of Multan was located in an enclosure situated between the bazaar of the ivory-carvers and the shops of the coppersmiths.[51] A series of ivory plaques depicting *apsara*s (celestial females) and *makara*s (hybrid creatures) excavated at Brahamanabad near Mansura have been tentatively dated to this period and identified as imports from the Gurjara-Pratihara kingdom of central India.[52] However, it is just as likely that they were produced locally.

A major interpretive problem, one directly related to the neglect of Sind in contemporary scholarship, concerns the ability to identify products of the Sindi ivory-carving workshops that may survive in contemporary museum collections. Among the most likely candidates is an ivory dubbed the "Chessman of Charlemagne," now housed in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (fig. 15-4). Tradition identifies the ivory as a gift sent by the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (r. 786–809) to the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne, but since the earliest recorded reference to the object is in a sixteenth-century inventory, this is unlikely. It has been suggested instead that the ivory was brought to Baghdad along with other Indian exotica in the ninth and tenth centuries.[53] This is very probable, but its origin has never been satisfactorily ascertained. On stylistic grounds, it has been ascribed dates ranging from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries, and attributed to regions ranging from northwest India to Gujarat and the Deccan.[54] However, a number of factors suggest that it was in fact produced in either Mansura or Multan during the ninth or tenth century.

The ivory is substantial, standing just over 6 inches high, and is designed to be seen in the round. It depicts a long-haired mustachioed figure seated in a howdah atop a richly caparisoned elephant and wearing a *kurta* (a long fitted shirt) and prominent earrings, his head adorned with a narrow fillet. The elaborate dress of the mounted figure as well as his pre-eminent position and scale

Publisher's Note:
Image not available
in the electronic edition

FIGURE 15-4 Carved ivory elephant. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des médailles, No. Chabouillet 3271.

identify him as a royal rider. The semi-circular exterior of the howdah is ringed by eight advancing foot soldiers set within the inter-columnations of an arcade. The base of the elephant is ringed by five horse-riders, who are either bare-chested or wearing a kurta with baggy trousers and boots. The details of their costume and accoutrements, including stirrups and horse trappings, are carefully delineated.

Some of the details of the Paris ivory suggest affinities with the sculpture of Kashmir (known to have been a center for ivory carving during the eighth and ninth centuries) or other regions of the western Himalayas.[55] Despite these affinities, it seems unlikely that the elephant was carved in Kashmir, since extant Kashmiri ivories generally depict religious (primarily Buddhist) scenes and are not executed in the round, but are clearly designed to be approached from a single, frontal, viewpoint. Its strong Himalayan affinities might instead attest to contacts between Kashmir, the Indus valley, and Gujarat between the eighth and tenth centuries. These are reflected not only in cultural and economic exchange, but in the more tangible realm of artistic production, ranging from imports of Kashmiri sculpture to the adoption of characteristic Kashmiri forms (including trefoil arches and pyramidal roofs) in some of the Hindu temples of the Salt range in the northern Indus valley.[56]

There is little "Islamic" about the Paris ivory in the sense that this adjective is usually employed, were it not for an Arabic inscription on the base of the piece. Written in a Kufic script that has been dated to the ninth or tenth century on paleographic grounds, the inscription reads *min amala Yusuf al-Bahili* (from [among] the work of Yusuf al-Bahili).[57] The *nisba* or toponymic of the individual named in the inscription indicates that he was a member of the celebrated Bahila tribe of Arabs, many of whom participated in the early conquests of the eastern frontier.[58] During the reign of the caliph Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz (d. 720 [101]), for example, an individual named Amr ibn Muslim al-Bahili oversaw the recently acquired territories in Sind. It is likely that his descendants settled in the region, as did many of those involved in the conquest, including the ancestors of the Habbarid amirs of Mansura.[59]

As for the likely subject of the carving, a metaphysical reading might see in it a representation of dharmic order: the vassals (*samanta*s) surrounding a maharaja or the ideal polity described by Kautilya, central to which is the "circle of kings" comprised of the alternating rings of adversaries and allies that form around a *chakravartin* or universal ruler.[60] The concept has something in common with the "family of kings" depicted in early Islamic images and texts, where the kings of the earth (often reduced to the four or five kings of the Turks and/or Persians, China, India, and Rome) frame the throne of a superordinate ruler.[61] The sculpture might equally be read as an idealized representation of a contemporary Sindi amir. Arab admiration for the elephant is rooted in the military advantage that pachyderm power conferred; by the ninth and tenth centuries the iconographic association between elephants and authority was acknowledged as far west as al-Andalus. In medieval Arabic geographies, the king of al-Hind is also referred to by the homonym "king of the elephants" (*malik al-fila*).[62] The Habbarid ruler

of Mansura possessed 80 war-elephants, two of which are named and were celebrated for their size and strength, while the Arab amirs of Multan also made use of elephants in processions.[63] Paradoxically, the Indic dress of the royal figure on the Bibliothèque nationale ivory only strengthens the likely association with the amirs of Sind, for it is reported that the Habbarid rulers of Mansura (whom the sources refer to as both amirs and maharajas) dressed in the style of contemporary Indian kings, wearing earrings, long hair (a practice associated with Indians), and a tunic known as a kurta.[64] The sources emphasize that these modes of dress were peculiar to the amirs and were not general in Mansura, whose inhabitants wore instead the Iraqi fashions that held sway as far away as Andalusia at this time, reflecting the cultural hegemony of the Baghdad caliphate.[65] Just as the kings of neighboring Kashmir distinguished themselves from their subjects by their mode of hairstyle,[66] the amir and his subjects evidently participated in distinct sartorial ecumenes, underlining once again the complex transregional orientations and transcultural affiliations of the Mansura elite.

We know far less about the amirs of Multan than about their counterparts in Mansura, but there are hints that they may also have adopted Indic modes of self-fashioning. Arab travelers report that on the occasion of Friday prayers, the amir of Multan processed to the congregational mosque of Multan from his palace at Jandrawar (Chandravar) outside of the city, mounted on an elephant.[67] The ritualized nature of the event recalls descriptions of the ruler of Nahrwara (medieval Anhilavada or Patan), the capital of the Solanki or Chalukya rajas of neighboring Gujarat, vassals of the Gurjara-Pratiharas, riding out in procession every Friday, richly clad in a golden crown and robe, surrounded by female courtiers wearing the kurta, the garment also favored by the amirs of Mansura.[68]

The adoption of Indic dress (and perhaps ceremonial) by the Sindi amirs runs counter to both the spirit and the letter of *ahadith* (Traditions of the Prophet) that proscribe the imitation of sartorial practices associated with unbelievers.[69] Rather than a religious reorientation, it should be understood as a pragmatic "orientation to power," an exercise in self-fashioning that highlights the agentive appropriation of specific cultural forms and practices.[70] Geographically isolated from a Baghdad to which they were nominally subservient, the Sindi amirs evidently modeled their dress and public appearances on those of their powerful Indic neighbors, projecting their authority in a manner determined by the dominant political culture of the region, regardless of any ethnic or religious associations.

Given the likelihood that the Bibliothèque nationale ivory is the product of a Sindi workshop, the possibility that other products of Sindi ivory workshops have survived and not been recognized as such must be considered. The former is unique in bearing an inscription, but there are analogous ivory elephants that may be of similar provenance. Among them is a smaller elephant found in the northwestern Indian subcontinent and now in the collections of the Museum für Indische Kunst in Berlin (fig. 15-5). Standing 3.8 inches high, the Berlin elephant is considerably smaller than that in Paris, poorly preserved and of much cruder workmanship.[71] Nevertheless, the iconography of the piece is almost identical to that of the larger and more sophisticated Bibliothèque nationale ivory.

FIGURE 15-5 Ivory elephant, Sind (?), courtesy of Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin.

Closer parallels are offered by a spectacular Buddhist diptych in the form of an elephant carrying a seated figure bearing a stupa shrine and surrounded by armed infantrymen. The ivory was found at Gansu in northwestern China, but the scenes from the life of the Buddha depicted in its interior are closely related to the Buddhist stone sculptures found in the Gandhara region of the northern Indus valley. Although different in detail, at 6.25 inches high, the Gansu piece is almost identical in size to the Paris ivory. A study in 2006 of the Gansu ivory concluded that it was produced in a frontier region of northwest India during the seventh or eighth century under strong Kashmiri influence, but showing characteristics quite distinct from those of medieval Kashmiri ivories.[72] All of this is also true of the Paris ivory. Taken together, the Paris and Gansu elephants may therefore offer evidence for continuity between pre- and post-conquest traditions of ivory carving in Sind.

It is of course possible that the Arabic inscription post-dates the creation of the Bibliothèque nationale ivory, but the sole reason to assume this is an a priori assumption about the nature of "Islamic" art and the fact that the presence of an Arabic name is somehow at odds with the Indic style of the piece. In his analysis of the carving, Moti Chandra gives voice to these ontological and taxonomic aporias:

> As a matter of fact, the purpose of an Arabic inscription on a purely Indian piece is also far from clear. It is difficult to say whether some Arab ivory-carver working in Indian style put his name on the ivory or whether its Arab owner got his name inscribed there.[73]

Similarly, a recent study of the ivory dismisses the idea that such a richly figural tableau could be the work of a Muslim sculptor, concluding that it was carved by an anonymous (Hindu) artisan within the workshop of Yusuf al-Bahili.[74]

The "problem" is common to the bronzes from Mansura (fig. 15-3), which scholars have struggled to locate both geographically and taxonomically. On stylistic grounds they have been divided into an "Indic" anthropomorphic pair and "Islamic" zoomorphic pair, the latter on the basis of comparison with much later leonine door-knockers from as far as afield as Spain. The hegemony of a model in which culture percolates from the center to the periphery is reflected in the failure to consider the possibility that, chronologically and iconographically, these "provincial" works might stand at the beginning of this series rather than on its margins. Moreover, explanations for this juxtaposition of Indic and Islamic iconography in a single group of artifacts range from literally diffusionist (the "Islamic" bronzes were dispatched from Iraq) to absurdly intentionalist:

> two different workshops (or two artisans in the same workshop) [may have been] responsible. One worked in a traditional Indian mode, continuing to use the local style connected with the production of Hindu and Buddhist sculpture; the other employed a deliberately Islamic idiom and was well aware of stylistic developments in the central Islamic lands, possibly having emigrated from there.[75]

Once again, it should be emphasized that there is nothing comparable to these bronzes from the central Islamic lands at this date, so that the "stylistic developments" there are being read backwards from the very bronzes that are taken to show their diffusion.

The juxtapositions and imbrications that necessitate these interpretive acrobatics only appear anomalous by virtue of an attempt to accommodate the artifacts in question within taxonomies that conflate ethnic, territorial, iconographic, and stylistic terms of analysis, privileging categories of "Hindu" or "Muslim" identity that are assumed to be distinct and incommensurate.[76] The categorical approach to identity that underlies these distinctions is apparent, for example, in David Wasserstein's insistence that,

> The very recognition of a coin as Islamic . . . implies the recognition of boundaries dividing Muslim from non-Muslim, Islamic from non-Islamic as well. Such a coin refers unmistakably to Islamic, as distinct from non-Islamic, territory, in every sense of that word.[77]

An understanding of the fabric, script, and scale of coins as constituting a numismatic metalanguage that asserts intercultural difference cannot, however, account for the bilingual dammas from Multan (fig. 15-2), whose spirit is perfectly in keeping with the intermingling of Arabic text and Indic style on a single object, or the combination of lion masks and Abbasid religious slogans on the doors of the *dar al-imara* at Mansura. In a world in which descendants of the Prophet's tribe could issue coins with Sanskrit texts representing him as an avatar and invoking

Hindu deities, a world in which for some temple and mosque seem to have been equally integral to quotidian rituals of devotion, neither "Islamic" nor "Indic" characteristics can be taken as predictive of ethnicity or religious affinity, if in fact such characteristics can be clearly distinguished at all.

Conclusion

Posing significant challenges to a principle of reading difference intrinsic to modern categories of thought that structure our understanding of the past, the flotsam from premodern Sind that are so marginal to canonical tellings of history (and art history) are immensely productive sites from which to interrogate the categorical structures upon which canons themselves depend. They also provide a timely reminder not only of the fact that people, things, and the practices associated with both have been mixed up together for a very long time, but also of the violence done to all cultural forms by attempts to purify and stratify them, to bring them into conformity with our culturally specific modes of ordering the universe. In this sense, rather than attesting to the narratives of conquest and conflict favored in colonial and nationalist historiographies, the material from Sind might equally be read against the background of a current interest in cosmopolitanism.

Contemporary interest in the theme of cosmopolitanism is closely linked to the phenomena of globalization, diaspora, and modernity, but the blend of imperial and mercantile cosmopolitanism that characterizes late capitalism is hardly unique. As the Romans, the Hapsburgs, the Ottomans, and numerous others have discovered, cosmopolitanisms of all sorts can be a useful asset to the state. This is in fact reflected in the Arabic name for Multan: Faraj Bayt al-Dhahab (Frontier of the House of Gold), reflecting the economic importance of the Sun Temple that stood in the city to its Arab rulers, who claimed up to 30 percent of its revenues.[78] The pragmatic dimension of elite cosmopolitanism in Umayyad Spain, a frontier region at the opposite end of the Abbasid caliphate, which came under Arab dominion at the same time as Sind, has also been noted.[79] The heterogeneous nature of the Sindi populations may therefore have led those attempting to consolidate their authority to foster aspects of pietistic cosmopolitanism to which the Multani coins attest. If the empires of imperial Rome and Ottoman Istanbul were marked by what Antonio Gramsci referred to as "imperial cosmopolitanism," the range of phenomena outlined here is indicative of what might be dubbed mercantile cosmopolitanism. The two are by no means incompatible: they often went together.[80]

In a provocative if somewhat reductive hypothesis, Bruno Latour has suggested that a fundamental distinction between modern and premodern societies lies in the contrast between what he calls translation (broadly understood as a process of mixing and hybridization) and purification (broadly understood as the assertion or imposition of taxonomic difference) as dominant cultural paradigms.[81]

The authors of a volume of essays on cosmopolitanism reach a similar conclusion, noting that:

> In fact, modernity itself is just this contradictory, even duplicitous, attempt to separate and purify realms – the natural, social and empyrean realms, with their things and peoples and gods – that have never been separate and pure, and still are not.[82]

However, while the purifying or stratifying impulses of modernity may say much about the contemporary situation, we should be wary of casting premodernity as the utopian inverse of a dystopian present. Flattening the topography of highly contoured landscapes, notions of a lost heterogeneous, hybrid, or "multicultural" past are romantic fantasies that, no less than sectarian historiographies, deny the agency of premodern subjects and the consequently protean nature of their identities.[83] They also obscure the complex and dynamic dialectic between accommodation and alterity, confrontation and cooption that structured ethnically or religiously heterogeneous spaces like those found in early medieval Sind.

The transformation of Abbasid cultural forms (from coins to script) in "Arab" Sind under the impact of Indic artistic and numismatic conventions reminds us that localism and particularism are by no means opposed to cosmopolitanism, both being implicit in the term itself.[84] In addition, the material remains from Sind remind us that cosmopolitanism does not preclude more aggressive assertions of particularism. Excavations of the congregational mosque at Banbhore/Daybul, the port city of Mansura, revealed that a *linga* (an aniconic sign of the Hindu deity Shiva) was set at its main entrance, to be trampled by those entering, a common practice of monotheist polemicists.[85] Yet, in another sector of the city, a Shiva temple was found with its linga and *yoni* still intact. The manner in which Banbhore was excavated precludes any certainty about the chronology of the temple, but it appears that the only reason for attributing it to the pre-Islamic period is an assumption that temple and mosque inhabit distinct space-time continua: the "Hindu" and "Muslim" periods.[86] Fragments of tenth-century sculptures of Shiva and the sun god Surya were recovered from nearby Brahmanabad, however, and the Buddhist stupas of Sind show signs of continued use after the Arab conquest, perhaps even as late as the tenth century.[87] It is, therefore, quite likely that temple and mosque thrived in close proximity. That those entering the main mosque of Banbhore trampled a linga similar to that on display in the nearby temple suggests that freedom of polytheistic practice was by no means incompatible with freedom to indulge monotheistic propaganda: practices of denigration and veneration could and did inhabit proximate spaces, undermining any suggestion that medieval encounters along the shifting frontier between what the Arabic and Persian sources refer to as the *dar al-Islam* ("house of Islam," the lands under the control of Muslim rulers) and the *dar al-harb* ("house of war") led to the embrace or emergence of a medieval "multiculturalism."

The end of the Arab amirates of Sind reinforces this point, while also indicating the limits of the essentialist paradigm of "Muslim" conquest with which

I began. As I have mentioned previously, around 965 (354), the amirs of Multan abandoned the fold of Sunni orthodoxy, aligning themselves with the Fatimids of North Africa. These espoused the Ismaili denomination of Shia Islam, laid claim to the title of caliph, and installed themselves in Egypt, which seceded from Abbasid control in 969 (358). The (ultimately successful) promotion of Ismaili Shiism in Sind by the Fatimids of North Africa highlights once again the role of maritime connections between Sind and Egypt in facilitating the transmission of potentially seditious ideas and the human agents who propagated them. This was a period of resurgent Shia political activity even in the Iraqi heartlands of the caliphate, which from 955 (344) were under the control of the Buyids, Iranian Shias based in the Gulf province of Fars, who retained the caliph as little more than a figurehead. Around the same time that Multan came under Ismaili control, the amirs of Mansura (connected to Fars by the maritime routes) aligned themselves with the Buyids, bringing the two Arab polities of Sind within the Shia fold.[88]

This shift in alignment had a significant impact on the cultural and political life of Sind. In Multan, for example, the Sunni Friday Mosque was abandoned and an alternative congregational mosque built for the newly converted amirs.[89] The conversion of the amirs also seems to have signaled the death-knell of the pietistic cosmopolitanism that had characterized the religious life of the city for the previous quarter of a millennium, with bilingual coins bearing names of Hindu deities replaced by those bearing Shia slogans.[90] One of the first acts of the Ismaili amir was to demolish the Sun Temple that had thrived at the heart of the city since before the Arab conquest, appropriating its site for his new congregational mosque. A letter written in North Africa by the Fatimid caliph al-Muizz and addressed to his agent Jalam ibn Shayban after the latter had succeeded in establishing an Ismaili Shia government in Multan around 965 (354) reveals the fate of the Surya icon that had previously stood within it.[91] Lauding the victory of Ibn Shayban, al-Mu'izz mentions the destruction of the idol temple and the construction of the mosque on its site, making the following request:

> We would be very much pleased if you could send us the head of that idol (*sanam*); it would accrue to your lasting glory and would inspire your brethren at our end to increase their zeal and their desire to unite with you in a common effort in the cause of God.[92]

Ultimately, the pietistic realignments that augured these dramatic changes were to lead to the demise of the Arab amirates of Sind just decades later. At the same time that Ismaili Shiism was making significant inroads in Sind, the rise of the sultans of Ghazni in eastern Afghanistan was about to radically reconfigure the political landscape of the eastern Islamic world. The Ismaili affinities of the Sindi amirs attracted the attentions of sultan Mahmud of Ghazni (r. 997–1030), known to South Asian historiography as the scourge of unbelieving Hindus, and to Islamic historiography as an unrelenting enemy of heterodox Muslims. In 1006 (396)

and 1010 (401), Mahmud invaded Sind and chastised its Shia amirs en route to pillaging the temples of India.[93] As part of the re-establishment or reinforcement of orthodoxy, the Ismaili congregational mosque built on the site of the Sun Temple was destroyed, and the earlier Sunni congregational mosque of the city re-established.[94] After this date we hear little of Sind in the Arabic sources; later writers who deal with the region show a clear dependence on those written during the heyday of the Arab amirates in the ninth and tenth centuries. The demise of Arab Sind, the fractures, fragmentations, and pietistic shifts (even within the same ruling house) that defined its final decades do little to support the notion of a unified "Islamic" front necessitated by the "slow progress" paradigm of South Asian historiography with which I began.

Notes

1 Awasthi, "*Garuḍa Purāṇa*," 139.
2 Bhandarkar, "Indian Studies No. 1." For similar evaluations see Srivastava, "A Survey of India's Resistance to Medieval Invaders from the North-West," and Richards, "The Islamic Frontier in the East." As the editors of a volume of essays that sought to reconceptualize essentialist notions of Muslim and Hindu identity noted, "Not local Indian rulers but Hindu norms were defeated in the period from the Ghaznavids to the Mughals, and they were defeated not by certain Muslim rulers but by Islam itself." Gilmartin and Lawrence, "Introduction," 3.
3 Collins and al-Tai, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge*, 417. For the Arabic original see al-Muqaddasi, *Kitāb Aḥsan*, 474.
4 Fatimi, "First Muslim Invasions of the NW Frontier"; Gabrieli, "Muhammad ibn Qasim ath-Thaqafa"; Pathan, *Arab Kingdom of al-Mansurah*, 33–64; Wink, *Al-Hind*, 201–9.
5 Al-Kufi, *Fatḥnāma-yi Sind*; Friedmann, "The Origins and Significance of the Chach Nāma."
6 The amirs of neighboring Multan claimed descent from the tribe of Usama ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghalib a branch of the Quraysh, the Prophet's tribe: al-Mas'udi, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol. 1, 207, 376–7; Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadim*, vol. 1, 11.
7 For a full discussion see Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 26–37.
8 While I am using Common Era dates throughout, the dates that sometimes follow after a solidus are *hijri* dates given according to the Islamic lunar calendar, which is used in Arabic and Persian inscriptions and texts.
9 Ramhurmuzi, *Kitāb ʿajā'ib al-Hind*; Sauvaget *Aẖbār aṣ-Ṣīn wa l-Hind*. For a full discussion of the sources see Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman*, 116–32. Among other important works that do not survive are the *Kitāb ʿummāl al hind* (*The Book of the Governors of India*) and the *Kitāb thaghr al-hind* (*The Book of the Indian Frontier*) by the Iraqi writer al-Mada'ini (d. 839 [225]): Friedmann, "The Origins and Significance of the Chach Nāma," 27.
10 Pellat, "Al-Mas'ūdī."
11 The term was coined by Glick, "Science in Medieval Spain," 103.
12 Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 19–20.
13 Gupta *et al.*, "On the Footsteps of Zoroastrian Parsis in India."

14 Bosworth, "The Coming of Islam to Afghanistan," 7; Salomon, "Epigraphic Remains of Indian Traders in Egypt."
15 Horton, "Artisans, Communities, and Commodities," 68–9.
16 Al-Masʿudi, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol. 1, 382; Ramhurmuzi, *Kitāb ʿajāʾib al-Hind*, 142–4; al-Istakhri, *Kitāb masālik waʾl-mamālik*, 173, 176; al-Muqaddasi *Kitāb Aḥsan*, 480; Anon., *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, 66; Kramers and Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, 313; Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 320; Minorsky, *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, 88; Pingree, "Sanskrit Evidence," 175–7; Willis, "An Eighth Century Mihrab in Gwalior"; Maclean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, 71; Chakravarti, "Monarchs, Merchants and a Maṭha," 265–9. For a full discussion of these communities see Lambourn, "India from Aden."
17 Deyell, *Living without Silver*, 46–8; Tye, "Dammas, Daniqs and ʿAbd al-Malik." 7–10; Horton, "Islam, Archaeology, and Swahili Identity," 76, 81, fig. 4.6. The term *drama* is used in a Rashtrakuta inscription of VS 1005/947–8: Burgess, *Epigraphia Indica* 1 168, l. 21.
18 Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 38–44.
19 Goron and Goenka, *Coins of the Indian Sultanates*, xxii. I am extremely grateful to Dr Joe Cribb, Dr Shailendra Bhandare and Dr Stan Goron for sharing their insights on these coins with me.
20 The sole name known is Abuʾl-Luhab al-Munabbih ibn Asad al-Qurayshi, a descendant of Usama ibn Luʿayy ibn Ghalib (for whom see Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadim*, vol. 1, 11), who was ruling in 912 (300) when al-Masʿudi visited Sind: al-Masʿudi, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol. 1, 207, 376–7.
21 Goron and Goenka, *Coins of the Indian Sultanates*, xxvi–xxvii. The coins exist in four variant types. The fine quality of the engraving on both issues has led to suggestions that the coins were intended as fiduciary dirhams. A tanka is a type of coin found in southern Asia during this period.
22 Burgess, *Epigraphia Indica* 1, 167, l. 11; Deyell, *Living without Silver*, 28–9.
23 Lowick, "Fātimid coins of Multan."
24 Anon., *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, 66; Kramers and Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, 318; Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 325; Minorsky, *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, 88.
25 Al-Masʿudi, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol. 1, 207; Kramers and Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, 318; Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 325; al-Muqaddasi, *Kitāb Aḥsan*, 479–80; Collins and al-Tai, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge*, 420–1. Epigraphic and textual evidence suggests that bilingualism and/or polyglossia may in fact have been relatively common phenomena of the South Asian borderlands, including Sind. A foundation text dated 857 (243) from the Tochi valley in Waziristan, one of the passes that led from Afghanistan to the Indus valley that was known for its communities of heterodox Muslims, is inscribed in both Arabic and Sanskrit, attesting to an overlap between the dominant Islamic and Indic linguistic ecumenes of the period: Habibi, "The Oldest Muslim Inscription in Middle Asia."
26 Lugo, "Reflections on Border Theory, Culture, and the Nation," 51, 57; McMaster, "Border Zones," 82; Hay, "Toward a Theory of the Intercultural," 7. See also Abulafia, "Introduction: Seven Types of Ambiguity," 5.
27 Maclean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, 1–21.
28 Lohuizen de Leeuw, "The Pre-Muslim Antiquities of Sind," 51. Other temples stood in the town of Ramiyan or Ramayan near Multan, at the entrance to which stood a

temple containing a gold-inlaid copper idol that was the object of rites of veneration similar to those reported at Multan. Similarly, the town of Biruza or Biruda, an emporium within the amirate of Multan, is said to have possessed a number of Hindu temples: Minorsky, *Sharaf al-Zamān*, 49, 52; Minorsky, *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, 90.

29 Murgotten, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, part 2, 221; Friedmann, "The Temple of Multān," 181; Friedmann, "A Contribution to the Early History of Islam in India," 328–9; Maclean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, 40–9; Wink, *Al-Hind*, 192.

30 Stern, "Heterodox Ismāʿīlism," 11, 14–16; Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 389; Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 42–3.

31 Al-Muqaddasi, *Kitāb Aḥsan*, 483; Collins and al-Tai, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge*, 424.

32 Yaqut, *Kitāb muʿjam al-buldān*, vol. 1, 348; Murgotten, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, part 2, 225; al-Baladhuri, *Kitāb futuḥ al-buldān*, 441; Friedmann, "A Contribution to the Early History of Islam in India," 314–15, 323; Rehman, *The Last Two Dynasties*, 149–50. Similarly, in the exchanges between Byzantium and Baghdad during the ninth and tenth centuries, we encounter particularly mobile individuals who move between languages as easily as they oscillate between religious affinities: Dagron, "Formes et fonctions," 232.

33 Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 73, 76, 82.

34 Anon, "Excavations at Banbhore," 52; Ashfaque, "The Grand Mosque of Banbhore"; Pathan, *Arab Kingdom of al-Mansurah*, 65–79. For an unconvincing attempt to date the mosque to the tenth century see Khan, "The Grand Mosque of Banbhore." For a useful survey of the published material see Patel, "The Mosque in South Asia – Beginnings."

35 Al-Muqaddasi, *Kitāb Aḥsan*, 479; al-Istakhri, *Kitāb masālik wa'l-mamālik*, 173, 176.

36 Cousens, "Brāhmanābād-Manṣūra in Sind," 133–4; Khan, *Al-Mansurah*, 26.

37 Kervran, "Le port multiple des bouches de l'Indus," 46–7, figs. 9–12; Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 45–6. For other early mosques of the Indus delta see Ibrahim and Lashari, "Recent Archaeological Discoveries."

38 Ashfaque, "The Grand Mosque of Banbhore," 193; Shokoohy, *Bhadreśvar*, 39–40.

39 Khan, *Al-Mansurah*, 42–55.

40 Ramhurmuzi, *Kitāb ʿajā'ib al-Hind*, 2–3.

41 Zebrowski, *Gold, Silver and Bronze from Mughal India*, 30–1; Meyer and Northover, "A Newly Acquired Islamic Lion Door Knocker."

42 Al-Istakhri, *Kitāb masālik wa'l-mamālik*, 174; Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 321; Lohuizen de Leeuw, "The Pre-Muslim Antiquities of Sind," 51, pl. XIII; Joshi, "Introduction à l'art Gupta," 53, fig. 16.

43 Cousens, "Excavations at Brāhmanābād-Manṣūra, Sind," pl. XXI; Chandra, "A Study in the Terracotta from Mirpurkhas," 18, figs. 7b, 11a, 11c, 12c, 13a.

44 Bialostocki, "Some Values of Artistic Periphery"; DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art*, 233–4.

45 Al-Sabi', *Rusūm dār al-Khilāfah*, 95; Salem, *Hilāl al-Ṣābi'*, 76–7.

46 Anon., *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, 67; Pathan, *Arab Kingdom of al-Mansurah*, 83–99; Minorsky, *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, 88. With the result he is referred to as *mutaghalliba* (having seized power): Wink, *Al-Hind*, vol. 1, 212. Al-Ya'qubi, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 2, 599; al-Baladhuri, *Kitāb futuḥ al-buldān*, 446; Murgotten, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, part 2, 232. According to al-Yaʿqubi, the governor in question was Harun ibn Muhammad, who is named in a foundation text from Banbhore dated 853–4 (239):

Ghafur, "Fourteen Kufic Inscriptions of Banbhore," 77, 81. Al-Baladhuri erroneously identifies the governor as Imran ibn Musa al-Barmaki, who held the office two decades earlier: Maclean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, 47.

47 Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 322; Kramers and Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, vol. 2, 315.

48 Ghafur, "Fourteen Kufic Inscriptions of Banbhore," 81–4. In 913 (300), al-Muqaddasi reports that the ruler of Mansura was Abu'l-Mundhir 'Umar ibn 'Abd Allah: al-Muqaddasi, *Kitāb Aḥsan*, vol. 1, 377.

49 Grohmann, "The Origin and Early Development of Floriated Kufic," 197, 203.

50 Kalus and Guillot, "Réinterprétation des plus anciennes stèles funéraires islamiques," 18–24, nos. 1 and 2. I am grateful to Elizabeth Lambourn for drawing my attention to the existence of these inscriptions.

51 *Bayn sūq al-'ājiyyīn wa ṣaff al-ṣaffārīn*: al-Istakhri, *Kitāb masālik wa'l-mamālik*, 174; Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 321; al-Muqaddasi, *Kitāb Aḥsan*, 481; Collins and al-Tai, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge*, 422.

52 Barrett, "A Group of Medieval Indian Ivories," 50. See also Cousens, "Excavations at Brāhmanābād-Manṣūra, Sind," 85–6; Chandra, "Ancient Indian Ivories," 49; Khan, *Al-Mansurah*, 86–8, pls. 68–9.

53 Ettinghausen *et al.*, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, 327.

54 Anon., *Arts de l'Islam*, no. 267; Welch, *India: Art and Culture*, no. 72; Alcouffe and Louvre, *Trésor de Saint-Denis*, no. 18; Burjakov, "Zur Bestimmung und Datierung," 70.

55 Czuma, "Ivory Sculpture."

56 Ramhurmuzi, *Kitāb 'ajā'ib al-Hind*, 2–3, 103; Goetz, "Late Gupta Sculpture in Afghanistan," 19; al-Mas'udi, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol. 1, 150; Goetz, *Studies in the History and Art of Kashmir*, 97; Pal, *Indian Sculpture*, 52; Maclean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, 103–4, 113–14, 122–3; Meister, "Temples along the Indus," 43, figs. 4–5. For artistic contacts between Kashmir and Gujarat during the same period see Klimburg-Salter, "The Buddhist Art of Gujarat," 259–60.

57 Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 31; Pinder-Wilson, "Ivory Working in the Umayyad and Abbasid Periods," 19. Although the formula *min 'amala* is unusual by comparison with the simpler and more common *'amal* used by Islamic artisans of the seventh through tenth centuries, the cognate formula *min ṣan'at* is recorded as early as 686–6 (67) or 688–9 (69) on a bronze ewer from Basra: Mayer, *Islamic Metalworkers and Their Works*, 22, 44, 48, 65, 85.

58 Al-Mas'udi, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 6: 140; Caskel, "Bāhila." Among these were Qutayba ibn Muslim al-Bahili who conquered Samarkand in the first decades of the eighth century.

59 Zambaur, *Manuel de généalogie*, table 259; al-Baladhuri, *Kitāb futuḥ al-buldān*, 442; al-Ya'qubi, *Tā'rikh*, vol. 2, 389; Murgotten, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, part 2, 225, 232; Hinds, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, 194.

60 Kautilya, *The Arthashastra*, 547, 559; Wink, "Sovereignty and Universal Dominion in South Asia," 268–9. To some extent this identification depends on whether the mahout leaning from the head of the elephant is in the process of assisting the figure curled within the elephant's trunk or attacking him. The mutual enmity of the Arabs and Rashtrakutas towards the Gurjara-Pratihara rajas is congruent with the ideals of the *Arthashastra*, which identifies an immediate neighbor as an enemy and a neighbor's neighbor as a potential ally: Kautilya, *The Arthashastra*, 555, 6.2.15.

61 Ibn al-Faqih, *Kitāb al-buldān*, 429; Massé, *Abrégé du livre des pays*, 262.
62 Wink, *Al-Hind*, 104.
63 Kramers and Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, 315; Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 322; al-Istakhri, *Kitāb masālik wa'l-mamālik*, 175.
64 Al-Biruni, *Kitāb fī taḥqīq-i-ma li'l-Hind*, 145; Kramers and Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, 314; Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 321; Al-Istakhri, *Kitāb masālik wa'l-mamālik*, 173; Sachau, *Al-Beruni's India*, vol. 1, 180.
65 Chandra, "Indian Costumes and Textiles," 29–30. According to the geographers, the adoption of Iraqi and Persian modes of dress was the norm in the mercantile emporia of Sind and Makran, which lay to the west, en route to Iran: Kramers and Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, 318; Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 325.
66 Stein, *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī* vol. 1, 339, Book 7: 922.
67 Kramers and Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, 315; Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 315; al-Istakhri, *Kitāb masālik wa'l-mamālik*, 175.
68 Al-Idrisi, *Waṣf al-Hind*, 59; Ahmad, *India and the Neighbouring Territories*, 59. Although writing in the twelfth century, al-Idrisi refers to the Chalukyas as feudatories of the Rashtrakutas, indicating that his information refers to ninth- or tenth-century conditions, when the ritualized appearances of the Multani amirs and their Solanki neighbors were evidently marked by striking similarities.
69 *Man tashabbaha bi-qawm fahuwa minhum*: Noth, "Problems of Differentiation," 119. For a full discussion see Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 61–3.
70 Gilmartin and Lawrence, "Introduction," 6.
71 Eder, "Ist der 'Elefanten-König'"; Eder, "Bagdad-Bergkristall-Benediktinerzum," 53, no. 1; Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 55–6, pl. 29. The ivory was acquired in 1967 from an Indian or Pakistani dealer. I am grateful to Dr Rafael Gadebusch and Dr Corinna Wessels-Mevissen for supplying information about it. See also the fragmentary figure of a rider in the Hermitage Museum about 4.5 centimeters high, and thus comparable in scale to the rider on the Paris elephant with which it shares a common pose and dress: Burjakov, "Zur Bestimmung und Datierung," 68, fig. 15.
72 Rowan, "Reconsideration"; Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 56, pls. 30–1.
73 Chandra, "Ancient Indian Ivories," 51.
74 Pinder-Wilson, "Ivory Working in the Umayyad and Abbasid Periods," 19.
75 Zebrowski, *Gold, Silver and Bronze from Mughal India*, 31. Similarly, the tin content of the heads and the plates to which they are attached differs, leading to the suggestion "that at least two hands, technologies and two traditions – local and foreign – were involved in their manufacture": Khan, *Al-Mansurah*, 51.
76 For an excellent treatment of an analogous problem in a very different context see Elsner, "Archaeologies and Agendas."
77 Wasserstein, "Coins as Agents of Cultural Definition in Islam," 318.
78 Friedmann, "The Temple of Multān," 178; Friedmann, "Multān. 1. History." In addition, when threatened by "Hindu" armies from the east or north, the amirs wielded the threat of destruction to the revered icon of Surya until the aggressor receded.
79 Gallois, "Andalusi Cosmopolitanism in World History."
80 For a critical discussion of Antonio Gramsci's idea of imperial cosmopolitanism see Brennan "Cosmopolitanism and Internationalism," 79–80; Brennan, "Cosmo-Theory," 667–8.

81 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 10–11.
82 Pollock *et al.*, "Cosmopolitanism," 12. The volume for which this essay serves as an introduction is unusual in considering contemporary cosmopolitanisms in relation to those of premodernity. On the question of premodern globalization see Armitage, "Is there a Pre-History of Globalization?"
83 Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 84; Viswanathan, "Beyond Orientalism."
84 Pollock, "The Sanskrit Cosmopolis," 246.
85 Anon., "Excavations at Banbhore," 53, pls. XVIB, XVIIA; Ashfaque, "The Grand Mosque of Banbhore," 198–9. Recent research has suggested that the decline and disappearance of the Buddhist communities of Sind was due to voluntary conversion to Islam by a community that had traditionally been involved in long-distance trade seeking to maximize the commercial opportunities afforded by incorporation into the Abbasid caliphate: Maclean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, 155. In light of this research, it is worth noting that elsewhere in the Islamic world, the trampling of religious icons was sometimes associated with the testing of converts to Islam for signs of apostasy.
86 Khan, "Bhambore," 23.
87 Lohuizen de Leeuw, "The Pre-Muslim Antiquities of Sind," 51–4.
88 Al-Muqaddasi, *Kitāb Aḥsan*, 485; Hamdani, "The Fāṭimid–ʿAbbāsid Conflict in India"; Collins and al-Tai, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge*, 425.
89 Sachau, *Al-Beruni's India*, vol. 1, 117.
90 Lowick, "Fātimid Coins of Multan." Minting of the characteristic *dammas* introduced by the amirs of Sind continued for a few decades, but they are not found later than the reign of the Ghaznavid sultan Ibrahim (1055–99): Deyell, *Living without Silver*, 73.
91 Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 389.
92 Stern, "Ismaili Propaganda," 301–2; Stern, "Heterodox Ismaʿilism," 23–4. See also Sachau, *Al-Beruni's India*, vol. 1, 116; Said, *Al-Beruni's Book on Mineralogy*, 42.
93 Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultān Maḥmūd*, 96–9.
94 Sachau, *Al-Beruni's India*, vol. 1, 117.

References

Abulafia, D. "Introduction: Seven Types of Ambiguity *c.* 1100–*c.* 1500." In *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices*, edited by D. Abulafia and N. Berend, 1–34. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.

Ahmad, S. M. *India and the Neighbouring Territories in the* Kitāb Nuzhat al-Mushtāq fi'khtirāq al-'Afāq *of al-Sharīf al-Idrīsī.* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960.

Alcouffe, Daniel, and the Musée du Louvre. *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis* [*The Treasure of Saint Denis*]. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1991.

Anon. *Arts de l'Islam dès origines à 1700 dans les collections publiques françaises* [*The Arts of Islam from Its Beginnings to 1700 in French Public Collections*]. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1971.

Anon. "Excavations at Banbhore." *Pakistan Archaeology* 1 (1964): 49–55.

Anon. *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* [*The Limits of the World*]. Edited by Manuchihr Sutudeh. Tehran: Intisarat-i Danishgah-i Tehran, 1962.

Armitage, D. "Is There a Pre-History of Globalization?" In *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective*, edited by D. Cohen and M. O'Connor, 165–76. New York and London: Routledge, 2004.

Ashfaque, S. M. "The Grand Mosque of Banbhore." *Pakistan Archaeology* 6 (1969): 182–209.

Awasthi, A. B. L. "*Garuḍa Purāṇa* on the Turkish Conquest of India." *Journal of the Uttar Pradesh Historical Society* 10 nos. 1–2 (1962): 139–42.

al-Baladhuri, Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Jabir. *Kitāb futuḥ al-buldān* [*Book of the Conquests of the Lands*]. Edited by M. J. de Goeje. Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum vol. 5. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968 [1866].

Barrett, D. "A Group of Medieval Indian Ivories." *Oriental Art*, new series 1–2 (1955): 47–51.

Bhandarkar, D. R. "Indian Studies No. 1: Slow Progress of Islam Power in Ancient India." *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 10 (1930): 25–44.

Bialostocki, J. "Some Values of Artistic Periphery." In *World Art: Themes of Unity in Diversity*, vol. 1, edited by Irving Lavin, 49–54. University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989.

al-Biruni, Abu Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad. *Kitāb fī tahqīq-i-ma li'l-Hind* [*Book of Inquiry into India*]. Hyderabad: Osmania Oriental Publications Bureau, 1958.

Bosworth, C. E. "The Coming of Islam to Afghanistan." In *Islam in Asia*, vol. 1: *South Asia*, edited by Yohanan Friedmann, 1–22. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984.

Brennan, T. "Cosmopolitanism and Internationalism." *New Left Review* 7 (2001): 75–84.

Brennan, T. "Cosmo-Theory." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100 no. 3 (2001): 659–91.

Burgess, J., ed. *Epigraphia Indica*. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1892.

Burjakov, J. F. "Zur Bestimmung und Datierung einiger der ältesten Schachfiguren [On the Identification and Dating of One of the Earliest Chess Pieces]." *Antike Welt* 25 (1994): 62–71.

Caskel, W. "Bāhila." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn., vol. 1 (1960): 920–1.

Chakravarti, R. "Monarchs, Merchants and a Maṭha in Northern Konkan (*c.* AD 900–1053)." In *Trade in Early India*, edited by Ranabir Chakravarti, 257–81. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Chandra, M. "Ancient Indian Ivories." *Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India* 6 (1957–9): 4–63.

Chandra, M. "Indian Costumes and Textiles from the Eighth to the Twelfth Century." *Journal of Indian Textile History* 5 (1960): 1–41.

Chandra, M. "A Study in the Terracotta from Mirpurkhas." *Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India* 7 (1959–62): 1–22.

Collins, B. A., and M. H. Al-Muqaddasi al-Tai, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*. Reading: Garnett Publishing, 1994.

Cousens, H. "Brāhmanābād-Manṣūra in Sind." *Archaeological Survey of India Annual Reports* 4 (1903–4): 132–44.

Cousens, H. "Excavations at Brāhmanābād-Manṣūra, Sind." *Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report* (1908–9): 79–87.

Czuma, S. "Ivory Sculpture." In *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*, edited by P. Pal, 57–76. Bombay: Marg Publications, 1989.

DaCosta Kaufmann, T. *Toward a Geography of Art*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Dagron, G. "Formes et fonctions du pluralisme linguistique à Byzance (IXe–XIIe siècles) [Forms and Functions of Linguistic Pluralism in Byzantium (Ninth–Twelfth Centuries)]." *Travaux et Memoires* 12 (1994): 219–40.

Deyell, J. S. *Living without Silver, the Monetary History of Early Medieval North India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Dodge, B. *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-century Survey of Muslim Culture*, 2 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970.

Eder, M. A. J. *Bagdad-Bergkristall-Benediktinerzum. Zum Ex-oriente des Schachspiels.* [*Bagdhad-Rock Crystal-for the Benedictines. Chess from the East*]. Aachen: Förderkreis Schach-Geschichtsforschung e.V und Domkapitel Aachen, 2003.

Eder, M. A. J. "Ist der 'Elefanten-König' doch (ke)ein 'Schach-König'? [Is the 'Elephant King' Really a 'Chess King'?]" *Schach-Journal* 1 (1994): 45–51.

Elsner, J. "Archaeologies and Agendas: Reflections on Late Ancient Jewish Art and Early Christian Art." *Journal of Roman Studies* 93 (2003): 114–28.

Ettinghausen, R., O. Grabar, and M. Jenkins-Madina. *Islamic Art and Architecture 650–1250*. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2001.

Fatimi, S. Q. "First Muslim Invasions of the NW Frontier of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent 44 AH 664–5 AD." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan* 8 (1963): 37–45.

Flood, F. B. *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu–Muslim" Encounter*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Friedmann, Y. "A Contribution to the Early History of Islam in India." In *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, edited by M. Rosen-Ayalon, 309–33. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1977.

Friedmann, Y. "Multān. 1. History." In *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, edited by P. J. Bearman, vol. 7, 548–9. Leiden: Brill, 1993.

Friedmann, Y. "The Origins and Significance of the Chach Nāma." In *Islam in Asia*, vol. 1: *South Asia*, edited by Y. Friedmann, 23–37. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984.

Friedmann, Y. "The Temple of Multān: A Note on Early Muslim Attitudes to Idolatry." *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972): 176–82.

Gabrieli, F. "Muḥammad ibn Qāsim ath-Thaqafī and the Arab Conquest of Sind." *East and West* new series 15 (1964–5): 281–95.

Gallois, W. "Andalusi Cosmopolitanism in World History." In *Cultural Contacts in Building a Universal Civilisation: Islamic Contributions*, edited by Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu, 59–109. Istanbul: IRCICA, 2005.

Ghafur, M. A. "Fourteen Kufic Inscriptions of Banbhore, the Site of Daybul." *Pakistan Archaeology* 3 (1966): 65–90.

Gilmartin, D., and B. B. Lawrence "Introduction." In *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identity in Islamicate South Asia*, edited by D. Gilmartin and B. B. Lawrence, 1–20. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000.

Glick, T. F. "Science in Medieval Spain: The Jewish Contribution in the Context of *Convivencia*." In *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims and Christianity in Medieval Spain*, edited by V. B. Mann, T. F. Glick, and J. D. Dodds, 83–111. New York: George Braziller, 1992.

Goetz, H. "Late Gupta Sculpture in Afghānistan: The 'Scorretti Marble' and Cognate Sculptures." *Arts Asiatiques* 4 (1957): 13–19.

Goetz, H. *Studies in the History and Art of Kashmir and the Indian Himalayas*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1969.

Goron, S., and J. P. Goenka. *Coins of the Indian Sultanates Covering the Area of Present-day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2001.

Grohmann, A. "The Origin and Early Development of Floriated Kufic." *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 183–213.

Gupta, S. P., K. F. Dalal, A. Dandekar, R. P. Nanji, and S. Bomble. "On the Footsteps of Zoroastrian Parsis in India: Excavations at Sanjan on the West Coast, 2003." *Journal of Indian Ocean Archaeology* 1 (2004): 93–106.

Habibi, A. H. "The Oldest Muslim Inscription in Middle Asia." *Museums Journal* 6 nos. 1–2 (1954): 70–5.

Halm, H. *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996.

Hamdani, A. "The Fāṭimid–ʿAbbāsid Conflict in India." *Islamic Culture* 41 (1967): 186–91.

Hay, J. "Toward a Theory of the Intercultural." *Res* 35 (1999): 5–9.

Hinds, M. *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 23: *The Zenith of the Marwānid House*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.

Horton, M. C. "Artisans, Communities, and Commodities: Medieval Exchanges Between Northwestern India and East Africa." *Ars Orientalis* 34 (2004): 63–80.

Horton, M. C. "Islam, Archaeology, and Swahili Identity." In *Changing Social Identity with the Spread of Islam: Archaeological Perspectives*, edited by D. Whitcomb, 67–88. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Ibn al-Faqih, Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Hamadhani. *Kitāb al-buldān* [*Book of Lands*]. Edited by M. J. de Goeje. Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, vol. 5. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967.

Ibn Hawqal, Abu'l-Qasim. *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* [*The Image of the Earth*]. Edited by J. H. Kramers. Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, vol. 3. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967 [1873].

Ibrahim, A., and K. Lashari. "Recent Archaeological Discoveries in the Lower Deltaic Area of Indus." *Journal of Pakistan Archaeologist's Forum* 2 nos. 1–2 (1993): 1–44.

al-Idrisi, Abu ʿAbd Allah Muhammad. *Wasf al-Hind* [*India and Its Neighboring Territories*]. Edited by S. M. Ahmad. Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University, 1954.

al-Istakhri, Abu Ishaq al-Farisi. *Kitāb masālik wa'l-mamālik*. Edited by M. J. de Goeje. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967 [1870].

Joshi, M. C. "Introduction à l'art Gupta [Introduction to Gupta Art]." In *L'Age d'or de l'Inde classique, l'empire des Guptas* [*The Golden Age of Classical India: The Gupta Empire*], 29–57. Paris: Éditions de la réunion des musées nationaux, 2007.

Kafadar, C. *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Kalus, L., and C. Guillot. "Réinterprétation des plus anciennes stèles funéraires islamiques nousantariennes. III: Sri Lanka [A Reinterpretation of the Oldest Islamic Funeral Steles in the Indonesian Region]." *Archipel* 72 (2006): 15–68.

Kautilya. *The Arthashastra*. Translated by L. N. Rangarajan. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1992.

Kervran, M. "Le port multiple des bouches de l'Indus [The Multiple Ports of the Mouth of the Indus]: Barbariké, Dêb, Daybul, Lâhorî Bandar, Diul Sinde." *Res Orientale* 8 (1996): 45–92.

Khan, A. N. *Al-Mansurah: A Forgotten Arab Metropolis in Pakistan*. Karachi: Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan, 1990.

Khan, A. N. "Bhambore, a Probable Site of Debul." *Islamic Review* 54 (1996): 19–23.

Khan, M. I. "The Grand Mosque of Banbhore: A Reappraisal." *Ancient Pakistan* 15 (2002): 1–7.

Klimburg-Salter, D. E. "The Buddhist Art of Gujarat: on Tāranātha's Old Western Indian Style." *Silk Road Archaeology* 6 (1999–2000): 253–67.

Kramers, J. H., and G. Wiet. *Configuration de la terre (Kitāb ṣurat al-arḍ)* [*Book of the Description of the Earth*], vol. 2. Paris: Éditions G. P. Maisonneuve and Larose, 1964.

al-Kufi, 'Ali ibn Hamid ibn Abi Bakr. *Fatḥnāma-yi Sind (Chachnāma)* [*History of Sind*]. Edited by N. A. Baloch. Islamabad: Institute of Islamic History, Culture and Civilization, Islamabad University, 1983.

Kühnel, E. *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen VIII.–XIII. Jahrhundert* [*The Islamic Ivories, Eighth–Thirteenth Centuries*]. Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1971.

Lambourn, E. "India from Aden: Khutba and Muslim Urban Networks in Late Thirteenth-Century India." In *Secondary Cities and Urban Networking in the Indian Ocean Realm, c. 1400–1800*, edited by Kenneth R. Hall, 55–98. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008.

Latour, B. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Translated by Catherine Parker. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Lohuizen de Leeuw, J. E. van. "The Pre-Muslim Antiquities of Sind." In *Sind through the Centuries, Proceedings of an International Seminar held in Karachi in Spring 1975 by the Department of Culture, Government of Sind*, edited by H. Khuhro, 43–58. Karachi. Oxford University Press, 1981.

Lowick, N. W. "Fātimid Coins of Multan." In *Islamic Coins and Trade in the Medieval World*, edited by Joe Cribb, 62–9. Aldershot: Variorum, 1990.

Lugo, A. "Reflections on Border Theory, Culture, and the Nation." In *Border Theory: The Limits of Cultural Politics*, edited by S. Michaelsen and D. E. Johnson, 43–67. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Maclean, D. N. *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989.

Massé, H. *Abrégé du livre des pays* [*Summary of the Book of the Country*]. Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1973.

al-Mas'udi, Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali. *Murūj al-dhahab wa mada'ādin al-jawhar* [*Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*]. 9 vols, edited and translated by C. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille. Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1861–77.

Mayer, L. A. *Islamic Metalworkers and Their Works*. Geneva: A. Kundig, 1959.

McMaster, G. R. "Border Zones: The 'Injun-uity' of Aesthetic Tricks." *Cultural Studies* 9 no. 1 (1995): 74–90.

Meister, M. W. "Temples along the Indus." *Expedition* 38 no. 3 (1996): 41–54.

Meyer, J., and P. Northover. "A Newly Acquired Islamic Lion Door Knocker in the David Collection." *Journal of the David Collection* 1 (2003): 48–71.

Minorsky, V. *Ḥudūd al-'Ālam, "The Regions of the World". A Persian Geography 372 AH–982 AD*. Karachi: Indus Publications, 1980 [1937].

Minorsky, V. *Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir Marvazī on China, the Turks and India*. London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1942.

Miquel, A. *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusq'au milieu du 11e siècle* [*The Human Geography of the Islamic World to the Eleventh Century*]. Paris and The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1967.

al-Muqaddasi, Muhammad ibn Ahmad. *Kitāb Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fī ma'rīfat al-aqālīm* [*The Best System for the Knowledge of the Regions*]. Edited by M. J. de Goeje. Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, vol. 3. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967.

Murgotten, F. C. *The Origins of the Islamic State*, part 2. New York: AMS Press, 1969 [1924].

Nazim, M. *The Life and Times of Sultān Maḥmūd of Ghazna*. New Delhi: Munshriam Manoharlal, 1971 [1931].

Noth, A. "Problems of Differentiation Between Muslims and Non-Muslims: Re-reading the 'Ordinances of 'Umar' (*al-Shurūṭ al-'Umariyya*)." In *Muslims and Others in Early Islamic Society*, edited by R. Hoyland, 103–124. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.

Pal, P. *Indian Sculpture: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*, vol. 2: *700–1800*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1988.

Patel, A. "The Mosque in South Asia – Beginnings." In *Piety and Politics in the Early Indian Mosque*, edited by Finbarr B. Flood, 3–26. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Pathan, M. H. *Arab Kingdom of al-Mansurah in Sind*. Hyderabad: Institute of Sindhology, 1974.

Pellat, C. "Al-Mas'ūdī." In *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 6: 784–9. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

Pinder-Wilson, R. "Ivory Working in the Umayyad and Abbasid Periods." *Journal of the David Collection* 2 no. 1 (2005): 13–23.

Pingree, D. "Sanskrit Evidence for the Presence of Arabs, Jews, and Persians in Western India: ca. 700–1300." *Journal of the Oriental Institute, M. S. University of Baroda* 31 no. 1 (1981): 172–82.

Pollock, S. "The Sanskrit Cosmopolis, 300–1300: Transculturation, Vernacularization, and the Question of Ideology." In *Ideology and Status of Sanskrit, Contributions to the History of the Sanskrit Language*, edited by Jan E. M. Houben, 197–247. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2006.

Pollock, S., H. K. Bhabha, C. A. Breckenridge and D. Chakrabarty. "Cosmopolitanism." In *Cosmopolitanism*, edited by C. A. Breckenridge, S. Pollock, H. K. Bhabha, D. Chakrabarty, 1–14. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2002.

Ramhurmuzi, Buzurg ibn Shahriyar. *Kitāb 'ajā'ib al-Hind (Livre des merveilles de l'Inde)* [*Book of the Marvels of India*]. Edited by P. A. van der Lith and L. Marcel Devic. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1883–6.

Rehman, A. *The Last Two Dynasties of the Śāhis (an Analysis of their History, Archaeology, Coinage and Paleography)*. Islamabad: Quaid-i Azam University, Center for the Study of the Civilizations of Central Asia, 1979.

Richards, J. F. "The Islamic Frontier in the East: Expansion into South Asia." *South Asia* 4 (1974): 91–109.

Rowan, D. P. "Reconsideration of an Unusual Ivory Diptych." *Artibus Asiae* 46 no. 4 (1985): 251–304.

al-Sabi', Hilal. *Rusūm dār al-Khilāfah* [*The Rules and Regulations of the Ābbāsid Court*]. Edited by Mikha'il 'Awad. Baghdad: Matba'a al-'Ani, 1964.

Sachau, E. C. *Al-Beruni's India*, 2 vols. Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1989 [1910].

Said, H. M. *Al-Beruni's Book on Mineralogy: The Book Most Comprehensive in Knowledge on Precious Stones*. Islamabad: Pakistan Hijra Council, 1989.

Salem, E. A. *Hilāl al-Ṣābi', Rusūm dār al-Khilāfah (The Rules and Regulations of the 'Abbāsid Court)*. Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1977.

Salomon, R. "Epigraphic Remains of Indian Traders in Egypt." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111 no. 4 (1991): 731–6.

Sauvaget, J. *Akhbār aṣ-Ṣīn wa l-Hind. Relation de la Chine et de l'Inde* [*Relations between China and India*]. Paris: Société d'édition "les belles letters," 1948.

Shokoohy, M. *Bhadreśvar, the Oldest Islamic Monuments in India*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988.

Srivastava, A. L. "A Survey of India's Resistance to Medieval Invaders from the North-West – Causes of Eventual Hindu Defeat." In *Itihāsa-Chayanikā (Dr. Sampurnanand Felicitation Volume)*, edited by C. D. Chatterjee, 21–40. Lucknow: The UP Historical Society, 1965.

Stein, M. A. *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr*, 3 vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1989 [1900].

Stern, S. M. "Heterodox Ismāʿīlism at the Time of al-Mu'izz." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 17 no. 1 (1955): 10–33.

Stern, S. M. "Ismaili Propaganda and Fatimid Rule in Sind." *Islamic Culture* 23 (1949): 298–307.

Tye, R. "Dammas, Daniqs and ʿAbd al-Malik." *Oriental Numismatic Society Newsletter* 148 (Spring 1996): 6–10.

Viswanathan, G. "Beyond Orientalism: Syncretism and the Politics of Knowledge." *Stanford Humanities Review* 5 no. 1 (1996): 19–34.

Wasserstein, D. "Coins as Agents of Cultural Definition in Islam." *Poetics Today* 14 no. 2 (1993): 303–22.

Welch, S. C. *India: Art and Culture, 1300–1900*. New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1985.

Willis, M. D. "An Eighth Century Miḥrāb in Gwalior." *Artibus Asia* 46 no. 3 (1985): 227–46.

Wink, A. *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, vol. 1: *Early Medieval India and the Expansion of Islam 7th–11th Centuries*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Wink, A. "Sovereignty and Universal Dominion in South Asia." *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 21 no. 3 (1984): 265–02.

al-Yaʿqubi, Ahmad ibn Abi Yaʿqub. *Ta'rīkh* [*History*]. Edited by T. Houtsma, 2 vols. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969 [1883].

Yaqut, ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Hamawi. *Kitāb muʿjam al-buldān* [*Book of the Lands*]. Edited by Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, 6 vols. Leipzig: F. A. Brochaus, 1866.

Zambaur, E. de. *Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de l'Islam* [*Manual of Genealogy and Chronology for the History of Islam*]. Hanover: Librairie Orientalisten Heinz Lafaire, 1927.

Zebrowski, M. *Gold, Silver and Bronze from Mughal India*. London: Alexandria Press, 1997.

Further Reading

Fredunbeg, M. K. *The Chachnamah: An Ancient History of Sind*. Karachi: Vanguard Books Ltd., 1985 [1900].

Friedmann, Y. "The Beginnings of Islamic Learning in Sind: A Reconsideration." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 37 (1974): 659–64.

16

In the Absence of the Buddha: "Aniconism" and the Contentions of Buddhist Art History

Ashley Thompson

Theory, Practice, and Other Buddhological Paradoxes

Recent years have seen a significant methodological reappraisal in and of Buddhist studies.[1] Under the more or less explicit influence of postcolonial perspectives in much of the humanities, many aspects of classical scholarly paradigms in the study of Buddhism have been challenged or reassessed. In the first section of this essay, I will discuss ongoing debates with regard to one crucial concern: understandings of relations between Buddhist doctrine and Buddhist practice. In classical Buddhist studies, the former has almost invariably been privileged over the latter. Buddhist practice, which is often seen to diverge from the strict application of doctrinal precepts, for example in the veneration of relics or consecration of religious icons, has frequently been disregarded as testimony to the relative decadence of the religion in its institutional realization within society. Rather than seeing the complex relations between Buddhist theory and practice as constituting a dynamic cultural organism, Buddhist studies scholars long assumed that Buddhist practitioners, lacking a "proper" understanding of the religion (i.e. the doctrine), perverted its true nature or contaminated it with extraneous elements. The classical paradigm was integral to a dramatic historical narrative by which colonial powers identified with ancient "lost" civilizations in exotic, far-flung lands, while condescending to (and exploiting) their "uncivilized" current inhabitants.

The artifactual remains (architectural, archaeological, iconographic, textual, or linguistic) of these manifestly great but long-extinct civilizations, ignored or misunderstood by the contemporary local populations, were to be unearthed and decoded by western scholars. In short, they were to be appropriated by the scholarly arm of the colonial enterprise, generally operating in parallel with its diplomatic, martial, and mercantile arms. In intellectual terms, this political and historiographical narrative translated into the explicit valuing of text (doctrine, theoretical expositions of fundamental precepts) over practice (whether ancient or contemporary).

Postcolonial perspectives in Buddhist studies have tended to reverse this hierarchy: practice is often given methodological and epistemological priority over texts and doctrine. A central aspect of this new approach has consisted in a range of attempts to give voice to politically decolonized peoples and, in so doing, to reveal and generate forms of knowledge perceived as indigenous. This ongoing decolonization process is two-fold, for the colonial hierarchy is critiqued precisely for its reiteration of *indigenous* hierarchies in which elite textual traditions have been read to effectively silence popular expression in the historical record. Within a certain Buddhism (and it is important to remember that there are many Buddhisms), the Buddhist textual canon is understood to speak for all Buddhists. While efforts to take actual Buddhists and their practices seriously in academic terms within Buddhist studies can still elicit scholarly circumspection amongst more traditional Buddhologists, scholars influenced by the postcolonial outlook are more likely to see Buddhist texts as bearing testimony to the elaboration of a philosophical ideal, and/or in their *relation* to practice, than as bearing unproblematic access to ancient historical fact.[2]

It can appear ironic that the disdain once reserved for "corrupt" practice is now at times directed toward textual work, but this situation points to the fact that, if the value judgments associated with the theory/practice opposition have been to a large extent inverted, the opposition itself is in one way or another generally maintained. Until the tides turn, at least, art historians able to make the silenced – whether sculptors or worshippers, or even in some particularly inspired works, the sculptures themselves – heard can bask in a newfound limelight.

Although I believe that this description of the historically overdetermined transformations in Buddhist studies is in a fundamental way unassailable, it must be said that, like any macrohistorical narrative, it involves a gross oversimplification of what is necessarily a complex situation. Colonial discourse, like its postcolonial successor, was subject to internal variation and significant evolution. There have been great classical scholars who were acutely aware of the critical importance and inherent value of the empirical realities of everyday practice, and postcolonial scholars committed to careful, open-ended analyses of textual sources and theoretical debates. However, I would argue that a new paradigm in Buddhist studies, beyond the "colonial" lens and its "postcolonial" correctives, a paradigm of research free to move among many often apparently heterogeneous sources and modes of study, is on our horizon.

The theory/practice opposition, which has long structured Buddhist studies, is inseparable from what is now frequently characterized as a "tension" between impermanence and permanence. This is how Bryan Cuevas and Jacqueline Stone characterize the state of affairs in their introduction to *The Buddhist Dead*:

> We have already noted the pervasive tension between Buddhist doctrinal teachings of transience and non-attachment and the emotional adherence to stability and permanence found in multiple aspects of Buddhist funerary practices and attitudes toward the deceased . . . This raises some fascinating problems, especially for those interested in the social and historical dimensions of Buddhist attitudes toward death and the dead or in how doctrine is appropriated in social practice.[3]

Doctrine is now "appropriated" rather than corrupted. The term "tension," which frequently makes an appearance at crucial moments in a range of contemporary scholarship in the humanities, often responds to an imperative to redress imbalance. The postcolonial situation might be said to have at once confirmed and been informed by the Hegelian dialectic, imbuing this dominant interpretive paradigm with new emphasis and urgency. "Tension" is something produced between two *different* but *equal* terms. In the face of the historical precedent, however, this equality can only be approached by giving a bit of extra weight to the historically underprivileged practice. This necessary postcolonial methodological move could be seen as a kind of scholarly affirmative action. It is interesting to note that affirmative action is "itself" caught in an often highly charged debate about the relations between theory and practice: in theory, the principle of equality should be enough to eliminate discrimination, but in practice, the principle can always serve as an alibi for maintaining the status quo. However, the current embrace of practice in Buddhist studies is at times only the most visible aspect of a deeper concern for the dynamic between the opposing terms of theory and practice (and between their concomitant terms of impermanence and permanence) as a principle at the heart of Buddhism "itself."

To give a rapid introduction to the stakes involved in the "postcolonial" re-evaluation of more traditional approaches to Buddhist studies, I will look briefly at the work of Gregory Schopen on early Indian Buddhism. Schopen, one of the most brilliant contemporary scholars in the field, has a noted penchant for highlighting the materiality of the text. In some of the more radical formulations of insights that have inspired a generation of scholars, he shows Buddhist texts to function within a broad category of practice, with semantic content relegated to secondary status if not effectively evacuated.[4]

Schopen's iconoclastic work is founded on the repeated demonstration of a radical distinction between the archaeological record (including epigraphy), which allows "the most direct access to . . . religion as it was lived and practiced by all social classes" and canonical, clerical or literary texts produced, transmitted, and utilized by a small Buddhist elite.[5] Time after time he makes a mockery of the way in which scholars have long chosen to exploit the material records of "what

a small, atypical part of the Buddhist community wanted that community to believe or practice," and in so doing, to ignore the other voluminous body of available data which "records or reflects at least part of what Buddhists – both lay people and monks – actually practiced or believed."[6] At the same time it must be said that, in a certain sense, all of Schopen's work undermines this very foundation. For epigraphy, i.e. *texts* written in stone, is a component of the archaeological record, and the one component decidedly privileged by Schopen. These are texts that find themselves on the wrong side of the text/practice divide. Schopen regularly acknowledges this ambiguity, but in order to underscore the divide itself. He suggests variously nuanced ways of conceiving difference between literary and epigraphical texts by situating the epigraphical on the side of archaeology, and the archaeological record in opposition to the textual record.

In the following comment, Schopen appeals to a "fact" which appears to me to be less than simple in an argument which ultimately relies on an unstable distinction between what was "actually practiced" and the representation thereof: "inscriptions are, of course, written sources, but they are most easily and clearly distinguishable from literary sources by the simple fact that they were not meant to be circulated."[7] The question of circulation is a fraught one. While stone texts were not circulated like manuscript ones, people certainly circulated to see them, if not necessarily to "read" them according to the modern secular understanding of reading. Also problematic for Schopen's distinction here is that he repeatedly appeals elsewhere to the limited circulation of Buddhist *literary* texts written by and for "small, literate, almost exclusively male and certainly atypical professionalized subgroups" as damning evidence of the irrationality of modern Euro-American academic privileging of the texts in question.[8]

One of Schopen's more stunning case studies lays bare this telling trajectory of the circulation argument in his work. Schopen traces the effects of canonical texts circulating within ritual practices of pilgrimage and recitation, as relayed to us through the epigraphic record, by relating an account of third-century BCE Mauryan Emperor Ashoka's epigraphic citations of the *Mahaparinirvana-sutra* (*Sutra of the Great Extinction*).[9] The inscription in question records Ashoka's pilgrimage to a site designated for pilgrimage by the Buddha in the sutra. Ashoka is cited in the epigraphic text as he reiterates the very words the Buddha, in the sutra, prescribed for on-site iteration: "Here the Blessed One was born."

Schopen means the Ashokan account to model more judicious ways of mining canonical texts for historical data, judging such texts "significant only if they [can] be shown to be related to what religious people actually did."[10] This approach has a certain affinity with new historicism, and it constitutes an extremely valuable way of thinking about and using these texts. Yet there is a reactive ardor in Schopen's corrective crusade that seems to have eyes only for the most rigid categorical borders (here between text and practice) in his materials. I would argue that although the conditions and traditions of composition for epigraphic texts no doubt differed greatly, as a general rule, from those of literary/canonical texts, and although this difference is of real importance, inscriptions must be

seen to share some of the literary or textual characteristics widely attributed to the sutras. The above example, in which Schopen has in fact isolated a case of direct citation of a sutra in an inscription, is only a particularly striking instance of such overlaps. I would argue furthermore that it is impossible to maintain in all rigor the strict distinction Schopen appeals to between on the one hand archaeological and epigraphic sources, considered to offer a direct window into ancient practice, and literary/canonical texts on the other, understood as the product of an unrepresentative minority and all the more unreliable in their testimony to some ancient reality in that they have been filtered, so to speak, through generations of normative censorship by this same minority. Archaeological and epigraphic materials are framed and mediated differently than literary texts, no doubt, but they offer no direct, unproblematic access to the past. One can only agree, for instance, that the Buddhist epigraphic text offers a certain access to a certain practice, but I see this to derive not strictly from a privileged epigraphic relationship to actual events formulated in opposition to literature-as-artifice at a distance from reality. The epigraphic text is the trace of an event, but so is the literary one. In both cases, the event is inseparable from its trace. Key to the epigraphic specificity in the Buddhist context is the fact that the inscription is frequently integral to donative practice in a uniquely self-reflective manner, constituting an act of devotion in and of itself in the very process of recording the act of devotion. In this way, the epigraphic text is an event in itself. But this does not mean that the event is ever without trace, without "secondary" inscription, nor that it is or was ever purely present.

Of Buddhas and Kings[11]

From the Middle Ages through the Renaissance, English jurists and theologians speculated and legislated at length on the king's two bodies. Artists explored the two-body theory in a multitude of forms. The king's body natural was distinguished from his body politic or mystical body. The first was material and mortal – that is, impermanent – while the second was immaterial and immortal – that is, permanent. Hence the famous cries heard at royal funerary ceremonies from the beginning of the sixteenth century: "The king is dead! Long live the king!" In his seminal study of the phenomenon, Ernst Kantorowicz explores how these oxymoronic calls "powerfully demonstrated the perpetuity of kingship."[12] Each of the bodies is dependent on the other. The king's physical body stands in for a metaphysical body that outdoes it but cannot do without it. Or, to quote Kantorowicz again, the king's two bodies "form one unit indivisible, each being fully contained in the other."[13] Kantorowicz's study can, I believe, shed light on Buddhist understandings and experiences of permanence and impermanence.

Of course there are concerns of historico-cultural incommensurability here. The European model cannot simply be applied to any particular Buddhist case. And insofar as the topic of kingship is wholly tied up in cultural histories of conceptions

of subjectivity, and/or the non-self in the Buddhist context, the east–west comparison proves especially complex. Nonetheless, it seems possible to propose, with reference to Kantorowicz's work, a basic structural interpretation of the permanence/impermanence relation so frequently addressed in contemporary Buddhist studies. Let me emphasize that I in no way mean this interpretation to stand in for historically and culturally specific readings, but only to complement them.

A first cue I would take, albeit indirectly, from Kantorowicz is the very suggestion that this relation takes the form of a structural dynamic: the logical contradiction that is entertained so commonly in Buddhism between (belief in) permanence and impermanence is not a historical mistake which could be rectified were the monks no longer to cater to the needs of the masses or were the philosophers to open their eyes to reality. The perpetually reiterated apparent contradiction can be understood not as a mistake or an embarrassing oversight, but as a model for or reflection of the relations between the Buddha's body and the corporate body of the religious institution. In this sense, it might be thought of as what makes Buddhism work. From this perspective, the historically manifest contradiction between theory and practice, harnessed as it is to the impermanent/permanent dynamic, comes to seem not altogether illogical.

By the same token, I would argue that the pervasive and problematic association of Buddhism and kingship, of the Buddha and kings, is also, like that of permanence and impermanence, anything but an unfortunate historical mistake. While the two states, Buddhahood and kingship, are opposed from the very moment of the future Buddha's birth, they are nevertheless confused throughout his life.[14] This confusion continues unabated at the Buddha's death, and then throughout the life of Buddhism, beginning with the end of the Buddha's famous funeral ceremony as kings are willing to go to war over claims to his bodily remains. The Buddha's departing instructions to perform for him a funeral fit for a king may be read in the *Sutra of the Great Extinction* as part of a reluctant concession to a heartbroken disciple, yet this drawn-out moment of preparing for death, along with the funerary ritual itself, must, I believe, be further understood as integral to the institution of Buddhism itself. This is one way of interpreting John Strong's readings of the Buddha's cremation, by which the Buddha can only be made to undergo a last monastic ordination by first rebecoming a *chakravartin* king.[15]

From the perspective I am proposing here, there is no need to explain away this paradoxical command – there is no need, that is, to see the so-called chakravartin ceremony as being, in truth or in actuality, a monastic ordination. Indeed, Strong's reading of the ceremony as constituting a ritual transformation of the chakravartin into the monk demonstrates the extent to which the one cannot do without the other. The new body produced by the crematory fire – what will become known as the Buddha's relics, a remainder that simultaneously inaugurates, at once essential component and inessential addition – is the body that will constitute the institution of Buddhism.[16] The tradition of distinguishing between those previous Buddhas who left relics that were dispersed and those whose bodies would appear to remain together in an undifferentiated whole after

cremation is of especial note in this regard. The distinction would seem to be related to the lifespan of the Buddhas in question. Those who produced relics had lived for only a short time, and had therefore been unable to complete their teaching missions; the relics are dispersed to perpetuate their dharma. The relicless Buddhas had, on the other hand, lived long enough to spread their teaching as far as it could be spread.[17] The second body of the Buddha, the relic, is that which allows for the institutionalization of the dharma, which is inseparable from the institution of Buddhist power. At any rate, this is how I understand the uncanny familiarity of the virtual cry resounding at the Buddha's death: The Buddha is dead! Long live the Buddha!

Robert DeCaroli's recent research on the historical rise of the Buddhist "two-body theory" in the early centuries of the common era is particularly revealing from this perspective.[18] DeCaroli's compelling analyses show the theorization of a distinction between the Buddha's *rupakaya*, his physical body, and the *dharmakaya*, the Buddha's teachings, to have developed at this time within a broader context in which image use appears to have undergone important changes, notably with the introduction of royal portraiture, and implying exploration of the funerary implications of anthropomorphic imagery. These "two bodies" do not map precisely onto those of the European kings described by Kantorowicz, and they represent a preliminary aspect of what were to become systematic philosophical developments on the Buddha's various bodies. Nonetheless, querying at once the representational status of the body of the living Buddha and that of any representation or remains of the Buddha after his death, the two-body theory is concerned with the relations between the Buddha's body and the body of Buddhism. In this, it can be seen to speak, I believe, to the European case.

DeCaroli's work on the "two bodies" is part of a broader, creative attempt to narrate the historical transition from aniconic to iconic representation in early Buddhist art. He is to my knowledge the latest in a long line of scholars to have taken on this task. His work encompasses critical analysis of this genealogy, and is formulated as a response to the colonial denial of agency to the South Asian subject. In a direct countering of colonial rhetoric, DeCaroli attributes agency to South Asians by attributing agency to the art itself. South Asians talk back to European scholars through their statues which, in DeCaroli's animated readings of the archive, are "consistently credited with actively playing a role in the events that occurred around them." "Statues," he says, "have the ability to look back."[19] In the following I will look back at the double genealogy in question – of Buddhist art as narrated by art historians – in the hopes of furthering this critical exchange.

Early Buddhist Art and its Histories

Original images, imaginary origins: Foucher and Coomaraswamy

In the early twentieth century, French scholar Alfred Foucher championed a genealogy of Buddhist art emerging at the time in colonial scholarship.[20] This

influential art history posited a first "aniconic" period in early Buddhism, in which certain symbols – the wheel, the stupa, the footprint, the throne, the bodhi tree – were used in the place of anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha. In these well-known images, an empty throne can represent the Buddha in a depiction of the moment of enlightenment; a wheel set atop a pedestal-throne can represent the Buddha giving his first sermon; and footprints in a scene depicting the Buddha's mother and her entourage at the moment of the Buddha's birth represent the Buddha himself. According to the genealogy most systematically propounded by Foucher, this (an)iconographic paradigm was superseded by a durable aesthetic innovation sparked by the meeting of Indian and Greek political/cultural influences early in the common era in Gandhara – now an Afghanistan–Pakistan border region. Indeed this intercultural encounter produced, in Foucher's words, "one of the most widespread and the most durable successes that the history of art has ever chronicled," namely, the sculptural image of the Buddha.[21] The Greek contribution to this invention was on the order of the aesthetic (a style and technique of representing people and things); the Indian contribution consisted in iconographic material (the people and stories to be represented). The Greco-Buddhist image was to represent the height of Buddhist art. Foucher's colonial narrative continued in an interpretive vein well known at the time: Indian artists were won over by the superior Greek approach to anthropomorphic representation, yet in mechanically reproducing copies of the Greek-inspired image without a proper understanding of the conceptual underpinnings of Greek art, Indian sculptors quickly came to deform the model, thereafter producing a corrupt art.[22]

The chapter in Foucher's *Beginnings of Buddhist Art* in which the climactic pitch of this art historical narrative is reached is entitled "The Greek Origin of the Buddha Image." This text was originally a lecture delivered at the Parisian museum of Asian art, the Musée Guimet.[23] The literal context, in which the Indian Buddha statue had been taken into European territory, was to give uncanny expression to the ancient history Foucher was to narrate. The Guimet is a place full of ambivalence. Foucher ushers his audience at once into the museum and into his text with the following words of welcome: "In crossing the threshold of this Museum you would immediately find yourself transported from Europe to Asia, and you would hardly expect me to apologize for speaking of Buddha in the home of Buddha. For, if he is not the sole inhabitant of this hospitable house . . ."[24] The importation of the Buddha statue into the Guimet strangely brings the Buddha home, even as it transports the European viewer to Asia. This physical transposition, from Asia to Europe, this radical decontextualization of the art, is thus inseparable from a rhetorical transposition, for an audience captivated by an exotic eastern allure, from Europe to Asia. This double movement is at the origin of Buddhist art history. And, in an exemplary demonstration of the quintessentially colonial processes of identification between civilizer and lost ancient civilization noted above, Foucher posits a similar, radical double decontextualization to have been at the origin of the Buddha image itself: only as it was brought into contact with European civilization did Buddhism come into its

own; with the appearance of the Greco-Buddhist image, the European intellect is transposed to Asia. It is crucial to Foucher's formulation and so to the very foundation of Buddhist art history, that the exportation of Buddhist art to Europe is understood to constitute a *re*contextualisation rather than a *de*contextualization. Both the Buddha and the European colonial audience find themselves at home in the museum as they are respectively returned to the cradle of their own, shared origins, to meet again. The uncanny effect, in which a strong sensation of the unknown mingles with an equally powerful sensation of familiarity, is at the heart of the conception of the museum.

Foucher's subsequent characterization of the Guimet as a "mortuary of dead gods" appears at first glance to contradict the opening vision of the museum as home.[25] This phrase acknowledges the violence inherent in the museographical enterprise. Taken together, the two characterizations point up the inherently conflictual position of the colonial scholar. Foucher is an agent of the French *mission civilisatrice*, of which the stated goal is to bring civilization to the uncivilized; *and* he is an expert in Indian civilization. How can the colonial scholar be expected to reconcile these irreconcilables? The rhetorical mechanisms of identification between modern civilizer and ancient civilized, which serve to project the former as a savior rather than an executioner, seem to fail Foucher even as he sets them in motion here. Despite efforts to banish the specter of the violence of the colonial enterprise, Foucher seems to remain haunted. How hospitable is a mortuary? What kind of hospitality is it that is given to those effectively put to death in the very process of welcoming them in? For colonial protection, even when purportedly aiming to enable the revival of civilization, inevitably involved inflicting some degree of mortal violence upon the indigenous populations and their culture. The executioner is mortified by his own actions: the visitor is deadened when welcomed in to the home of those who effectively died in the name of civilizational progress.

"The Greek Origin of the Buddha Image" is remarkable testimony to ways in which the conditions of knowledge production affect the knowledge produced. In a remarkable demonstration of overdetermination, the Greco-Buddhist statue which Foucher uses as a model for establishing his theory was housed in "the Mess hall of the English Officers of the Native Regiment of the *King's own Corps of Guides*" in Mardan, a northwestern district of what is now Pakistan. The English are at the head of the native regiment; body and head together form the greater body, the corps of the (British) king. And it is in these same terms that Foucher describes the Indo-Greek Buddha statue itself:

> You take the body of a monk and surmount it with the head of a king (or what in India comes to the same thing, a god) . . . These are the two necessary and sufficing ingredients of this curious synthesis; and you divine immediately the advantages of this procedure. Were it not for the head, confusion with any monk would be almost inevitable: and this simple consideration may help to explain why the ancient native school abstained from representing the disciples as well as the Master.[26]

The head, it turns out, is the western contribution, placed atop the Indian body. For the hair atop its head, the Indo-Greek Buddha represented for Foucher a "contradiction to the sacred writings"[27] because Siddhartha's symbolic act of renouncing sovereignty is crowned with the dramatic cutting of his princely hair. "If from the beginning," Foucher writes, "the people must have felt the attractive charm of [the statue's] ideal and serene beauty, it must at its first appearance have been the object of just and bitter criticisms on the part of the old champions of orthodoxy."[28] The contribution of the head effectively decapitates the original religion, but in a strange and twisted manner. For prior to this early colonial encounter, as recounted in modern colonial times, there was no head to fell – no statue, no king, no sovereign master. The early colonial achievement was to engender renunciation of the intellectual bases of the religion in forcing the acceptance of a head. So, on the one hand, giving Buddhism the form it was lacking meant allowing the religion to come into its own. The Buddha had found expression in the sculptural form. On the other hand, the Buddha statue represented the religion's demise as it was overpowered by what Foucher explicitly names "western influences." The statue that allowed for the revival and survival of the religion was at the same time a mortuary. It represented at once deadly decontextualization and life-giving recontextualization.

It is no mistake that western influence is understood to be concentrated in the head. The aesthetic contribution carries, in Foucher's words, profound "moral" (i.e. intellectual, philosophical) significance. The Buddhist religion will find itself fundamentally changed, as the Buddha, through embodiment in the anthropomorphic sculptural image, relinquishes a fundamental commitment to giving up sovereignty and assumes the role of divine savior. In Foucher's narrative, this shift, enabled by western influence, represented an advance in civilization. The narrowly egoistical early form of Buddhist doctrine, by which individuals sought strictly to liberate themselves, and which was made manifest through an absence of anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha, was to evolve naturally towards a more charitable practice by which the people come to perceive the Buddha as a vehicle for popular salvation, that is Mahayana practice. Western genius simply gave expression to the will of the people. This particular story of art reproduces on its own micro-scale the overarching historical narrative by which the colonial powers, in restoring lost civilization, allowed the colonized peoples to renounce their own ineffective leadership in order to become who they really were.

But ultimately, as Foucher's thoroughly ambivalent narrative continued, the experiment was to fail. If the aesthetic technology of Greek statuary was for a time adopted, its accompanying intellectual apparatus was not understood. The hair bun, this top of the top, this head of the head, this sign of sovereignty, was to be transformed into a cranial protuberance, thereafter one of the Buddha's characteristic marks. The rational western-driven decision to render the Buddha with hair as a means of distinguishing the master from the monastic populace gave way to Indian superstition about special powers in the head; and it was this

superstition, an ultimate misconstrual by the populace of the promising advances once made, which subsequently deformed the Buddhist tradition.

Foucher's narrative was rebutted by art historian Ananda K. Coomaraswamy in a 1927 article combatively entitled "The Origin of the Buddha Image."[29] Coomaraswamy was born in 1877 in Sri Lanka to a Tamil father and a British mother, educated largely in Britain and employed largely in the United States. He was a staunch anti-imperialist from an early age, and in 1938 was named chairman of the National Committee for India's Freedom. Coomaraswamy's title, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," is not a term for term inversion of Foucher's, but almost. The absence of any qualification of "The Origin" belies an independentist revendication of hermeneutic foreclosure: it would simply be redundant to qualify the origin of the Buddha image as Indian.

In Coomaraswamy's reading, all the iconographic elements of the Buddha image are known in India prior to its development proper in ancient Gandhara and Mathura, two geographically and culturally distinct regions. The Mathura Buddhas may have predated those of Gandhara, and two fundamental methods of representation must be discerned within Indian tradition, a southern Dravidian (or "aboriginal") anthropomorphic method, and a northern Aryan symbolic one. But it is the terms with which Coomaraswamy contrasts Indian and Hellenistic art that are most telling in the present context. The former is abstract; it is a creation of thought. While the latter, resulting from perception of a pre-existing object, is naturalistic; it is on the side of the body, which is to suggest, of course, beneath the thinking head. Coomaraswamy insists that even the anthropomorphic image is an ideal creation of thought, not a rendering of the natural world. Indian subjectivity is in the head, but not on the Greek model. Re-establishing the aesthetic sovereignty of the Indian intellect asserts the cultural independence of ancient India from Europe, aesthetically, "morally," art historically, while it also contributes to establishing modern India in political terms.

Nonetheless, as DeCaroli notes in another context, Coomaraswamy leaves the overarching structure of Foucher's historical narrative in place.[30] "Aniconic" sculpture was still understood to have more or less preceded anthropomorphic representation and certainly to have predominated in early Buddhist artistic production. This period was followed by one of religious decline; yet Buddhist doctrine, according to Coomaraswamy, was betrayed with the very onset of Buddha image production that spread with the rise of popular theistic devotional practices. The aesthetic and "moral" advance that the introduction of the anthropomorphic image represented for Foucher was for Coomaraswamy an intellectual regression. For Foucher, the European-inspired advance was not sustainable by Indians. And if for Coomaraswamy the linear narrative with its associated hierarchies was essentially intra-Indian, it is clear that in his view European influence embodied by the Gandhara Buddhas contributed to the larger process of devolution. Reclaiming Indian subjectivity in ancient as in modern times meant for Coomaraswamy celebrating the "aniconic" at the origins of Buddhist art as a pure expression of Indian intellectual creativity.

Coomaraswamy's wide-ranging research on Indian tradition was influenced by European traditionalist movements; at the same time it was explicitly associated with denunciation of the corrosive effects of British colonialism on indigenous South Asian culture, perhaps most notably of the noxious infection of South Asian intelligentsia by notions of the superiority of European culture. The exergue to "The Origin of the Buddha Image" renders Coomaraswamy's position well: "Nothing beyond what is self-developed in the brain of a race is permanently gained, or will survive the changes of time."[31] The phrase is drawn from Flinders Petrie's *Social Life in Ancient Egypt*. Coomaraswamy's academic manifesto for Indian cultural autonomy is thoroughly indebted to European culture. But his position is not one of simple mimicry of colonial discourse. He uncannily mirrors it, identifying with ancient civilizations in order to claim Indian intellectual hegemony over India.

Filling the absence of the Buddha: Huntington and Dehejia

Comparable zeal has characterized more recent debates on early Buddhist art. Arguing that a majority of the so-called aniconic images actually represent ritual acts at Buddhist pilgrimage sites after the Buddha's death, art historian Susan Huntington has sought to attenuate the influence of the aniconic paradigm.[32] Early sculpted reliefs are predominantly documentational, she suggests, at times explicitly evoking the photographic metaphor. From this perspective, the absence of anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha indicates neither artistic ignorance nor strict adherence to doctrinal principles. The Buddha was simply, in historical fact, not there. Art was a practice of the people by and large serving to "record," in Huntington's words, practice by the people.

Huntington indicates that her arguments are embedded in a more extensive forthcoming consideration of the Judeo-Christian and colonial ideological frameworks in which the early art historical paradigms were established. Critiquing the "etic" approach characteristic of her predecessors in the field, she calls for future research to take an "emic" approach to the material. Characteristic of the ways in which her work is meant to model such an approach is her use of canonical literature. The near absence of canonical prohibitions against image cults is taken as evidence that there was no doctrinally driven deliberate avoidance of anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha. Canonical classifications of relic types, which include bodily remains, things used by the Buddha, as well as images, are cited to counter what she sees to be western assumptions of the primacy of the anthropomorphic image in commemorative processes. At the same time, Huntington's central hypothesis implicitly marginalizes the philosophical import of art. The emic view she sketches is one in which art practice principally involves documentation of ritual practice, with only secondary concern, if any concern at all, for Buddhist philosophy. Though Huntington acknowledges that interrogation of the status of the Buddha's body, before and after death, is central to Buddhist thinking, she does not see this as being of particular relevance to understanding early Buddhist art.[33]

This projection of a sharp division between the emic and the etic echoes Coomaraswamy's independentist exergue cited above. Huntington rejects the aniconic paradigm as a colonial projection in which the Other is circumscribed by a discourse of lack – the an- of the aniconic. She demands that Buddhist things be seen for what they are rather than for what they are not. She too is seeking to establish Buddhist subjectivity. While her attempt to subvert the colonial intellectual biases is laudable, there is a way in which her response, in placing a great deal of rhetorical weight on an inversion of the Euro-American hierarchies, effectively reaffirms the east/west binary, which is arguably itself a trap of Euro-American confection.

Defining an "emic" Buddhist point of view is in my view virtually impossible. This is not to say that we should abstain from attempts to do so. To the contrary. Beyond the evident difficulties in identifying sufficient commonalities among disparate Buddhist traditions across time and space, or between elite and popular positions, for example, lies a crucial theoretical problem: it is not clear that the emic/etic (or east/west) opposition is sustainable from a "Buddhist point of view." Buddhist and European philosophies certainly and variously cultivate different perspectives. Yet one of the most radical differences may lie in perception of difference itself. The emic/etic opposition which appears so natural, and necessary, to contemporary scholars, is grounded in conceptual processes of identification of Self in opposition to the Other which have long been demonstrated to have driven not only the European colonial project, but the ongoing politico-cultural construction of Euro-America. From a fundamental Buddhist perspective, were we able to establish one, the Self does not exist as such and certainly not in opposition to an Other. The Self is a conventional foil not to the Other but to the Non-Self. It does not oppose the Non-Self, but is an artifice used to prove or realize it. This point is key, I believe, to understanding east–west relations If from the one point of view an emic/etic opposition is meaningful, from the "opposite" point of view, it may not be. Any opposite point of view will always be a projection thereof from the inside of Euro-American formulations of selfhood. The oxymoronic nature of Buddhist subjectivity should not, furthermore, escape notice. This is also key, in my mind, to understanding Buddhist art.

The most sustained response to Huntington's theory has been made by Vidya Dehejia.[34] Dehejia upholds the centrality of the aniconic image in early Buddhist art, without disallowing interpretation of some imagery as also representing pilgrimage acts at specific times and places. Dehejia describes the "aniconic" image as an "emblem," "a picture that represents something different from itself."[35] The emblem can symbolize the Buddha, represent sacred spots and the devotions performed there, or serve to recall attributes of the Buddhist faith, such as the doctrine. As Huntington points out in turn, Dehejia integrates Huntington's readings into her own, but, it must be said that she does this only to a limited degree. For Dehejia the emblem is not essentially documentational: "Through its capacity for multiple reference, the emblem," she writes, "suggests the simultaneity of events that occur at separate times."[36] This reading challenges the notion

articulated by Huntington of the predominance of portraits of pilgrimage, in which the Buddha is simply absent, to reintroduce a certain emic depth to the interpretation of these images. As I will attempt to explain in the following, I see the nature of the event put on view in "aniconic" sculpture – that is its meaning and function from an emic perspective, to be central to the collapse of diachronic time Dehejia sees in the image.

The pilgrimage act in question is technically termed *darshana*, or "seeing," a word which also, not coincidentally, can be translated as "philosophy," for the vision is at once an interior and an exterior event. Darshana is a ritual viewing that participates in a process by which the image is understood to be animated. In the more common case of anthropomorphic representations, the image is perceived, through the experience of darshana, as sharing substance with the "original," in a relation that diminishes or eliminates temporal distance as well as the gap between manifest form and divine essence. The original presence is experienced by the viewer in the image, through the image or as the image, by means of this active process of ritual viewing. To recall Schopen's analysis of the interface between canonical and epigraphic texts at and on pilgrimage to sites of events in the Buddha's life, darshana is about "direct, intimate contact with a living presence." The textual evidence is for Schopen irrefutable on this point: practitioners "thought that the Buddha was, after his *parinirvana*, in some sense actually present at the places where he is known to have formerly been."[37]

In the traditional interpretation, aniconic images might be said to add a further operation of symbolic removal from the original: the representation of the throne, for instance, stands in for a representation of the Buddha's body, which stands in for the (absent, present) Buddha "himself." One can also see the aniconic images as playing out on the level of representation (image of throne for image of Buddha), echoing a ritual substitution that commands all darshana irrespective of the iconic support involved: the image of the Buddha for the Buddha, or more generally, an absence for a presence, an inanimate object for a living being.

Something similar happens in Huntington's reconstruction of religious practice centered on "aniconic" images at such pilgrimage sites: the early viewers of this art would have been accomplishing darshana of a ritual act of darshana (for instance, they would have been viewing an "aniconic" image carved into a stupa – itself another "aniconic" image of the Buddha – representing pilgrims worshiping an empty throne), resulting in a *mise en abime* in which the original event of the Buddha's life could not be wholly disentangled from its representation. The gap between representation of an event in the life of the Buddha and that of commemoration of that event (worshipers venerating the Buddha represented by an empty throne – worshipers actually venerating an empty throne in the absence of the Buddha) effectively collapses in this context. This is the very process we see at work textually through the epigraphic example taken from Schopen above. Ashoka heeds the Buddha's recommendation, made on the verge of his death, that lay people do pilgrimage to the sites of important events in the Buddha's

life. Ashoka goes to the site of the Buddha's birth, where he records in stone his "own" pronouncement of the Buddha's pronouncement: "Here the Blessed One was born." Through ritual processes, the Buddhist image, not unlike the Buddhist text exemplified by this Ashokan inscription, is not a simple representation of the event, but the event itself made present in the here and now: another "original."

In response to Dehejia's multivalent paradigm, Huntington insists on the primacy of a diachronic reading, in which the artists' intended meaning (representing a pilgrimage act in a specific time and place on the model of the photograph) is privileged over any secondary unintended meaning (such as the recollection of the actual event in the Buddha's life recalled in the pilgrimage act). These predominant meanings can then change over time.[38]

The significance of the Buddha's death is the unarticulated fulcrum of the Huntington–Dehejia debate: does the absence of anthropomorphic representation (or the presence of an emblem) render a moment before or after the Buddha's death? For Huntington, the image is generally post-mortem. If the Buddha is not there in the image it is, in most cases, because in historical reality he was not at the pilgrimage site depicted, while other commemorative props were. For Dehejia and the more traditional interpretation, the Buddha's passing does not mark such a clear border between presence and absence; there is always an ante-mortem aspect to the aniconic image. In chronological terms, the aniconic image represents firstly an event in the life of the Buddha in which the Buddha's presence is indicated by a visual substitute. But Dehejia's arguments do not adhere to a realism in which the Buddha's death would be simply equated with bodily absence or in which, by implication, his life would be simply equated with bodily presence. I would suggest, in this context, that if the moment of death, any death, raises questions of the relations between reality and representation, presence and absence, the moment of the Buddha's death redoubles such interrogations. For representation of the Buddha embodies not simply a certain presence of the absent, but more precisely a presence of the absence which the Buddha "himself" represented.

The increasing urgency of these interrogations in the final moments leading up to the Buddha's death bring the *Sutra of the Great Extinction* to its climactic narrative pitch. Myriad deities have joined the assembly of monks to pay homage to the Buddha. The Buddha harshly chastises one monk for blocking others' view of the Buddha. This situation, in which the Buddha's body is momentarily invisible, prompts the Buddha's faithful attendant Ananda to query how homage is to be paid him after his imminent *parinirvana*, that is, once there is "no remainder." It is thus a question of spectrality – whether one can see the Buddha's body or not – that leads to the prescription of proper devotional practices, and which is effectively one of anthropomorphic vs. non-anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha.

The Buddha proceeds to explain how Brahmins will prepare a funeral for him on the model of those for chakravartin kings; monks will recite the Buddha's

teachings, which will "henceforth be [their] master and salvation";[39] and lay people can pay homage to four sites: those of the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, first sermon, and parinirvana. Having then given the assembly of monks the opportunity to ask any lingering questions, the Buddha

> took off his outer robe and said: "Monks, gaze now upon the body of the Tathagata [the Buddha]! Examine the body of the Tathagata! For the sight of a completely enlightened Buddha is as rare an event as the blossoming of the udumbara tree. And, monks, do not break into lamentations after I am gone, for all karmically constituted things are subject to passing away."[40]

These are the last words of the Buddha in this version of the sutra. Look at this extraordinary sight, the Buddha says, it is nothing. The monks are exhorted to look upon this beautiful body for the last – but also the first – time as the quintessential embodiment of impermanence. The Buddha does not say that this is a unique event, but a "rare" one, therefore one that has been or will be repeated again and again. And the floral analogy links this repetitive cycle with the motif of the interdependence of life and death. But it also reinforces the visual reference: this rarest of bodies is to be observed like the rarest of ephemeral flowers even though the Buddha's next sentence, his last of all, is a reminder that this sight for sore eyes is nothing but a "karmically constituted thing." Which is to say at best a sign of nothingness. In this closing scene, the Buddha seems therefore to address the question of veneration – the future of Buddhism – through a visual paradox: look in order to see what you cannot/that you cannot see.

The sutra concludes with an account of the chakravartin funeral followed by the distribution of the Buddha's relics to vying kings, who enshrine them in stupas in their respective kingdoms. The "karmically constituted thing" may be gone, but the relics live on, permanently, as the new embodiment of nothingness.

Relic-Image

Given the contemporary scholarly context, in conjunction with overwhelming evidence of the association of relic and image in Buddhist practice, the extent to which reference to textual evidence continues to orient scholarly attention away from considering the image as a relic appears somewhat surprising. Those confronting the issue often note that the image does not appear in the earliest known relic classification systems, and cite the "late Theravada classification of 'relics'" with some ambivalence.[41] Scholarly hesitation as to the propriety of classifying the Buddha image as relic is further supported with reference to the *locus classicus* of the classification scheme, the *Kalingabodhi jataka*, which privileges the "bodily" and "contact" relics over "commemorative" relics, of which the anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha is a prime example. In his *Relics of the Buddha*, Strong notes that

> the "Kalingabodhi jataka" itself makes an important distinction between uddesikacetiya (e.g. images), and the two other types of memorials. The uddesikacetiya, it says, are "lacking in a foundation [*avatthuka*] by virtue of their being a matter of mind only [*manamattakena*]." In other words, unlike bodily relics and contact relics (relics of use), they do not have the basis of any direct physical connection with the Buddha.[42]

Evidence points to a historical mobility of value hierarchies with, for example, yet another relic type, dharma relics – the relics of the Buddha's teaching – at times valued more highly precisely because they embody the Buddha in a non-corporeal abstract manner. Being "a matter of mind only," images might be considered in such a schema to rank above contact or bodily relics. This mindset is indeed echoed by Coomaraswamy's characterization of early Buddhist art as against Foucher's as noted above. But it is the former hierarchical order established through textual work, in which the image is third-rate at best, which is privileged in contemporary scholarship.

The fundamental distinction at work here, between relics considered to be directly, physically linked to the actual corporeal presence of the Buddha's body, and relics, such as the image, that refer to the Buddha's body only by indirect, symbolic means, is taken up in an original and sustained manner by Robert Sharf as part of an explicit appeal for sharper scholarly discrimination between relic and image. Sharf sees confusion of the two distinct concepts to be an unfortunate outcome of recent scholarly emphasis on devotional practices. The "substance" of the relic (what might be taken as another formulation of Strong's "direct physical connection") is opposed, in Sharf's analysis, to the "form" of the image, whose association with the Buddha could be said to be "a matter of mind only" without physical foundation. Sharf insists on this difference: if the relic is grounded in physical presence, the image is defined by physical absence. The former is the "distilled essence of human corporeality"; the latter is representational.[43] The singularity of the relic – its "allure" for Buddhists and scholars of Buddhism alike – lies precisely in its "pure corporeality unencumbered by discernible form."[44] Sharf does acknowledge the ritual association of relic and image, providing some detail on common modes of incorporation of the relic in the image. His example of the ultimate association of the two is the Buddhist mummy, in which "the identity of relic and images – substance and form – has been fully realized."[45] And he suggests the icon to constitute a sort of medium through which the association can be interpreted: in the "icon," or its functional Buddhist equivalent, there is a shared substance between the form and the divine. Nonetheless, despite the pervasive association of the relic and the image in practice, highlighting their fundamental difference allows us, in Sharf's view, to develop a more precise understanding of their respective functions, and more particularly, of relics' strong allure.

I would agree that the relic and the image function in some fundamental way as incommensurable paradigms. But more than their respective particularities, it is the interrelations and interdependence between the two that I wish to

highlight. On one level, it must be said that carefully corrective theoretical distinctions between relic and image, whether made by traditional Buddhist authors or contemporary academics, are at odds with much Buddhist practice, in which it is common for relics and images to be intimately associated, indeed often assimilated to one another. On another level, however, the overlap between these theoretically incompatible regimes reveals a dynamic principle within the religion. Indeed, I take the strange complication of Buddhist aniconism to confirm this outlook. The relation between anthropomorphic images and aniconic images seems to repeat, on the aesthetic level, the relations defined by Sharf and others between relics and images. As I suggested above, the aniconic representation is one step further removed from the actual physical presence of the Buddha's body than the anthropomorphic representation. Buddhism, theory and/or practice, does not give us the means of deciding which side to privilege: bodily presence or bodily absence. But at the very least, the aniconic complication of the relic/image opposition suggests that the stakes are constantly shifting and that an ongoing negotiation is necessary in theory and practice between (the signs of) permanence and (those of) impermanence.

Legends of the first Buddha statue illustrate the situation I am attempting to describe. In the many versions of the story, which bears some relation to the account of the Buddha's "Great Extinction," the Buddha has left one community to preach to another. His physical absence occasions despair amongst his followers, and much anticipation of his return. The production of the first Buddha image is thus situated during the Buddha's lifetime. The importance of the Buddha's presence for and ultimately *in* the statue is highlighted in the following version translated by Strong. The story relates a king's emotional need for and simultaneous discomfort with producing a statue of the Buddha to replace him during his temporary absence. On his return, the Buddha goes "to see the statue in his own likeness." "Seeing the Buddha arriving," the Buddha statue, who had been theretofore "as though . . . alive," "acquired as it were a devout mind and living body."[46] The statue rises to prostrate itself at the feet of the Buddha, who accepts, or authorizes, or consecrates the reproduction in question, and effectively the very concept of anthropomorphic reproduction. The statue – this particular statue as well as the idea of the statue in general – is thus imbued with the Buddha's presence through actual contact with the Buddha himself. If this story legitimizes the production and worship of Buddha statues, it bears testimony to the statue's need for legitimization. Were there no discomfort in producing an image of the Buddha, were there no need for the Buddha's personal authorization, there would be no story.

Something similar happens in the common ritual incorporation of relics into the Buddha image. The legitimacy of the image, its authenticity, is derived from direct physical contact with the Buddha himself. The image, like the relic, and frequently through contact with the relic, is "infused with life."[47] An interesting example of this identification between image and relic is common in contemporary Theravadin Southeast Asia when old statue fragments are incorporated

into the body of a new statue, thus themselves playing the role of relic in infusing the new Buddha with the life of the old.

What is less frequently noted, however, is the consequence of the ritual framing of the relic. Sharf eloquently makes the point that without a frame – a reliquary or at least a story – a relic is nothing more than debris. Once framed, Sharf sees it become "a singular specimen of pure corporeality unencumbered by discernible form."[48] It is true that the framing makes a display of the relic's lack of form, and thus the relic is shown to contrast with the image. Yet it must also be said that once framed, the relic is at the same time not unlike an image, made to represent a specific thing through conventional presentation. So while everything is done to make an image like a relic, so is a relic given in some important way the likeness of an image, a sort of aniconic image. A relic stands in for something else, something absent, the Buddha – without representing it figuratively, realistically. Like the aniconic image, a relic is at once the essence of the Buddha and an addition to his body, something produced in the cremation fire, but not necessarily a physical bodily remainder.

We have thus come, in a certain sense, full circle: aniconism can be seen to be at work in the relic, as here, and thus to be on the side of a certain practice organized around the permanence/impermanence of a physical bodily presence; but it can also be understood as encapsulating the very logic of the image as a "matter of mind," and thus itself that much further along the road to impermanence.

Notes

1 Research on representation of death in Khmer culture which has informed this essay was carried out in collaboration with Ang Choulean, and with the assistance of Siyonn Sophearith, in the framework of a Toyota Foundation grant from 1999 to 2002, and then a Faculty Research grant from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2002–3.

2 The larger field of South Asian studies might be seen to be similarly framed today by a magisterial if somewhat oblique debate between Sheldon Pollock and Wendy Doniger. Pollock's *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, a complex treatise on the Sanskrit cosmopolis and its demise with the rise of vernacular literature, has met its voluminous match in Doniger's *The Hindus: An Alternative History*, driven by a commitment to making resound those who have remained largely unheard in more than 100 years of scholarship on thousands of years of Sanskrit and Sanskritized textual production. For better or for worse Southeast Asian cultural histories are deeply implicated in this ongoing debate regarding (relations to) hegemonic discourse.

3 Cuevas and Stone, *The Buddhist Dead*, 10.

4 See in particular the collection of articles reprinted in Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*. For a detailed analysis of Schopen's positioning with reference to traditions of Buddhist Studies – west and east – see Huntington, "History, Tradition and Truth." While historicizing Schopen and at the same time confronting

his scholarship with a series of theoretical interrogations, Huntington tracks the discipline as its focus shifts from attempts to establish the "essence" of Buddhism (more or less what I am calling "theory" here) to counter-attempts at establishing a strictly historiographical approach stripped of theoretical trappings (i.e. an approach predominantly if not exclusively concerned with practice).

5 Grenet, *Les pratiques funéraires*, 7, quoted approvingly in Schopen, "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions" in *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 15, n. 3.

6 Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 1.

7 Ibid., 16, n. 3.

8 Ibid., 114.

9 Ibid., 115–18. For more on Ashokan inscriptions and monuments, see Frederick Asher's essay in this volume (chapter 17).

10 Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 114.

11 The following draws from another article with related comments on the king's two bodies in Cambodian politico-religious practice: Thompson, "'The Suffering of Kings.'"

12 Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 410–13.

13 Ibid., 9. For a remarkable re-presentation and reassessment of Kantorowicz's work, see a series of articles in *Representations* 106 (2009).

14 A few key points in the Buddha's legendary life narrative should suffice to demonstrate the centrality of this association. The Buddha was born a prince by the name of Siddhartha. At his birth it is predicted he will become either a king of kings or a Buddha. The young Siddhartha defies his father's attempts to keep him on track for kingship. He renounces palace life in favor of that of a wandering ascetic. Once enlightened, his greatest supporters are kings. He is given a royal funeral at his death.

15 Strong, "The Buddha's Funeral." *Chakravartin* literally means "the wheel-turner" with reference to the wheel of the dharma. Often translated as "universal emperor," it is an epithet for the king of kings.

16 Something like a Derridian *supplément*. See *Of Grammatology*.

17 Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, 44–8.

18 DeCaroli, "From the Living Rock," esp. 30–43.

19 Ibid., 43.

20 The first part of his monumental study constituted his 1905 doctoral thesis. The full study was published over nearly 50 years in four volumes: *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhâra*. In English, see Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*. For a detailed history of the larger art historical context, see Abe, "Inside the Wonder House."

21 Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, 131.

22 For a cogent critique of the way in which Euro-American discourse "has positioned its technological and scientific knowledge as transferable and reproducible beyond Euro-America, but has constructed thought as if its more complex cultural forms were somehow inalienably founded in practices which were intrinsic to its own constitution," see John Clark, *Modern Asian Art*, 16.

23 For more on the Musée Guimet and its Buddhist objects, see Gregory Levine's essay in this volume (chapter 26).

24 Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, 111.

25 Ibid., 124.

26 Ibid., 133.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., 131.
29 Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image."
30 DeCaroli, "From the Living Rock," 28.
31 Coomaraswamy, "Origin of the Buddha Image," 287.
32 See in particular Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," and "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems: Another Look." This last text is a detailed response to Vidya Dehejia's critique of her hypotheses.
33 See Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 405.
34 Dehejia, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems."
35 Ibid., 45.
36 Ibid., 46.
37 Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 117.
38 Huntington, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems: Another Look," 113–14.
39 Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*, 36.
40 Ibid., 37.
41 Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, 19.
42 Ibid. Lance Cousins has suggested the following alternative reading of the passage in question: "An uddesikacetiya has no material basis and is just something mental." In his view this does not constitute a general statement on the relative value of the different types of relics. Personal communication, 11 August 2010.
43 Sharf, "On the Allure of Buddhist Relics," 82.
44 Ibid., 90.
45 Ibid.
46 Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*, 40.
47 Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 126–8.
48 Sharf, "On the Allure of Buddhist Relics," 90.

References

Abe, Stanley K. "Inside the Wonder House: Buddhist Art and the West." In *Curators of the Buddha: the Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr., 63–106. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Clark, John. *Modern Asian Art*. Sydney: Craftsman House, 1998.

Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. "The Origin of the Buddha Image." *The Art Bulletin* 9 (1927): 287–329.

Cuevas, Bryan J., and Jacqueline I. Stone, eds. *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.

DeCaroli, Robert. "From the Living Rock: Understanding Figural Representation in Early South Asia." In *What's the Use of Art? Asian Visual and Material Culture in Context*, edited by J. Mrázek and M. Pitelka, 21–45. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008.

Dehejia, Vidya. "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems." *Ars Orientalis* 21 (1991): 45–66.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997 [1974].

Doniger, Wendy. *The Hindus: An Alternative History*. London: Penguin, 2009.
Foucher, A. *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and Other Essays in Indian and Central-Asian Archaeology*. Madras: Asian Educational Series, 1994 [1917].
Grenet, F. *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie centrale sédentaire*. Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1984.
Huntington Jr., C. W. "History, Tradition and Truth." *History of Religions* 46, no. 3 (February 2007): 187–227.
Huntington, Susan L. "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems: Another Look." *Ars Orientalis* 22 (1992): 111–56.
Huntington, Susan. L. "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism." *Art Journal* 49 no. 4 (Winter 1990): 401–8.
Kantorowicz, E. H. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997 [1957].
Pollock, Sheldon. *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture and Power in Premodern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
Schopen, Gregory. *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.
Sharf, Robert. "On the Allure of Buddhist Relics." *Representations* 66 (Spring 1999): 75–99.
Strong, John S. "The Buddha's Funeral." In *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, edited by Bryan J. Cuevas and Jacqueline I. Stone, 32–59. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.
Strong, John S. *The Experience of Buddhism: Sources and Interpretations*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2002.
Strong, John S. *Relics of the Buddha*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.
Thompson, Ashley. "'The Suffering of Kings': Substitute *Bodies, Healing and Justice in Cambodia*." In *History, Buddhism and New Religious Movements in Cambodia*, edited by E. Guthrie and J. Marston, 91–112. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004.

Further Reading

Babb, Lawrence. "Glancing: Visual Interaction in Hinduism." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 37 no. 4 (Winter 1981): 387–401.
Bacci, Michelle. "Cult-Images and Religious Ethnology: The European Exploration of Medieval Asia and the Discovery of New Iconic Religions." *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 36 (2005): 337–72.
Collins, Steven. *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravada Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. *The Dance of Siva: Essays on Indian Art and Culture*. New York: Dover Publications, 1985 [1924].
Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. *The Transformation of Nature in Art*. New York: Dover Publications, 1956 [1934].
Dehejia, Vidya, ed. *Unseen Presence: The Buddha and Sanchi*. Mumbai: Marg Publications, 1996.

Eck, Diana. *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1985.

Eckel, Malcolm David. *To See the Buddha: A Philosopher's Quest for the Meaning of Emptiness*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Faure, Bernard. *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.

German, David, and Kevin Trainor, *Embodying the Dharma: Buddhist Relic Veneration in Asia*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.

Huntington, Susan L., with contributions by John C. Huntington. *The Art of Ancient India*. New York: Weatherhill, 1985.

Marshall, Sir John, and Alfred Foucher. *The Monuments of Sanchi*. Hyderabad: Swati Publications, 1982 [1940].

Mitter, Partha. *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.

Schopen, Gregory. "Relic." In *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, edited by Mark C. Taylor, 256–68. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Skilling, Peter. "Cutting across Categories: The Ideology of Relics in Buddhism." *Annual Report of the International Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 8 (2005): 269–322.

Swearer, Donald K. *Becoming the Buddha: the Ritual of Image Consecration in Thailand*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Trainor, Kevin. *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism: Rematerialising the Sri Lankan Theravada Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Williams, Paul. *Mahayana Buddhism: the Doctrinal Foundations*. London: Routledge, 1989: esp. chapter 8.

17

On Maurya Art

Frederick Asher

If ever a period in the history of Indian art were ripe for invention, it is the one we associate with the Maurya Dynasty (*c.* 322–185 BCE). During the reign of a single king, Ashoka (*c.* 262–239 BCE), we see the reappearance of Indian art after a period of some 1,600 years, that is, from the end of the Harappan culture. Not a single material remain survives from this entire 1,600-year period except some undecorated pottery.[1] And what appears, quite suddenly and without precedent, are three broad categories of objects. First to be considered here, the enormous pillars crowned with animal capitals for which the period is most famous; they are brilliantly conceived and brilliantly executed, hardly the sort of works that one might expect to see emerging without any sort of precedent at all. Second, a very few figural sculptures are also ascribed to this period; they share at least some stylistic features in common with the pillars. And finally, I consider architecture, not because it is any less significant than the other forms but rather because understanding the ways in which the sculptural works have captured modern imagination sets the stage for thinking about the ways that the architectural remains have done so.

Maurya art is replete with unanswered questions: where did it come from, what does it mean, and what, in fact, constitutes Maurya art? At best we can raise the questions and draw upon imagination to weave stories that might answer them. But we cannot pretend to have definitive answers. And perhaps, as with most art, we must recognize that there is no single answer or explanation. We cannot enter the mind of an artist at the moment she or he created a work, nor can we know how that artist conceived it before beginning the work or after it was completed. We cannot know for sure how the patron responded, and we can only guess what others who viewed it understood or, for that matter, understand today. In short, there is probably no single explanation for any work of art. But there are good questions, and there are good stories to be told. The

task is not a matter of sorting out what is myth and what is reality. Recounting history, including art history, is, like myth, a matter of making good stories. So my purpose here is to recount good stories, often variations on the stories others have told. Some, however, I am telling for the first time on the pages that follow.

What Is Maurya Art?

Despite the common description of this art as Maurya, that is, associating it with the entire dynasty, no one seriously attributes it to any time other than the reign of Ashoka. But for the art of India, a taxonomy based on dynasty is so ingrained, even in cases where there is no correlation whatever between reigning dynasty and the production of art, that this material, too, is widely given a dynastic identifier. That is, it is described as Maurya, not as more specifically Ashokan. Often the dynasty is treated as creator, a parallel to the post-Enlightenment notion of the creative role of an individual artist. In the case of some of the material described as Maurya (or, Mauryan, that is, made more adjectival than the nominal dynastic name used to describe subsequent periods of Indian art), the royal connection is clearly evident: The pillars often bear Ashoka's edicts and appear to have been made to carry his message visually as well as verbally.

What are the contenders for a Maurya date? They include several pillars with capitals – from Lauriya-Nandangarh, Rampurva, Sarnath, Sanchi, and Vaishali; several capitals or capital fragments without a pillar – from Sankissa and Basti; and several pillars without capitals – from Lauriya-Aeraj, Topra, Meerut, Allahabad, Kosambi, and Bodhgaya. In addition, there are some rock-cut sanctuaries in the Barabar Hills north of Gaya and a rock-cut elephant above an inscription of Ashoka at Dhauli just west of Bhubaneshwar as well as a very small handful of life-size figural sculptures that are commonly ascribed a Maurya date as are some terra-cotta sculptures.

These works are widely regarded as representing the beginning of a continuous development, one extending through the history of Indian art for at least two millennia, right to the present day. That is, art is viewed as continuously evolving from its Maurya beginnings. In addition it is an art that served as a basis for both revival and reuse. And finally, it is an art that, like so many succeeding it, appears to have no precedent at all, coming as it does after an enormously long hiatus since the previous visual material in South Asia. Thus, as happens repeatedly in fabricating an understanding of Indian art, scholars look beyond the borders of India for sources – external influence, as it is often described – to help explain the unprecedented appearance of Maurya art, a colonialist trope that assumes invention only beyond India, not within. That is, central to the colonialist project was a vision of India as unchanging or mired in tradition and thus dependent on a dynamic, inventive, external colonial authority to bring India into a state of modernity.

One characteristic that many of these sculptures share is a brightly polished finish to the stone. This technical feature, sometimes described as Maurya polish,

more than any stylistic trait, is so widely considered a uniquely Maurya characteristic that polished works are generally regarded as certainly Maurya in date, while unpolished ones are treated as doubtful. This, too, is a somewhat too facile notion, for we have polished works, especially from the vicinity of the Maurya capital, that clearly date after Maurya times.

With equal certainty, the works are said to have been carved from Chunar sandstone, that is, sandstone quarried in the hills above Chunar, some 22 kilometers southwest of Varanasi. Many of the contenders for a Maurya ascription are, it is true, carved from a buff-colored sandstone that, to the art historian's eye, resembles much of the sandstone from Chunar, where still today the quarries are worked. But even there, the color of the stone is far from consistent, ranging from buff through pink to deep purple. In any event, not all the contenders for a Maurya date are carved from buff-colored sandstone. Most notably, the pillar and capital from Sanchi is rather more pink than the others. But it may very well be the case that the stone all came from the Chunar quarries, perhaps owned by the crown. From the quarries, it could have been rolled down the hills to the Ganges river below and from there transported to the place or places where it was carved by sculptors. Unfortunately, the provenance of sedimentary rock such as sandstone, unlike igneous and metamorphic rock, cannot easily be determined by mineralogical techniques.[2]

The Pillars: What Are They?

By far the best known works attributed to the time of Ashoka are the pillars that bear his edicts, some seven edicts repeated on each of the inscribed pillars; occasionally an additional edict is added, one with local significance, for example, an admonition to the monks and nuns resident in the monastery at which the pillar was erected. The pillars are monolithic, generally some 13–14 meters in length, with a capital carved of a separate piece of stone and held in place with a very large metal dowel. Art historians generally have focused on the capital, which usually consists of a lotus-shaped component that supports a platform which, in turn, supports an animal or, in the case of two pillars, four addorsed animals.

Only two of the pillars remain standing and fully intact, one at Lauriya-Nandangarh, the other at Vaishali. The pillar at Lauriya-Nandangarh (fig. 17-1) stands some 12.3 meters above the present ground level. Like all the other pillars, it is monolithic, that is carved from a single piece of stone, with the capital carved from a separate piece of stone. A very large metal dowel secures the capital to the pillar shaft. The capital of this pillar, like some of the other pillars, consists of a lotus-shaped member – often described as bell-shaped, thinking of the characteristic European bell – surmounted by a platform, commonly described as an abacus, using the Latin term for the round portion of an architectural pillar that stands between the pillar shaft and the architrave of a building. In the case of the Lauriya-Nandangarh pillar, as in the case of two others, the

FIGURE 17-1 Pillar with inscriptions of Ashoka, Lauriya-Nandangarh, Bihar. Polished buff sandstone. Photograph by the author.

abacus is adorned with pecking geese. A crouching lion stands atop the pillar, the shaft of which carries the edicts of Ashoka.

The other intact pillar, which also has a lion as the capital, is at Vaishali (fig. 17-2). Until recent excavations revealed much more of the pillar shaft, it appeared rather stunted. The stone is not polished, nor is the shaft inscribed. And the lion at the top stands on an unadorned square platform, not the round one used for each of the other intact pillar capitals. Is that difference enough to declare that this is not a pillar of Ashoka's time?

In the absence of an inscription, there is no conclusive proof that the Vaishali pillar is from Ashoka's time. But even if there were an inscription, that would not be conclusive proof since the final words of the seventh pillar inscription remind us that standing pillars were to be inscribed with Ashoka's edicts.[3] Nonetheless, this pillar is sufficiently different that it may predate Ashoka's reign. John Irwin postulates that it is a pre-Ashokan monument that was an object of veneration in the third century BCE and thus was protected from anyone who might want to inscribe it.[4] Its stunted appearance at the time Irwin wrote might have suggested that it stood at the head of the series, dating earlier than the tall, elegant pillars. But there is also evidence for dating it later than Ashoka's time. The Bharhut railing, a product of about 150 BCE, has a gateway whose cross members are supported by lions bearing some resemblance to the one on the Vaishali pillar, that is, less ferocious and generally more abstract than the Lauriya-Nandangarh one. And they, too, stand on a square, not round, pedestal. Thus it is possible that the Vaishali pillar dates after Ashoka's time, when his edicts were no longer current and thus not pertinent for inscription on the pillar.

Several of the pillars have fallen and remain lying at the site where they were erected, almost invariably the site of a Buddhist monastery. Of these, the most famous is the pillar at Sarnath, on the outskirts of Varanasi, and site of the Buddha's first sermon. It is not so much the pillar lying within a protective structure on the site but rather the capital with four addorsed lions presently housed in the Sarnath Museum that has achieved fame as the emblem of the contemporary Republic of India.

Four addorsed lions also crown the pillar that once stood at Sanchi, just beyond the south gateway of the Great Stupa, a monument whose foundation is attributed to Ashoka. This pillar, too, carries a supplementary inscription admonishing the monks and nuns against schism. Its abacus, however, differs from the abacus of the Sarnath pillar, following instead the patterns of those with single lions, that is, with pecking geese. The remains of the pillar still lie outside the stupa's south gateway, whose imposts, consisting of addorsed lions on a round abacus, echo the form of the pillar capital. The capital itself is housed in the Sanchi Museum at the base of the hill.

Only one site has yielded two pillars. At Rampurva one pillar with a detached lion capital very much like the one at Lauriya-Nandangarh, 24 kilometers south, and another pillar with a detached bull capital (fig. 17-3) were found. The lion

FIGURE 17-2 Uninscribed pillar, Vaishali, Bihar. Unpolished buff sandstone. Photograph by the author.

FIGURE 17-3 Bull capital, Rampurva, Bihar. Unpolished buff sandstone. Now at the entrance to Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. Archaeological Survey of India, Janpath. Photograph by the author.

pillar, polished as is its capital, is inscribed with the usual edicts; the bull pillar, unpolished, is not inscribed. Irwin suggests that the bull capital is older, a work dating before Ashoka's time. Because, he argues, it did not stand on a foundation stone, distributing the weight in the moist soil, it would be less stable than those later pillars, such as the lion pillar at this same site, which do stand on foundation stones.[5] In fact, Irwin suggests the possibility that the pillar with the lion capital was erected specifically to replace a fallen pillar, the one with a bull capital.[6] That might explain two pillars at a single location, that is, the site of a monastery. We cannot, however, overlook the possibility that the bull capital dates later, to a time when the edicts of Ashoka were no longer current.

Both Faxian and Xuanzang, Chinese pilgrims of the fifth and seventh centuries respectively, report two sites that did have two pillars: at the entrance to the Jetavana garden just outside Shravasti, and at Kushinagar, the site of the Buddha's demise.[7] One of the Jetavana pillars, in fact, was crowned by an ox, they report; they don't indicate the capitals of the Kushinagar pillars. No pillar has been found at either of the sites presently identified as Shravasti and Kushinagar, although one writer has suggested that the site recognized as Kushinagar by both the Archaeological Survey of India and by the pilgrims who regularly visit it has been misidentified. Instead, he would identify Rampurva as the site of the Buddha's demise, that is, as Kushinagar.[8]

We thus only imagine that we know the location of the sites associated with the life of the Buddha. In some instances, for example, Lumbini, the site of the Buddha's birth, we know where Ashoka believed the locus to be because he said so in his pillar inscription. In other cases, we follow the guidance of Chinese pilgrims who wrote about the sites they visited long after they were there. And in other cases, we use information such as seals that report the name of a particular monastery. It is important to remember that art historians and archaeologists, rather like the Buddhist pilgrims, operate on a degree of faith, in this case, faith in their judgments. But it is equally important to remember that faith is often tinged with a degree of doubt and that truth is fluid and far from absolute. Thus present-day identification of sites may not represent the locus of the event at the time of the Buddha.

One more pillar capital remains intact, the one at Sankissa (fig. 17-4), called Sankasya in Sanskrit, the site where the Buddha descended to earth, accompanied by Indra and Brahma, after preaching in the Trayastrimsha Heaven. This capital consists of an elephant mounted on an abacus adorned with floral motifs very much like those of the Rampurva bull capital. Also like the Rampurva bull, this

Figure 17-4 Elephant capital, Sankissa, Uttar Pradesh. Unpolished buff sandstone. Photograph by the author.

elephant capital is largely unpolished – largely, that is, because some traces of polish may be seen on the floral décor of the abacus. The pillar on which the capital stood has never been found, suggesting the possibility that it was never erected.

In addition to these capitals and their pillars, we have a few capital fragments, e.g. the abacus from the Allahabad pillar, now in the Allahabad Museum, and an abacus adorned with floral motifs from Basti, in Uttar Pradesh, now in the Lucknow Museum. And there are a great many pillars that are attributed to the time of Ashoka though usually without any substantive evidence. An association with Ashoka gives a work, even the stump of a pillar, an apparent quality that links it with that magical moment in Indian history.

The Pillars: Where Did They Come From?

It is not hard to imagine that a 1,600-year hiatus without any works of art, at least not in durable materials, followed by the unprecedented appearance of these pillars and possibly also by figural sculptures such as those discussed below, would generate a range of hypotheses regarding their origins. Some have imagined that wooden pillars were regularly erected, ones that served as an "Indra *khila*" or stake symbolically separating the heavens and earth.[9] There is, in fact, some evidence for wooden pillars.[10] Others, assuming no indigenous artists capable of producing works such as these, have looked toward Iran as a source. They postulate that artists were driven eastward in the wave of Alexander's attack on Persepolis in 330 BCE, and that they found refuge in the Maurya court.[11] That, too, may be, although not just artists but all sorts of professionals would have been driven toward India if this hypothesis were correct. In any event, it would not be sufficient to explain the sudden appearance of pillars during the time of Ashoka, some 80 years after the sack of Persepolis. It is hardly likely that skilled artists were sitting idly for that long and then suddenly found employment, and at something like age 100 had the strength to fashion pillars such as the ones that carry Ashoka's edicts.

Still others argue that long before Ashoka's time, stone pillars had been erected. The seventh edict on the inscribed pillars implies as much, stating "This *dhammalipi* [writing about righteous law] should be inscribed where stone pillars or tablets are found so that it may long endure."[12] Perhaps, then, some pillars did stand prior to the time of Ashoka, but if his scribes and other authorities of his time followed this admonition, then even the pre-Ashokan pillars would carry his edicts. Yet curiously this seems to have been ignored by scholars, since all the pillars commonly ascribed to a date before his reign are uninscribed.

Ashoka and his Maurya predecessors, however, lived in a well-connected world. It was global insofar as the major world economies and cultures were in regular contact. It would not be hard to imagine a world system operative at that time, not one based on modern capitalism and the colonial enterprise that accompanied it, and certainly not one that was centered on Europe. At this time,

Europe, except for the Adriatic, was the hinterlands; there was no compelling reason for Alexander to look westward, that is, toward cultures with very limited natural resources and still more limited manufacturing. But those cultures that counted – the Indians, the Greeks, and the Persians, for example – were in close contact, exchanging goods and ideas and even ambassadors. Indeed some of our most vivid images of the Maurya capital, Pataliputra, come from the Greek ambassador, Megasthenes (*c.* 350–290 BCE), whose writings are not preserved in their entirety but were extensively quoted by other Greek writers.[13] Thus Ashoka would have had no difficulty drawing his artists from any part of the civilized world, much as the sixth–fourth century BCE Achaemenian monarchs did. Just as the stone workers employed by Darius (r. 522–486 BCE) at Susa were Ionians and Sardians,[14] so Ashoka would have had no trouble hiring the most skilled stone-workers available anywhere. Indeed, there is much to suggest that the artists were at the very least familiar with Mediterranean motifs and styles. The floral motifs of the Rampurva bull and Sankissa elephant capitals, for example, echo forms well known in the Mediterranean, and one scholar has observed that the lion capitals "are carved in cosmopolitan heraldic style."[15] Even if the artists were indigenous, the styles and motifs may well be a visual reference to Ashoka's global connections, that is a proclamation that this dynasty, or more specifically, this ruler, was not in any way provincial.

The Pillars: Why Are They Placed Where They Are?

Every one of the pillars generally accepted as dating to Ashoka's time stands or once stood at the site of a Buddhist monastery. And clearly at least two of the pillars bear inscriptions that are addressed to monks and nuns resident in these monasteries, not to Ashoka's subjects more generally. Does that mean that the monasteries' residents were the primary target audience for the pillars and their inscriptions? Certainly the law promulgated in the inscriptions relates more to righteous ethical behavior than to secular legal injunctions. Nevertheless, the emperor is very much at the heart of the edicts, and they indicate, as Romila Thapar has noted, his personal relationship with the Buddhist order.[16] But there is more, I would guess, than simply a monastic audience for the pillars.

Ashoka inherited an enormous empire, one far larger than the present Republic of India. He expanded that empire with the conquest of Kalinga, a kingdom comprising a large part of present-day Orissa on India's east coast, a kingdom that gave Ashoka critical seaports for trade with Southeast Asia. But how could a monarch ruling from his capital in Pataliputra, present-day Patna, located far in the eastern part of this empire, assert control over his distant lands? This question must have weighed heavily on Ashoka, especially given the unfamiliar languages and cultures of the most distant parts of his realm.

But expanding Buddhism and the visual elements of the faith may well have served as an effective means of securing this far-flung empire. Ashoka is said to

have opened the original stupas containing the ashes of the Buddha and distributed them among some 84,000 stupas, a number often used to express hyperbole in ancient India. The number matters far less than the sage political act of extending a religion that was largely localized in Ashoka's core area, the kingdom of Magadha, and bringing with it the visual elements – perhaps initially just stupas – to areas in which Buddhism had not been a significant force. With those stupas went Buddhist practitioners, that is, monks who brought with them Magadhan culture and a loyalty to the emperor. Ashoka's construction of new stupas provided an opportunity to erect pillars, often inscribed ones. And even if the messages were ostensibly directed to the monks and nuns resident in the monastery, they nevertheless would have clear impact on the laity who might see them, even from a distance, a clear indication of imperial presence and authority even in the hinterlands. This is very much akin to strategies followed subsequently, for example, by the Chola queen Sembiyan Mahadevi (tenth century CE), who built temples and installed gods not at the center but rather on the periphery, precisely where royal authority would feel distant and diminished.[17]

John Irwin has implied, though perhaps not stated explicitly, that Ashoka's pillars were erected along two paths that converged on the Maurya capital.[18] Very likely he is right. Thus the stupas that Ashoka erected and the monasteries in which they were housed were not capriciously located but rather sited to ensure maximum visibility by travelers. The monasteries served the religious needs of the monks and nuns resident in them, but they also served the more practical needs of travelers, for example, merchants carrying valuable goods. Within the walls of a monastery, they could be reasonably sure of their own safety as well as that of their merchandise. And while there, they could not help but notice the tall pillar, which still today stands out from a considerable distance away. Even if a merchant were unable to read, the monks and nuns resident in the monastery would be able to read – and, more important, to interpret – the edicts inscribed on the pillars.

The Pillars: What Did They Mean in Asoka's Time?

Why a pillar as the means to carry and convey the edicts, and why the capital? Interpreting the past, the historian's primary job, is always fraught. At best, we art historians can construct a story, one that may explain an artist's intent. But we cannot insist that there is one and only one interpretation of a past; nor can we assume that viewers in the past understood the artist's intention, much less the one we impute to the artist.

The general sense, based on the brilliant textual studies of Paul Mus, is that the pillar represents the world axis (*axis mundi*), an elevated place that symbolically, not geographically, marks the center of the world, a charged locus that is enormously sacred.[19] Such elevated places include mountains, the locus of gods, from which law is disseminated, for example, Mount Sinai or the mountain that

the Babylonian king Hammurabi ascended to receive the law code recorded on his famous stele now in the Louvre. Thus a pillar would be an especially appropriate source for the dissemination of secular law, that is, the law promulgated by Ashoka. It would reinforce by a sacred association the authority of the law.

Others may have seen the pillar as suggestive of the cosmic pillar or world axis, viewing it as standing at the conceptual center of the world, if not at its geographic center. And still others, Irwin argues, might have seen it as symbolic of the Indra *khila*, the stake that secured the firmament to the cosmic ocean on which it floats and also secures the heavens in their place above the earth.[20]

The capital as much as the pillar carried the meaning, one generally associated with universality, a theme important both to the message inscribed on the pillars and also to the extent of Ashoka's authority. The geese, for example, on the abacus of the Lauriya-Nandangarh, Rampurva lion, and Sanchi capitals suggest that sense of universality since geese were recognized as inhabiting the multiple realms of the universe: they dive beneath the surface of waters, symbolically the primordial waters on which the firmament floats, they walk upon the land, and they fly into the sky, symbolically the heavens. And the lion at the summit of the pillar simultaneously symbolizes royal authority, as lions did in ancient India, and also the Buddha, whose words were said to be like the lion's roar and whose epithet, Shakyasimha, describes him as the lion (*simha*) of his clan, the Shakya clan.

An even more powerful symbol of universality, at least to those who could read it, is the Sarnath capital. The wheel that once surmounted the shared backs of the capital's four addorsed lions likely refers both to the wheel of the law (*dharmachakra*), which the Buddha is said to have set in motion right there at Sarnath when he preached his first sermon. It also probably refers to the wheel of the ideal universal monarch, known as a *chakravartin*, literally wheel-turner, as Ashoka likely sought to present himself. By doing so, he linked his identity to that of the Buddha, who also was a wheel-turner as he set out the eight-fold path and Middle Way in his first sermon. In both cases, the wheel moves continuously and ubiquitously through space, carrying the righteous message of the Buddha or the chakravartin. This capital, unlike any of the others, has an abacus adorned with four animals – a bull, lion, elephant and horse – each separated by a wheel, reinforcing the symbolism of the larger wheel atop the capital. The four addorsed lions represent the cardinal directions, as we learn from a much later manuscript in which the lions are labeled,[21] as if they roar the message of the Buddha or the chakravartin, Ashoka in this case, to the four corners. Indeed, one Buddhist text, the *Maha-Sihanada Sutta* (*Great Discourse on the Lion's Roar*) explicitly links the wheel and lion with its refrain, "[the Buddha] roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and sets rolling the Wheel of Brahma [wheel of the law]."[22]

The abacus of this capital at Sarnath even more specifically suggests universality, referring to a myth regarding Lake Anavatapta, imagined to lie at the center of the world. At the center of the lake, a great waterspout arose, and from it were generated four streams, each channeled through the mouth of a

gargoyle-like animal at the edge of the lake, the very four animals depicted on the abacus of this pillar. From there, the rivers flowed to the four corners of the earth. Jean Przyluski sees the pillar as representing the waterspout and the four animals on the abacus suggesting the streams not otherwise visually implied. The notion, however, is that, like the streams that flow to the corners of the earth, so the Buddha's words and those of Ashoka inscribed on the pillar should have universal currency.[23]

As for the shape of the capital, it is almost surely a stylized lotus, a very common pedestal for figures in the art of India. On the Bharhut railing, a product of *c.* 150 BCE, we see many figures standing on a lotus, whose form clearly resembles that of the pillar capitals: the drooping petals are stylized as the pillar capital's flutes, the capital's rope pattern between the bell and abacus is a stylization based on the flower's stamens, while the abacus is based on the flower's pistil. The pillar, then, in addition to symbolizing the *axis mundi*, suggests the lotus stem growing from mud at the bottom of a lake, and indeed the pillars are generally placed where the water table is high.

Finally, what about the vegetal motifs that appear on the Rampurva bull and Sankissa elephant capitals? They seem to have an association with the Mediterranean, as Daniel Schlumberger noted.[24] Some might take this as indicative of the hand of a non-Indian artist, although it is hard to imagine why an artist from the west might work on the abacus, while an indigenous artist, one thoroughly familiar with Indian bulls and elephants, would work on the capital. Rather, we might imagine that these motifs, too, refer to universality, that is, the universality of both the Buddha's law and Ashoka's *dharma* expounded on the pillars. By incorporating motifs from distant lands, the pillars and their messages are clearly not intended to speak only domestically.

The Pillars: What Did They Mean after Ashoka's Time?

The revival or reuse of the past is common to most cultures, but in India no period's visual production has been invoked as frequently as Ashoka's has been. Not clear, however, is the extent to which anyone in subsequent periods, except the modern, really knew that it was Ashoka's art that was being reused and revived. If not associated specifically with Ashoka, the artworks were understood to link the present to an historic past of great importance since invariably Ashoka's monuments, not those of other periods, are selected for reuse. The monuments thus continued to have a special, maybe magical, quality long after the period of their production.

Ashoka's Allahabad pillar, preserved within the late sixteenth-century Mughal fort overlooking the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers, might be cited as the first work given a second life, one that recalls its initial meaning.[25] On this pillar, supplementing Ashoka's edicts, the Gupta monarch Samudragupta (*c.* 335–80 CE) wrote his famous world-conquering (*digvijaya*) inscription, one

in which he describes his victorious march over the myriad kingdoms he vanquished. The victory march extended all the way to the east coast of India and far into the south, possibly a considerable exaggeration and certainly not a claim that indicated sustained control of these far-flung kingdoms. But his inscription suggests an empire not unlike Ashoka's, and the use of Ashoka's pillar to make this claim symbolically situates himself at the center of the world, a center from which his authority should be seen as universal. That very pillar was subsequently used by the Mughal emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–28) to proclaim his succession to the throne, as if securing his legacy by linking himself not to his father, Akbar, against whom he had rebelled, but rather to Ashoka and Samudragupta, representatives of India's illustrious past. Today the Allahabad pillar is carefully maintained by the Indian Army, which guards it with such protective care that it is off limits to the eyes of any scholar.

How precisely the Sultanate ruler Firuz Shah Tughluq (1309–88) understood the pillars is uncertain, but he regarded them as imbued with sufficient qualities of authority that he expended huge effort and massive expense to bring two of them to his capital, Delhi. As Finbarr Barry Flood notes, he saw them as wonders (*'aja'ib*), not representative of any specific moment in history.[26] One, from Topra, near Khizrabad in Punjab, was toppled onto a soft, pillow-like bed, then brought on a 42-wheel cart down to the Yamuna river and from there floated to Firuz Shah's fort in Delhi, where it presently stands. Firuz Shah brought a second pillar to Delhi from Meerut, again as if bringing the authority of a past age to his own capital and thus his rule.

But certainly most famous is the subsequent life of the Sarnath capital. The flag of the Republic of India, adopted just prior to independence in 1947, includes the wheel of the Sarnath abacus within the central white stripe. Described as the Ashoka chakra, it is taken as a symbol of virtue, as dharma was conceived by India's first president. The entire capital subsequently was adopted as the emblem of the Republic of India, appearing on government buildings, passports, and even the second postal stamp issued by the newly independent country.

The pillars, especially those that are inscribed, most clearly have Maurya origins. They serve, then, as touchstones – that is, as bases of comparison – for uninscribed works that might have Maurya origins, for example, several figural sculptures discussed in the following section. However, these figural sculptures present issues with more than simply the date of their creation.

Figural Sculpture

A very small number of figures contend for attribution to the Maurya period, specifically to the time of Ashoka. None of them is inscribed with a date of any sort, so it is largely their size, a degree of naturalism found also on the pillar capitals, and the use of a brilliant polish that leads to their common identification as Ashokan in date.

In addition to their style and polished finish, four of the works generally described as Ashokan were found at or very near Patna, site of ancient Pataliputra, the Maurya capital, further supporting their Maurya attribution. First among these four is the life-size female figure found on the banks of the Ganges at Didarganj, on the eastern outskirts of Patna. It is almost ubiquitously identified as Maurya in date, more specifically from the time of Ashoka, and it is widely described as a *yakshi* (nature divinity). It shares with many of the pillars both features that are naturalistic (the cloth sash) and those that are rather stylized (the treatment of the abdomen). And it is treated with a brilliantly polished finish, so closely and exclusively associated with the time of Ashoka that it is widely called Maurya polish. In addition, it is a life-size free-standing figure quite different from the relief format that is generally used in subsequent periods. Those are features of the other figural sculptures attributed to Ashoka's time: two male figures from Patna City, usually called the Patna *Yakshas* (fig. 17-5), and a nude male torso from the section of Patna known as Lohanipur. But are these shared characteristics sufficient to ascribe these works to the third century BCE? Might they, rather, represent a style and technique that was common to Pataliputra rather than one linked to a specific moment in time? Some features of these works suggest an association with Kushan-period sculpture from Mathura, that is, works dating close to the second century CE.[27]

Occasionally a few other figures are presented as dating to Ashoka's time, for example, an enormous male figure from Parkham, near Mathura, and two female figures from Beshnagar. These figures are neither polished nor stylistically related to the others. The only feature they share with those commonly described as Maurya or Ashokan is the fact that they are large and free-standing. That is certainly not sufficient to date them to Ashoka's time.

Indian art, not just during Ashoka's time but throughout its history, is a great deal more complex than commonly presented. To assume, as some do, that only relief art was produced at a particular moment in time, even during a relatively long period such as the second and first centuries BCE, misunderstands the rich variety of Indian art. While much very interesting art during those two centuries is relief sculpture adorning stupa railings and gateways, there certainly were fully independent sculptures in the round as well. Similarly, we should not assume that sculpture during the period of Kushana authority was restricted to the broad region of Gandhara and the single center of Mathura. While it is true that in north India, excluding Gandhara, every inscribed Kushana-period sculpture we know was made at Mathura, even if it was then exported to some other place, that does not preclude the possibility that sculptures were produced elsewhere, even in Pataliputra. It is only if we allow no possibility that sculptures were produced outside of Mathura during the Kushana period that the four sculptures commonly called Maurya must be considered Ashokan. But if we admit the possibility that artists were working outside of Mathura, then we must ask whether these sculptures might date to the Kushana period. And if we accept the likelihood that artists produced both relief and sculpture in the round in

FIGURE 17-5 Standing male figure, commonly called a yaksha, Patna City, Patna, Bihar. Polished buff sandstone blackened by pollution. Indian Museum, Kolkata. Photograph by the author.

the eight or ten generations between Ashoka's time and the beginning of the Kushana period, then still more possibilities arise for these sculptures from Pataliputra and for other life-size sculptures in the round.

The debate about the sculptures' date is part of their modern life. After all, that was not an issue for anyone who treated them as objects of devotion, as once they were. Likewise, their identity as yakshas or yakshis, an identity assigned by modern scholarship: a good guess, but only a guess, at the identity they were assigned by their makers or early worshipers. That identity has led some to see them as popular figures, distinct even in style from the more lofty imperial products, that is, the pillars. And, as they have been transformed from objects of worship to archaeological relics and museumified objects, complete with special lighting and catalogue numbers, they most decidedly have been given new identities. Indeed, as the Didarganj figure has traveled even as far as the National Gallery of Art in Washington, one might imagine that her new identity requires a passport.[28]

Finally, what does the problem of dating the sculptures say about the date of those pillars? There is a highly compelling reason to view at least the inscribed ones as dating to Ashoka's time, but all of this hinges on the inscriptions, not on the style of the pillars or their capitals. The edicts, which we say were issued by Ashoka, begin not with his name but rather with the statement that in such-and-such a year of his reign, Devanampriya Piyadasi (the beloved of the gods) promulgated the following edict. From the time James Prinsep deciphered Brahmi script, about 1830, until about 1915, scholars could only guess that Devanampiya Piyadasi was Ashoka. Only with the discovery of the inscription at Maski, in present-day Karnataka, was that identity made certain, for it refers to the monarch as Devanampriya Ashoka. So we can be reasonably sure that at least the inscribed pillars described as Maurya really do date to Ashoka's time. But were the pillars the only sculptural art of the period? Just as we might ask whether only relief sculpture was produced during the generations immediately after Ashoka's time, so we might ask whether only pillars and their capitals were produced during his reign. I close this section with a question, not with an answer because there is and presently cannot be any definitive response.

Ashoka's Capital

Even in antiquity, Ashoka was the stuff of legends. Nearly a half millennium after his time, a text known as the *Ashokavadana* (the story of Ashoka) was composed from memories about the monarch. It was of such importance that the Chinese pilgrim Faxian translated it into Chinese in the fifth century; he obviously admired Ashoka greatly as his narrative of sites in India repeatedly attributes monuments to the king.

That admiration of Ashoka and the continued making of legends about him persisted into modern times as western scholars sought to imagine him in ways

that no other Indian king was visualized. He lived in a palace, as kings do after all. And so his palace had to be found even though no other royal residence until the time of Akbar was identified. Thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century, L. A. Waddell began a quest to identify Ashoka's capital.[29] Pataliputra was real because it had an identity described by the Greeks, not some "tangled fable and conjecture" found in "native" histories, as Waddell described them.[30] Waddell recognizes Pataliputra as the "splendid capital of the celebrated warrior-prince Asoka."[31] He refers to Ashoka's gigantic stone buildings and so, "recognizing the importance of recovering, if possible, for science and the history of civilization, some of the monuments and records of this great lost city," set out to find Ashoka's capital. As others before him had done, he used the records of Chinese pilgrims as his guide to the city. What he found, he contended, matched so perfectly the description of Xuanzang that he knew precisely where to excavate. And indeed, he found what he was looking for: "I found that portions of the old wooden walls of the city as described by Megasthenes still existed in this area, actually *in situ*!"[32]

The most important find in the Bulandibagh, the site in Patna that Waddell identified with the Maurya capital, was a single quasi-Ionic pillar capital (fig. 17-6) that he describes as "of a distinctly Greek type." According to Waddell, using italics and exclamation points, the capital was "*found within the palace precincts of* Asoka's *own capital, and is probably of* Asoka's *own age*!"[33] That was sufficient

Figure 17-6 Pillar capital, Bulandibagh, Patna, Bihar. Unpolished buff sandstone. Patna Museum, Patna. Photograph by the author.

to confirm the classical Greek connection that Waddell and others knew from the account of Megasthenes. Waddell must have imagined Ashoka as a sort of Hellenophile, who naturally would look toward Greece as a source of inspiration. He seems to ignore, however, Megasthenes' own awe at Pataliputra.

Aside from that capital, which may be a product of Ashoka's time, though this is not something we can say with certainty, little was found at the site that may be attributed to the Maurya age. A pillar found in fragments, Waddell claims, is Ashokan. In subsequent excavations, a total of 80 pillars carved from spotted buff-colored sandstone were found, all of them described as luminously polished. The Archaeological Survey of India, which today protects the site and charges admission to see the barely perceptible ruins, identifies the pillars as the supporting members of either the palace of Ashoka, his audience hall, the throne room of Mauryas, a pleasure hall, or the conference hall for the third Buddhist council held at Pataliputra in the third century BCE during the reign of Ashoka.

The Caves

We conclude this story with a story, one of the most compelling and elegantly written English tales of colonialism. E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* is divided into three sections, one representing each of India's major religions: Mosque, Caves, and Temple. The caves, called in the novel the Marabar Caves, are, in fact, the caves of the Barabar Hills, products of Maurya patronage and located about 85 kilometers south of Patna.

Forster's description of the caves says much more about what actually happened in the darkness between Dr. Aziz and Adela Quested than it does about the actual appearance of the rock-cut sanctuaries:

> They are dark caves. Even when they open towards the sun, very little light penetrates down the entrance tunnel into the circular chamber. There is little to see, and no eye to see it, until the visitor arrives for his five minutes, and strikes a match. Immediately another flame rises in the depths of the rock and moves towards the surface like an imprisoned spirit; the walls of the circular chamber have been most marvellously polished. The two flames approach and strive to unite, but cannot, because one of them breathes air, the other stone. A mirror inlaid with lovely colors divides the lovers, delicate stars of pink and grey interpose, exquisite nebulae, shadings fainter than the tail of a comet or the midday moon, all the evanescent life of the granite, only here visible. Fists and fingers thrust upon the advancing soil – here at last is their skin, finer than any covering acquired by the animals, smoother than windless water, more voluptuous than love. The radiance increases, the flames touch one another, kiss, expire. The cave is dark again, like all the caves.[34]

The caves were provided by Ashoka for the Ajivika sect, a religion that no longer remains; his son, Dasharatha, provided caves for the Ajivikas in the nearby Nagarjuni Hills. The form of each of the sanctuaries is quite similar to one another,

perhaps best typified by the Sudama cave. A plain entrance with inward sloping jambs leads to a large rectangular chamber; at one end of the chamber is a smaller circular chamber with domed roof that may reflect the form of a thatched hut. The interior is polished, as are so many of the other works attributed to the time of Ashoka. Of the caves, only one, the Lomas Rishi cave, bears any sort of relief carving. This, certainly the best known of all the Barabar caves, is adorned with an arched form above the doorway. Below the arched form is a lattice-work decoration that does not fully pierce the stone and allow light to enter the rectangular chamber. And just below that is a relief with four pairs of elephants, each pair walking toward a structure that looks rather like a stupa, and a crocodile-like animal (*makara*) at each end.

If this were a temple such as those we know from the fifth century onward, we could relate the rectangular chamber to the temple porchway (*mandapa*) in which the worshiper stands before the threshold of the sanctum, which might be related to the circular chamber. But in fact, we know almost nothing about the Ajivikas and so have no sense of their ritual practices. At best we can construct a story based on the sole surviving Ajivika shrine, these caves of the Barabar Hills.

Conclusion

The question to ask in conclusion might not be, what do we know about the art of Ashoka's time, but rather, what stories can we tell? As we narrate them, we need to ask, do they tell us more about art that might have been fabricated in the third century BCE or about the ways that this period was imagined? Do they, in other words, tell us at least as much about subsequent periods and the construction of history as they do about Ashoka and his visual world?

Notes

1 The period is probably best discussed by Romila Thapar in her *Early India*, especially pp. 69–173. Books on the pottery of the period are either conference proceedings or cover a single type of pottery, e.g. Painted Grey Ware or Northern Black Polished Ware.

2 For further information on the Chunar quarries, though not on the issue of determining the provenance of the stone, see Jayaswal, *From Stone Quarry to Sculpturing Workshop*.

3 Ashoka's seventh pillar edict concludes, "This inscription . . . is to be engraved wherever there are stone pillars or stone slabs, that it may last long." Thus if the pillar had been standing during Ashoka's time, there is probably compelling reason to believe that it would have been inscribed. See Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*.

4 Irwin, "'Aśokan' Pillars: A Reassessment of the Evidence," 714. This is the first in Irwin's series of four articles on the pillars published in *The Burlington Magazine*.

5 Irwin, "'Aśokan' Pillars IV: Symbolism," 737; Irwin, "True Chronology," 248.
6 Irwin, "True Chronology," 264.
7 For translations of Faxian and Xuanzang's texts, see Beal, *Si-yi-ki*.
8 Phelps, "Lumbini on Trial."
9 Irwin, "'Aśokan' Pillars IV: Symbolism," 738.
10 Irwin, "'Aśokan' Pillars II: Structure," 726.
11 Bachhofer, *Early Indian Sculpture*, 3; Marshall, "The Monuments of Ancient India," 621.
12 See Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*.
13 Majumdar, *Classical Accounts of India*.
14 Sen, *Old Persian Inscriptions*.
15 Irwin, "'Aśokan' Pillars II: Structure," 722.
16 Thapar, *Early India*, 200.
17 Kaimal, "Early Cōḻa Kings," 33–66, esp. 63.
18 Irwin, "'Aśokan' Pillars," 717.
19 Mus, *Barabudur*.
20 Irwin, "'Aśokan' Pillars IV: Symbolism," 739–40.
21 Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa*.
22 See Rhys-Davids, *The Dīgha Nikāya*.
23 Jean Przyluski, "Le symbolisme du pilier de Sarnath."
24 Daniel Schlumberger, "Descendants non-méditerranéens de l'art grec."
25 The Yamuna river is also referred to as the Jamuna or the Jumna river.
26 Flood, "Pillars, Palimpsests, and Princely Practices," 106.
27 For a more elaborate discussion of these figures, see Asher and Spink, "Maurya Figural Sculpture Reconsidered."
28 Guha-Thakurta, "The Endangered Yakshi"; Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*, 3–17.
29 Waddell, *Report on the Excavations at Pataliputra (Patna)*.
30 Waddell, *Report on the Excavations at Pataliputra (Patna)*, 2.
31 Waddell, *Report on the Excavations at Pataliputra (Patna)*, 6. Note that Ashoka, who ruled a land several score greater than Waddell's own Britain, is identified only as a prince, a rather common trope in British India, e.g. the princes of Rajasthan, all apparently subordinate to a parental monarch, presumably the one on the British throne. Waddell spells the ruler's name Asoka, without diacriticals, in the published version of his text.
32 Waddell, *Report on the Excavations at Pataliputra (Patna)*, 15.
33 Waddell, *Report on the Excavations at Pataliputra (Patna)*, 17.
34 Forster, *A Passage to India*, 137–8.

References

Asher, Frederick M., and Walter M. Spink, "Maurya Figural Sculpture Reconsidered." *Ars Orientalis* 19 (1989): 1–25.

Bachhofer, Ludwig. *Early Indian Sculpture*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929.

Beal, Samuel, trans. and ed. *Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1906.

Davis, Richard H. *Lives of Indian Images*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Flood, Finbarr B. "Pillars, Palimpsests, and Princely Practices; Translating the Past in Sultanate Delhi." *Res* 43 (Spring, 2003): 95–116.

Forster, E. M. *A Passage to India*. New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1965 [1924].

Guha-Thakurta, Tapati. "The Endangered Yakshi: Careers of an Ancient Art Object in Modern India." In *History and the Present*, edited by Partha Chatterjee and Anjan Ghosh, 51–75. London: Anthem Press, 2002.

Hultzsch, E. *Inscriptions of Aśoka*. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol. I. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925.

Irwin, John. "'Aśokan' Pillars: A Reassessment of the Evidence." *The Burlington Magazine* 115 no. 4 (November, 1973): 706–20.

Irwin, John. "'Aśokan' Pillars: A Reassessment of the Evidence – II: Structure." *The Burlington Magazine* 116 no. 4 (December, 1974): 712–27.

Irwin, John. "'Aśokan' Pillars: A Reassessment of the Evidence – III: Capitals." *The Burlington Magazine* 117 no. 4 (October, 1975): 631–43.

Irwin, John. "'Aśokan' Pillars: A Reassessment of the Evidence – IV: Symbolism." *The Burlington Magazine* 118 no. 4 (November, 1976): 734–53.

Irwin, John. "The True Chronology of Aśokan Pillars." *Artibus Asiae* 44 no. 4 (1983): 247–65.

Jayaswal, Vidula. *From Stone Quarry to Sculpturing Workshop: A Report on the Archaeological Investigations around Chunar, Varanasi and Sarnath*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1998.

Kaimal, Padma. "Early Cōḻa Kings, and 'Early Cōḻa Temples': Art and the Evolution of Kingship." *Artibus Asiae* 56 (1996): 33–66.

Majumdar, R. C. *The Classical Accounts of India*. Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1960.

Marshall, John H. "The Monuments of Ancient India." In *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. 1: *Ancient India*, edited by Edward J. Rapson, 612–49. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mus, Paul. *Barabudur: esquisse d'une histoire du Bouddhisme fondée sur la critique archéologique des texts* [*Outline of a History of Buddhism Based on an Archaeological Critique of the Texts*]. Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extrême-Orient, 1935; reprint edn., New York: Arno Press, 1978.

Phelps, T. A. "Lumbini on Trial: The Untold Story." Accessed 17 June 2010. http://www.lumkap.org.uk/

Przyluski, Jean. "Le symbolisme du pilier de Sarnath [The Symbolism of the Pillar at Sarnath]." *Études d'orientalisme à la mémoire de Raymonde Linossier* vol. II, 481–98. Paris: Musée Guimet, 1932.

Rhys-Davids, T. W., trans. *The Dīgha Nikāya* [*Collection of Long Discourses*]. 3 vols. London: Luzac, 1947–60.

Schlumberger, Daniel. "Descendants non-méditerranéens de l'art grec [Non-Mediterranean Descendants of Greek Art]." *Syria* 37 nos. 1/2 (1960): 131–66; Part II: *Syria* 37 nos. 3/4 (1960): 253–318.

Sen, Sukumar. *Old Persian Inscriptions of the Achaememian Emperors*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1941.

Snodgrass, Adrian. *The Symbolism of the Stupa*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1985.

Thapar, Romila. *Early India; from the Origins to AD 1300*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Waddell, L. A. *Report on the Excavations at Pataliputra (Patna), the Palibothra of the Greeks*. Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1903.

Further Reading

Ghosh, Amalananda. "The Pillars of Aśoka, Their Purpose." *East and West* n.s. 17 nos. 3–4 (1967): 273–5.

Huntington, John C. "The Lomās Ṛṣi: Another Look." *Archives of Asian Art* 28 (1974–5): 34–56.

Ray, Niharranjan. *Maurya and Post-Maurya Art: A Study in Social and Formal Contrasts*. New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1975.

Thapar, Romila. *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961; [2nd edn. 1973].

Part VI

Shifting Meanings

18

Art, Agency, and Networks in the Career of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616)

Morgan Pitelka

Introduction

The second half of the sixteenth century in Japan is famous for its heroes. In the realm of politics, three pre-eminent warlords fought wars, bribed enemies, and engaged in lavish pageantry in the process of unifying the country after a century of sporadic civil conflicts. These so-called Three Hegemons – Oda Nobunaga (1534–82), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–98), and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) – continue to shape our understanding of the period as a whole, particularly in a widespread assumption of the epic in popular culture and trade publications on the sixteenth century. In the arts, this age is referred to as the Momoyama period, and has been described as a moment in which "we find the spirit of the people so liberated and avant-garde as to excel ours in the late twentieth century in search of individualistic manifestations in various fields."[1] Artists such as the martyred tea master and designer Sen no Rikyu (1522–91), the mysterious founder of the Raku ceramic tradition Chojiro (dates unknown), and the prolific painter Kano Eitoku (1543–90), for example, are routinely discussed in terms of their individual creativity and genius, rendering them heroic actors who replicate the transformative politics of the Three Hegemons in the cultural realm.[2]

An alternative and deliberately provocative reading of the documentary record, however, indicates that some of the most influential historical agents in Japanese politics in the 1580s may have been a group of Chinese ceramics: a celadon incense burner named "Plover," a tea caddy named "First Flower," and a tea caddy named

"Nitta." These works have the particular combination of resonances seen in many powerful art objects: distinguished origins, noteworthy social biographies, contemporaneous fame that made them the target of the lust of many sixteenth-century warlords, and of course beauty and function. As we will see below, these objects also shaped the tension and political alliances between the more famous agents of the day, such as Hideyoshi and Ieyasu, as well as the practices of remembering and honoring these men centuries after their deaths.

This essay explores the role of visual and material culture in Ieyasu's life, as a struggling warlord, then as the founder of a new military regime, and eventually as a deity. It argues that objects have the power to compel people and to shape decisions. This is by no means a new idea in the study of art history. The small but influential body of scholarship on the social history of art – ranging from Frederick Antal's *Florentine Painting and Its Social Background* (1948) and Arnold Hauser's *The Social History of Art* (1951) to John Berger's 1973 book and BBC series *Ways of Seeing* – has emphasized the instrumental, rather than merely aesthetic, power of art objects. In the field of Asian art history, Craig Clunas's 1991 book *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* focuses on texts written about objects and art appreciation in the late Ming Period (1368–1644) as "one of the key areas of discourse which operated on its social fabric in a period of change."[3] Clunas is particularly interested in foregrounding the role that social status and power played in the production of art, influenced by the writings of Pierre Bourdieu on consumer culture and Arjun Appadurai on commoditization.[4] Clunas writes that "the accumulation of political, economic and cultural power on the part of elite consumers far outweighed the resources of the relatively weak producers, un-centralized, unorganized and relatively unconscious in their responses to the demands made on them by their customers."[5] In a later work, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (1997), Clunas argues that objects have situated meanings, not only in terms of place but in terms of time as well. "The physical mobility of the objects discussed here was not accidental, it was on the contrary central to their ability to constitute meaning, by appearing in certain contexts at certain times."[6] Ming paintings could function to ward off evil, move from one owner to the next as a simple gift, or mark a major event such as a birthday or wedding.

Following Clunas, the work of Philip Fisher on the social lives of art, and the more recent work of sociologist Bruno Latour, this essay posits that artworks function not merely as markers of status or objects of fetishism, but as actors in networks of information and influence that enable the careers of men such as Ieyasu.[7] The implications of an approach that acknowledges the agency of art is profound. Rather than seeing art as a product of a few exceptional human actors, or even as the result of a particular set of social or cultural conditions, it can be integrated into the overlapping collectives, the web of relations, performances, and practices that make up history. To put it another way, art objects are not products of an abstract entity called "society," external to the relations between

people. Rather, they are constituent and active elements inside of a messy system of relations, agents that relate as much by chance as by intentionality.[8]

Tokugawa Ieyasu's early biography is surprisingly lacking in direct references to art production, consumption, or exchange. This may be because his networks were small and his agency was highly constrained. Born in 1543 to a young warlord and his even younger wife, Ieyasu experienced a form of human trafficking at a young age that was one of the main characteristics of elite warrior society in the premodern period. Ieyasu's father was sandwiched among more powerful warlords who might invade his domain at any time, so he sent the boy as a hostage to the most dangerous of his neighbors to guarantee loyalty and safe conduct. But Ieyasu was kidnapped by a rival warlord along the way and supposedly looked after by a kindly master who taught him to identify birds. Soon his father died and he was summarily sent to the originally intended hostage-holder, Imagawa Yoshimoto, in whose care he would live until the age of 18.[9] Although hardly an ideal childhood, Ieyasu's life was not uncommon in an age of civil war, in which human bodies were often used as bargaining chips and guarantors. Certainly Ieyasu received the education that his status as the heir to the family name demanded: he studied the Chinese classics, learned the requisite military skills, studied tea culture and other social and cultural rituals, and when he reached the appropriate age, was married to one of Yoshimoto's vassals' daughters and then sent out on his first sortie.[10] Ieyasu also received the gift of a large sword from Yoshimoto in this period, one of the only objects that appears in the documentary record which would today be considered an example of "art." Later in his career Ieyasu would be almost constantly surrounded by artworks of various sorts, but in this moment in which he was under the power of a superior, we know little of his cultural activities. The Imagawa were certainly active as patrons of the arts and as students of tea, but the degree to which Ieyasu was involved is unknown.[11]

What was extraordinary about this period in Ieyasu's life was the timing of his opportunity to reclaim his independence. When he was 18, his liege Yoshimoto decided the time had come to invade the provinces to his west, and perhaps attempt to enter the capital city of Kyoto, seat of imperial and shogunal power, both of which had been weak for decades. Yoshimoto set out with his forces and began attacking fortifications in Owari province. However, the young warlord in Owari, Oda Nobunaga, attacked Yoshimoto – reportedly at night, under cover of a rainstorm, though this may be apocryphal – and the Oda army surprisingly defeated the larger Imagawa force and killed its leader. Ieyasu had been sent to guard supply lines and thus avoided the fate of his master.[12] He is said to have gathered his family vassals to him and headed to Okazaki Castle, the place of his birth and the hereditary headquarters of his family, to re-establish his rule. He soon allied himself to the young warlord who had eliminated Yoshimoto. In a matter of just a few years, Ieyasu found his position transformed from that of a hostage to that of an independent warlord partnered with the most vibrant warrior leader Japan had seen in a century.

This transformation involved, among other things, Ieyasu's entry into various networks, including those among neighboring warlords, among vassals of Nobunaga, and among elites and the artworks they coveted.

Ieyasu in Sakai: Saved by Tea

After Ieyasu established himself as an independent warlord and strengthened his position by partnering with Oda Nobunaga, he became more involved in national politics. Key to late sixteenth-century warrior politicking were gatherings that focused on cultural pursuits such as linked-verse poetry or tea, which became primary venues for alliance-building and decision-making, as well as conduits for the acquisition of the art that elite warriors used to communicate authority. Nobunaga in particular was well known as an enthusiastic patron of tea and its affiliated arts and he established the precedent of hiring experts in tea as members of his administration. Beginning in the late 1560s, for example, Nobunaga frequently employed the merchant and tea master Imai Sokyu (1520–93) from the port city of Sakai.[13] Sokyu helped supply Nobunaga in his near-constant war efforts, including the purchase of gunpowder; he also helped set up firearms manufacture in the province of Tajima on Nobunaga's behalf. Likewise, he hosted tea gatherings for Nobunaga and he was involved in the acquisition and exchange of art for Nobunaga and his vassals.

It was no accident that Sokyu hailed from the entrepot Sakai, one of the most influential commercial cities of the period. The port was home to international and national shipping outfits, wholesalers who dealt with the transshipment of estate rents, a range of merchants, and powerful temple complexes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[14] The city was by all accounts teeming with activity. Genre screens from the period, such as the painting of the Sumiyoshi festival (*Sumiyoshi sairei-zu byobu*), show shops selling goods to festival participants and bystanders on a network of densely crowded streets.[15] Sakai was home to a class of wealthy merchants who were quite independent and managed to shield their city from much of the violence that visited other parts of Japan in a period of political instability. One Jesuit visitor to the city in the 1560s remarked:

> Unlike Sakai, Japan in general is not a tranquil country. In the provinces, there are disturbances everywhere. These are unknown in Sakai. Vanquished and victors can come here to live in peace. Here, they talk, instead of fighting. There is no disorder in the city's districts . . . In each district are lookout towers ready to intervene in case of brawls . . . The city has a secure position, surrounded by the sea and by moats filled with water.[16]

In fact the leading council of the city's merchant elders maintained a certain degree of independence and safety by negotiating with surrounding warlords and using their broad influence to ensure their collective safety.

From 1469 to 1510, Sakai had served as the gateway for official missions to Ming China, which included significant mercantile activity.[17] This trade contributed much to the longstanding importation of Chinese ceramics, paintings, and other objects that were treasured by Buddhist, urban commoner, and warrior elites. Even after the official Ming expeditions came to a halt, Sakai continued to function as a center for the exchange of various types of art objects, including Chinese and Japanese ceramics. Excavations of late sixteenth-century archaeological sites in the city have yielded remarkable pieces, including carved Mishima bowls from Korea, Longquan celadons from China, Chinese blue and white porcelains from a variety of kilns, and even wares from Southeast Asia.[18] Many of the prominent Japanese ceramic styles that became increasingly popular among tea practitioners in the second half of the sixteenth century are also found in these sites, making it clear that Sakai was a major center for the trade in beautiful and desirable things. These details were not incidental to the political successes of leading merchants and tea practitioners such as Imai Sokyu, or to the attraction of the city for warlords such as Nobunaga and, as we will soon see, Ieyasu.

Another prominent figure in the Sakai tea world was Tsuda Sogyu (d. 1591), the son of a particularly successful merchant and tea practitioner who had been one of the first to record his tea experiences in a tea diary (*chakaiki*). Like his father, Sogyu was an extremely active tea practitioner as well as an avid chronicler of his activities, and aided by the wealth that his family had acquired through their Tennojiya business, he was able to put together a notable collection of tea utensils. Along with Imai Sokyu and the up-and-coming tea master Sen no Rikyu (also Sen Soeki; 1522–91), Sogyu was one of the most influential members of Sakai's tea community. After resisting the rise of Nobunaga when the young warlord first emerged as a major force in national politics, Sogyu eventually recognized that Nobunaga was more powerful than the collective will of Sakai's merchant leaders, and he was rewarded with certain privileges. In 1574, for example, Nobunaga invited Sogyu, Rikyu (Soeki), and Sokyu to a special viewing of a Chinese celadon incense burner (fig. 18-1) named "Plover" (Chidori), one of his favorite works of art, at a large tea gathering in Kyoto that included most of the Sakai elite.[19] Later that year he and Sokyu were responsible for arranging Nobunaga's acquisition, posed as a "gift," of a prized tea bowl in the collection of another Sakai merchant.[20] In this manner Sogyu was occasionally involved in the mixed

FIGURE 18-1 Ceramic incense burner with celadon glaze, named "Plover" (Chidori). Chinese, Southern Song Dynasty (thirteenth century). Collection of the Tokugawa Art Museum.

negotiations over land, authority, and the acquisition of tea utensils that characterized Oda Nobunaga's administration.

What was the significance of these men and their activities? One possible interpretation is that despite their relatively low social status as merchants, the success of the leaders of Sakai in establishing that city's independence from warrior rule gave Sokyu and Sogyu access to a shared political capital that they would have otherwise lacked. They had to be taken seriously by Nobunaga and his peers because Sakai itself was so significant as a port and as a militarily strategic point in western Japan.[21] Another interpretation is that their wealth and connoisseurial abilities, which brought them access to famed and valued tea utensils, gave them a kind of cultural capital that they could use in their interactions with the powerful warlords of the day. This in turn pushed warlords, aware of their growing inferiority in the field of tea as urban commoners became increasingly adept at defining the terms of practice and artistic value, to employ, reward, and in some cases (most famously the forced suicide of Sen no Rikyu in 1591) severely punish professional tea masters.[22]

It is possible to reconcile these interpretations by seeing society, culture, and politics not as separately defined domains of life, but instead, as the fluid and changing associations between all kinds of entities, including material culture.[23] The artworks that warlords like Nobunaga and Ieyasu valued and that tea practitioners such as Sokyu and Sogyu had access to were not merely "objects of action" but rather were "participants in the course of action."[24] As one proponent of the Actor–Network Theory of sociology put it, "any thing that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor."[25] Things such as Chinese ceramic tea caddies, Korean tea bowls, and iron tea kettles possessed a kind of agency in the encounters between entities in the sixteenth century. This is not to say that the force of an artwork such as the celadon incense burner "Plover" is equivalent to the force of the relationship between warlords such as Nobunaga and Ieyasu. But this incommensurability should not be confused with irrelevance, since these objects frequently shaped, enabled, blocked, or enhanced relations such as those between vassals, foes, or partners in an exchange. The significance of tea masters like Sokyu and Sogyu therefore lay in their ability to be intermediaries in networks of people and things.[26] By acquiring objects and using them in tea gatherings, they shaped taste, brought new genres of art to a wider audience, and created demand for types of things that previously were not known to or desired by the larger community of tea practitioners. These practices were not separate from or incidental to their politicking; they were inherently political acts.

Let us return to Ieyasu, who served Nobunaga throughout the 1570s as the latter succeeded in conquering warlords who resisted his attempt to pacify the country. Particularly significant was Nobunaga's and Ieyasu's victory over the Takeda, one of the most powerful warrior families in eastern Japan, in 1581–2. The elimination of the Takeda only increased Nobunaga's growing roster of vassals and their armies, which of course included Ieyasu but was by

no means limited to him. This allowed Nobunaga to begin planning major assaults on regions of the country that required significant mobilization and preparation. He aimed his sights first on the island of Shikoku, but was distracted by news from his lieutenant Hashiba Hideyoshi, who was in the middle of a struggle against the mighty clan of Mori in southern Honshu. Hideyoshi reported that the Mori were emerging in force and that he would need reinforcements. From Nobunaga's perspective, this was a golden opportunity to crush a resilient opponent. He therefore ordered six of his generals to reinforce Hideyoshi, and he began preparations to travel to the west himself. Plans for the invasion of Shikoku also continued, meaning that he would mount two major offensives simultaneously, a clear sign of his strength and confidence. He left for Kyoto with a small group of retainers, secure in his control of the central region of the country.[27]

As Nobunaga made his way to Kyoto, Ieyasu was just leaving the capital. Ieyasu was on a tour of the region that he took on his way to Sakai to ferret out information and prepare his troops for the invasion of Shikoku.[28] The Tokugawa general arrived at Sakai on the same day that Nobunaga entered Kyoto. This was Ieyasu's first visit to the city after spending most of his life in the central region of Japan. Two days later he took advantage of the opportunity to meet with two of the most important sources of information and providers of tea utensils in Japan: Sokyu and Sogyu, the two influential Sakai tea masters discussed above.[29] That afternoon he joined another tea gathering, and in the late afternoon he attended a dance performance. He topped off this rather long day with a banquet in the evening.

Ieyasu's superior Oda Nobunaga, at precisely the same moment, was enjoying a celebration in Kyoto put on by members of the court, who recognized that the Oda lord was the undisputed master of the temporal realm (*tenka*) and according to some sources, were prepared to offer him the position of shogun.[30] Unbeknownst to Nobunaga, however, his vassal Akechi Mitsuhide had decided to seize this chance to overthrow the Oda family and take their territory and vassals by force. In an attack that has become one of the most famous acts of treason in Japanese history, Mitsuhide and his army of 13,000 diverged suddenly from their route to the south and entered Kyoto in the early morning, surrounding the temple where Nobunaga was staying in quiet luxury. They attacked, and Nobunaga and his men died. Mitsuhide turned immediately to attack Nobunaga's eldest son Nobutada, who was staying in Nijo Castle in the capital; he too was soon dead. In a single morning, the rule of Nobunaga had descended from well-appointed confidence to complete disarray, as his vassals and surviving family members scrambled to recover. Many citizens of Kyoto, afraid of further violence, retreated to the imperial court in search of sanctuary.[31]

Ieyasu's presence in Sakai at the time of Nobunaga's assassination was, of course, a contingency. Without straying too far into the realm of counterfactuality, we can easily imagine that Ieyasu might have stayed in Kyoto with Nobunaga and been trapped in the flames of Honnoji, or, equally likely, stayed a bit longer in his home castle, which would have put him in an ideal position to seek rapid

vengeance against Mitsuhide. The chance to share tea, examine fine Chinese art, and consort with knowledgeable merchants in Sakai, however, drew him down a different path. Objects such as the Chinese art desired by tea practitioners played a major role in shaping the range of possibilities in the historical past. Thus, the significance of these small moments of cultural practice is striking in the larger picture of national politics; or perhaps it is better to say that encounters such as this one prove the lie that cultural practice lies outside of the realm of national politics. Historians often comment on the fact that, unlike Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, who were such devoted students of tea ritual, Ieyasu was only a grudging participant. At the time of the Honnoji attack, however, it is not too much of an exaggeration to say that tea saved Ieyasu's life by drawing him away from the capital and into Sakai.

Perhaps because of this disconcerting experience of having been exposed in Sakai when the attack occurred, Ieyasu did not immediately pursue Mitsuhide. Instead, it was Hideyoshi, another Oda vassal, who quickly led his forces north and successfully destroyed Mitsuhide, and then turned to the problem of knitting together the fraying Oda alliances. Ieyasu, who was an avid letter-writer but rarely strayed in his comments beyond alliance-building and management of his domain, characteristically left no record of his thoughts or emotions at this most critical juncture in his career. How he may have felt personally about Nobunaga's death is impossible to know. Certainly Nobunaga had been his closest and most powerful ally for decades. At the very least we can assume that Ieyasu took Nobunaga's death as a reminder, if he needed one, of the dangers of letting your guard down. Back on his turf, he threw himself into the task of absorbing the lands and samurai of the Takeda into his own growing domain, a task that, successfully completed, put him in a strong bargaining position when Hideyoshi began to emerge as a major power.

First Flower as Ambassador: On the Agency of Objects

While Ieyasu was busy cementing his hold on the six provinces to the east of his ancestral home of Mikawa, the warlord Hideyoshi – one of Nobunaga's chief lieutenants and the man who took vengeance upon Nobunaga's killer – was creating a powerful alliance from the former vassals of Nobunaga. In 1583, Hideyoshi defeated the armies of Shibata Katsuie, a major rival, and the next day Ieyasu sent him a congratulatory letter:

> When Shibata advanced to the southern border of Echizen, you rode north to Nagahara. Your situation worried me so I sent a messenger. It is now clear the enemy strategy was unsound. Shibata advanced to seize Kyutaro's fortress and fighting erupted. I am delighted to hear that his forces were crushed and larger numbers slain by your incomparable performance. I am very gratified to hear the details of these developments. Here I have thoroughly quieted Shinano and when I have a respite shall unsaddle my horses, so please feel at ease.[32]

Publisher's Note:
Image not available
in the electronic edition

FIGURE 18-2 Ceramic tea caddy with iron-brown glaze, named "First Flower" (Hatsuhana). Chinese, Song Dynasty (960–1279). Important cultural property. Collection of the Tokugawa Memorial Foundation.

This letter was clearly designed to show Hideyoshi how much Ieyasu knew and also to remind him that the Tokugawa, too, were expanding their territories. It was followed by a gift delivered in person by one of Ieyasu's most trusted vassals: Ishikawa Kazumasa. The gift was a famous Chinese ceramic tea caddy (*chaire*) named "First Flower" (Hatsuhana), which has a remarkable biography of its own (fig. 18-2). This small ceramic container (8.4 cm tall and 8 cm wide at the thickest point) was made in China during the Southern Song dynasty. It was thrown on a wheel and decorated with an iron-brown glaze that dripped down over the unglazed, bottom half of the piece. Its shape is of a type described at the time as "having shoulders" (*katatsuki*) because of the relatively acute angle at which the exterior wall turns in to meet the neck of the vessel, which is accentuated by an impressed line. As was true for most ceramic tea caddies from this period, tea practitioners added an ivory lid and stored the piece in an attractive textile bag when using it to store powdered green tea at a tea gathering. "First Flower" was widely thought to be one of the three most important tea caddies in Japan. It had previously been owned by a series of warlords including Oda Nobunaga and his son Nobutada; it survived the attack that killed its owner.[33] After Nobutada's death it was recovered and given to Ieyasu, so passing it on to Hideyoshi was fraught with complicated references.[34] (Hideyoshi used the tea caddy dozens of times and seems to have considered it one of his most cherished possessions.)

Despite these sparring but still friendly exchanges, Ieyasu and Hideyoshi gradually drifted towards a military conflict that seemed likely, considering the long chain of victories Hideyoshi was amassing, to result in the defeat of Ieyasu. Instead, in the battles of Komaki and Nagakute in 1584, Hideyoshi proved unable, even in advantageous circumstances, to pin down Ieyasu and his forces. Hideyoshi, ever the pragmatist, decided to wage a war of diplomacy.[35] He made sure that Ieyasu received word as more and more warlords threw their lot in with Hideyoshi, and he continued to badger Ieyasu with messages and requests. As more and more men joined Hideyoshi, the problem grew serious enough that Ieyasu held a council with his chief vassals to discuss the matter. Though the details are not known, Ieyasu was not swayed by those who counseled capitulation to Hideyoshi's demands.[36] These events provoked a crisis for which Ieyasu was entirely unprepared. One of the Tokugawa's most significant and

experienced vassals, Ishikawa Kazumasa – the man who had delivered "First Flower" to Hideyoshi in person after his victory over Shibata Katsuie – decided to defect to what he saw as the stronger side. Kazumasa, who was the keeper of Okazaki Castle and had been one of Ieyasu's companions since childhood, snuck out of Okazaki with his wife and children and traveled to Osaka to pledge himself to Hideyoshi. He brought with him as a hostage a child of a former vassal of Nobunaga's who had nominally supported Ieyasu but now also chose to throw his lot in with Hideyoshi.[37]

Kazumasa's defection was a stunning development from Ieyasu's point of view. The move illustrated that dissatisfaction with Ieyasu's ongoing resistance to Hideyoshi ran deeper than he had dared to imagine. Of even greater concern than Ieyasu's loss of a lifelong companion was the inevitable exposure of his defenses, tactics, and military secrets to his most powerful adversary. Ieyasu therefore traveled immediately to Okazaki and reconfigured and refortified his interior and exterior defenses. But Hideyoshi continued to apply diplomatic pressure. In early 1586, he rather publicly rewarded Ishikawa Kazumasa for his defection from the Tokugawa with the rule of Izumi province. This surely sent the message to Ieyasu, as well as to any other potential turncoats in the Tokugawa ranks of generals, that service to Hideyoshi was rewarding.[38] After a few more negotiations Ieyasu seemed finally on the verge of giving in. Some final token was needed. Hideyoshi's solution to this vexing problem was yet another example of human trafficking in the form of offering a hostage as guarantee. He sent to Okazaki emissaries who promised that Hideyoshi would use his own mother to guarantee Ieyasu's safety. In response to this unusual offer, Ieyasu conceded.

In late 1586, Hideyoshi's mother arrived in Okazaki, and Ieyasu, who had been staying at a different castle, came to verify the situation and then set out for the Kansai.[39] A week later he arrived in Osaka, where he stayed in a residence provided by Hideyoshi. The following evening Hideyoshi visited Ieyasu, who invited him to sit inside "to his heart's content." The two men reportedly talked little but drank sake together, with Hideyoshi pouring and generously offering cup after cup to Ieyasu, and the Tokugawa lord reciprocating.[40] Ieyasu soon visited Hideyoshi in the castle and formally declared his allegiance in front of the assembled warlords who already served Hideyoshi.[41] His duty done, Ieyasu returned to Okazaki and sent Hideyoshi's mother back to Osaka the following day. Hideyoshi soon after sent Ieyasu a tea jar, a short sword, a long sword, a falcon, and a formal coat (*haori*); Ieyasu sent Hideyoshi ten horses, 100 gold pieces, and a long sword. At the risk of stretching the meaning of this exchange a bit too far, I would say that these gifts represent a remarkable tally of the price of loyalty at the end of the sixteenth century.[42] More broadly, it is vital to remember that in this delicate political equation the primary catalyst was not Ieyasu but his vassal Ishikawa Kazumasa. Likewise, it is important to emphasize that Kazumasa himself was introduced to Hideyoshi, in effect, by the tea caddy First Flower. Again, I hesitate to engage in counterfactuals, but had Ieyasu not

submitted to Hideyoshi at this precise moment, the latter would not have felt secure enough to launch his invasion of Kyushu, probably opting instead for an invasion of Mikawa and the other Tokugawa domains. The history of Japan, suffice it to say, would likely have looked quite different.

Buried, Excavated, and Remade

Even after Ieyasu had capitulated to Hideyoshi's demands, it was clear that the two warlords did not trust each other. Ieyasu had proven on two occasions to be a wily opponent; he had centrally and strategically located domains with a large corps of loyal retainers; and he was among the wealthiest warlords in Japan in terms of the annual income yielded from his domains. Not long after visiting Osaka, Ieyasu moved his main headquarters from Hamamatsu Castle, where he had based his operations since 1570, to the more eastern location of Sumpu Castle, where he had lived his youth as a hostage.[43] The move put him farther from Hideyoshi's center of power in the region of the capital. Hideyoshi, meanwhile, avoided involving Ieyasu in any of his own war efforts, but instead seemed to be trying to figure out how to employ his new general. He used Ieyasu as a kind of diplomat in 1588, and in 1589 ordered him to organize and participate in the assault on one of the sole remaining holdouts in Hideyoshi's attempt to unify Japan: the Hojo family, who ruled substantial domains in eastern Japan and who had recently been fairly close allies of Ieyasu. He duly participated in the destruction of his old friends. The surprise was his reward: Hideyoshi transferred the Tokugawa lord to the newly vacated domains of the Hojo.[44] This change removed Ieyasu completely from his hereditary lands in Mikawa province, pushing him even further to the east. Furthermore, the change massively increased the size of his holdings, making him the wealthiest warlord in all of Japan.[45] He chose the medieval town of Edo, with a small fortress at its center, as his new headquarters.

Hideyoshi continued to surprise Ieyasu and his peers. In early 1592, he issued orders to all warlords demanding participation in a monumental invasion of the Asian mainland, with nothing less than the conquest of the Ming dynasty as its goal. Oda Nobunaga had reportedly first asserted his own intention to conquer China in 1582, the year of his assassination. Hideyoshi likewise had mentioned his own continental objective on numerous occasions, often rationalizing this with reference to divine imperative and the will of Heaven.[46] It was not until 1592, however, that Hideyoshi actually began the mobilization of troops, construction of a base of operations in southern Japan, and initiation of the conflict that we now know as the Imjin War, Japan's only full-scale assault on another kingdom in the premodern period. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Ieyasu was not ordered to participate in the invasion, perhaps because of his power and influence. Instead he was put in charge of the base of operations in Kyushu, which involved very little work and in all probability was meant to allow Hideyoshi to

keep his eye on Ieyasu. He spent most of his time writing letters and attending tea gatherings.[47]

The decision to invade Korea and China marked the beginning of the end of Hideyoshi's rule. Over the course of the mid-1590s he gradually declined in health and stability, and with his death in 1598, he gave his generals the chance to rapidly withdraw from a destructive war that no one in Japan seemed to support. Although he had a young heir, Toyotomi Hideyori (1593–1615), whom his vassals had pledged to support, the boy was too young to exert control over men as independent and ambitious as Ieyasu, and in 1600 a war resulted – between Ieyasu and his allies on one side, and those who opposed them on the other. Ieyasu emerged victorious and was rewarded with the post of shogun in 1603, after which he established a new military government or shogunate in Edo. Hideyoshi's lack of trust for Ieyasu had perhaps been warranted.

The Toyotomi regime was capable of one last gasp. After the decisive battle at Sekigahara, Ieyasu did not interfere when Hideyoshi's heir, Toyotomi, continued to occupy Hideyoshi's old headquarters in Osaka Castle along with his mother. Over time more and more defeated Toyotomi vassals made their way to Osaka, until Ieyasu felt the time had come to eliminate the memory of the Toyotomi by attacking in 1614. He found himself unable to penetrate the significant defenses of the eight-story castle, and instead resorted to political trickery. He brokered an agreement with the Toyotomi that would allow them to keep the castle in exchange for some minor modifications to its exterior. In reality, his workmen filled in the moat and otherwise compromised the defenses, and his army's second attack in 1615 completely destroyed the castle and its inhabitants. As the castle fell, Ieyasu sent in his ambassador to negotiate. Before discussions could begin, however, Hideyori and his mother took their own lives.[48]

In the aftermath of this conflict, Ieyasu traveled to Kyoto with his son (the shogun) Hidetada, and systematically met with all the major constituents of elite Japanese society to patch together the fraying social and political fabric. He also turned to another pressing concern: the retrieval of a number of valuable things from the ashes of the castle. He invited Oda Uraku – a former priest, a prominent tea master, and the younger brother of Nobunaga – to Kyoto, and asked him to investigate what happened to the ceramic tea caddies that were lost in the destruction of the Osaka fortress.[49] Other sources record that Ieyasu similarly asked two lacquerers to repair tea caddies broken in the blaze.[50] A week later, he commanded a sword-maker to reforge famous swords that had also been damaged when the castle burnt.[51] Ieyasu's attention to the material culture possessed by the Toyotomi is usually ignored in accounts of his life and of early modern Japan, because the policies issued around this time – *Code for the Warrior Households*, *Code for the Imperial Court and Court Nobility*, and several others – are widely seen as providing the legal framework for the Tokugawa social and political system that would dominate Japan for the next 250 years.[52] But Ieyasu's insistence that his underlings find and reclaim the most precious things associated with the Toyotomi regime serves as a reminder that art objects, too,

had the power to affect their society. By excavating, repairing, and then keeping these things associated with the now vanquished Toyotomi, Ieyasu and his heirs controlled, to some degree, the memory of Hideyoshi and his line.[53]

One of the best-known objects rescued and rehabilitated from the destruction of Osaka Castle is the tea caddy known as "Nitta." Like "First Flower," discussed above, this small ceramic container (8.6 cm tall and 7.9 cm in diameter at the widest point) dates to around the thirteenth century in the Southern Song dynasty in China. The pot is simply thrown and trimmed, and decorated with an iron-brown glaze that covers the top four-fifths of the vessel and drips down onto the dark clay on one side.[54] The pedigree of the piece is one reason that Nitta was so highly valued. According to the tea diary *Record of Yamanoue Soji*, this tea caddy was once owned by Murata Shuko (1423–1502), an early merchant tea practitioner from Sakai who is credited with beginning the tradition of rustic (*wabi*) tea that became dominant in later centuries.[55] The next known owner was Miyoshi Masanaga (1508–49), a warlord and tea practitioner from Shikoku, the island across the water from Sakai. Later Oda Nobunaga owned Nitta, followed by Otomo Sorin (1530–87; also Yoshishige), another warlord and tea practitioner who is also well known as one of more prominent Christian converts of the sixteenth century. Sorin was an avid collector of tea utensils, and only parted with this piece when his increasingly dire political and economic circumstances demanded it. The Jesuit Luis Frois recorded this sad moment in 1585:

> King Francisco (Otomo Yoshishige) became poor after the people of four kingdoms (Buzen, Chikugo, Chikuzen, and Higo) rose in rebellion and refused to obey his son, the prince (Yoshimune). And so he ordered that a utensil, very highly prized in Japan, should be sold in the city of Sakai. This was a small glazed porcelain cup shaped like a pomegranate, and it was used to hold certain leaves ground into a powder, which they drink with hot water on every occasion. Faxiba Chicugendono (Hideyoshi), lord of the greater and more important part of Japan, heard about this precious jewel and he yearned to obtain it for it was a very famous piece in Japan. He gave him fifteen thousand crowns for it, and to show his special favor, he ordered that the money should be carried overland, via the kingdom of Yamaguchi, to Bungo, which is a very long route.[56]

The piece stayed with the Toyotomi until the destruction of Osaka Castle, which gave Ieyasu the opportunity to finally obtain another of the three best tea caddies in Japan. Today, it is impossible to see the fine lacquer repairs to the piece that allowed it to be reassembled.

Many of the additional surviving, reclaimed heirlooms from Osaka Castle are swords. The short sword known as "Ebina Kokaji" (Fig. 18-3), for example, was made by the renowned Heian period (794–1185) smith Sanjo Kokaji Munechika (who himself is the subject of much mythologization, including a Noh play in which he is assisted by a fox spirit in forging a blade for the emperor).[57] This prized weapon is 29.7 cm in length, and was reportedly once owned by the Ashikaga shoguns. Other examples from the Kamakura period (1185–1334)

Publisher's Note:
Image not available
in the electronic edition

FIGURE 18-3 Short sword, known as "Ebina Kokaji." Full image on right; details middle and left. Inscription: Munechika (Munechika was the name of a lord in Japan in the Edo Period). Made in Yamashiro. Heian period (twelfth century). Collection of the Tokugawa Art Museum.

include the long sword "Ichigo Hitofuri," made by the sword-maker Yoshimitsu and the long sword "Nansen," made by the sword maker Ichimonji. These objects were only a drop in the bucket of Ieyasu's sword collection, which included more than 1,000 heirloom pieces when he died, but their reclamation and reforging represented a concerted effort not just to defeat but literally to own the

treasured weapons of the now vanquished Toyotomi. This attempt to tidy up after the destruction of the Toyotomi is ignored in accounts of the founding of the Tokugawa period and overviews of the beginning of the early modern age in Japan, but like the destruction of Osaka Castle and the issuance of legal codes, the repossession of these powerful works of art was a fundamentally political act.

Early Modern and Modern Enshrinements

Ieyasu died in 1616 at the age of 75.[58] He had already passed on the position of shogun (head of the military government in Edo) to his son Hidetada in 1605, so the most immediate areas of concern for his numerous offspring were the division of his estate and the interment of his body. Probate was a complicated matter because of the huge size of Ieyasu's material legacy. Likewise, careful control of these art objects – which as we have already seen were influential enough to save lives, to change alliances, and to be excavated from the ashes of a destroyed castle – was vital to the ongoing survival of the Tokugawa regime. Ieyasu's vassals therefore divided the estate among the three main branches of the Tokugawa family at Mito, Kii, and Owari, a process that would pass along some of the power of Ieyasu's networks to selected lines of his descendants. Some objects also went to the shogun's residence at Edo Castle while others were to be kept with Ieyasu body.[59] Strict records were kept of the receipt of these materials at each destination, which means that many of the details provided for the objects discussed in this essay were transmitted and preserved, along with the actual ceramics, swords, and other items, by Ieyasu's descendants. Their fate, they seem to have understood, was bound to these things.

As Philip Fisher suggests in his work on the shifting contexts of art objects, the transformation of these art works from their original usage to their lives as members of Ieyasu's substantial collection represents one distinct phase in their social lives.[60] Their division among the Tokugawa branch families after Ieyasu's death represents yet another phase, particularly because Ieyasu was not merely honored as an ancestor. Instead, according to carefully designed plans dating to well before his death, Ieyasu underwent a process of apotheosis by which he became a major divinity for the Tokugawa family and for the warrior class in general.[61] Ieyasu was first enshrined as the deity Tosho Daigongen ("Light of the East, the Ultimate Made Manifest") on Mount Kuno, east of Ieyasu's final resting place at Sumpu Castle. Later, his grandson and the third shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–51), constructed a colossal shrine and temple complex (fig. 18-4) on Mount Nikko, north of Edo. Both these shrines, as well as the many smaller shrines to Ieyasu that his descendants and other warriors built in nearly every domain in early modern Japan, became sites for the ritual storage and usage of art works associated with Ieyasu during his life. Until the collapse of the Tokugawa regime in 1868, these shrines to Ieyasu held private rituals and in some cases public festivals at which Ieyasu's spirit was called forth, often

FIGURE 18-4 Nikko Toshogu, Nikko, Japan. Photograph by the author.

using an inherited or donated object as a ritual vessel.[62] Many shoguns made semi-annual pilgrimages to Nikko to mark the day of Ieyasu's death.[63] Likewise, elite warriors from across the country petitioned the government for the right to go on pilgrimages to the main shrine at Nikko, a privilege that was only doled out to certain applicants. This is not surprising considering the huge amounts of money the Tokugawa government spent to maintain and repair the structures at Nikko, which amounted to more than half of all government expenditures in the late seventeenth century.[64] The objects collected by Ieyasu over the course of his life and carefully distributed to his descendants and shrines after his death therefore continued to compel and shape the actions of Japan's elites more than a century after he was buried. The afterlife of Ieyasu, to put it another way, was mediated as much by material culture as his life had been.

In 1868, the Tokugawa government collapsed in the face of an uprising of middling warriors disenchanted with the gap between theory and practice at the heart of Japan's early modern system. These men formed a new, European-style monarchy centered on the Meiji Emperor as a synthetic symbol of old and new Japan. Over the course of the late nineteenth century they created a modern state that aimed to enrich and industrialize the nation so as to protect it from foreign invasion. All things Tokugawa were, for a time, reviled or at the very least ignored. By the early twentieth century, however, as Japan emerged onto the international stage as a major imperial power, Japanese leaders and elites became interested in their own past and particularly in moments – such as the founding of the Tokugawa government – that were newly understood to represent traditional strength and national unity. Many members of the Tokugawa family became active in politics again. Tokugawa-related institutions, too, shifted from being tourist destinations to being more actively involved in protecting their legacies. The shrine to Ieyasu at Nikko, for example, became one of the main institutional supporters of research into the life of Ieyasu, not unlike a modern museum. Even today, in addition to serving as one of Japan's most popular rural tourist destinations (and, as of 1999, a UNESCO World Heritage Site), the Nikko Toshogu organizes exhibitions and publishes collections of primary sources related to Ieyasu.

The objects passed on to the branch Tokugawa families continued to exert influence in the twentieth century as well. One of Ieyasu's descendants, the Marquis Tokugawa Yoshichika (1886–1976; adopted head of the Owari branch), took advantage of his wealth, name, and connections to become a major force in Japanese politics. Educated first at the aristocratic school Gakushuin and then at Tokyo Imperial University, Yoshichika showed great interest in history, leading to research on the history of forest management. Science became increasingly interesting to Yoshichika, and in 1911 he re-entered Tokyo Imperial University to begin graduate studies in the field of botany. The same year, he became a member of the House of Peers. In 1918, he established the Tokugawa Institute for Biological Research (Tokugawa Seibutsu Kenkyujo), and in 1923 he established the Tokugawa Institute for the History of Forestry (Tokugawa Rinseishi

FIGURE 18-5 The Tokugawa Art Museum, Nagoya, Japan. Photograph by the author.

Kenkyujo). In 1931, he established the nonprofit Tokugawa Reimeikai Foundation, to which he donated the collection of Owari Tokugawa. In 1935, Yoshichika worked through the Tokugawa Reimeikai to found the Tokugawa Art Museum (fig. 18-5) on the site of the former residence of the Owari Tokugawa, at the height of Japan's expansion as a modern colonial empire. This museum became the center for a distinctly modern way of knowing the Tokugawa past, what Philip Fisher referred to as the fourth form of access: the art historical mode in which Tokugawa treasures were "looked at, studied, contrasted with other objects, seen as an example of a style, a moment, a level of technical knowledge, a temperament and culture."[65] Exhibitions and catalogs from the period immediately after the opening of the museum reflect the pro-imperial, nationalist ethos of the day. In 1936, for example, the museum organized an exhibition that included calligraphy by the seventeenth-century emperor Go-Mizuno'o, the nineteenth-century emperor Komei, the last Tokugawa Shogun, Yoshinobu, the progressive and innovative last lord of the Echizen Domain (and the birth father of Yoshichika), Matsudaira Shungaku, and the last domainal lord of Owari (and the adopted grandfather of Yoshichika), Tokugawa Yoshikatsu. The exhibition thus carefully narrates the cultural production of the imperial family and of the warrior class (usually understood as rival entities in premodern Japan) as one unified

heritage. On August 3, 1937, Emperor Hirohito visited the museum in person, and reportedly congratulated Yoshichika on his accomplishment.[66]

Today one can easily encounter many of the objects that Ieyasu collected and passed onto his descendants. The Tokugawa Art Museum in Nagoya attracts millions of domestic and foreign visitors each year, and also has contributed to major international exhibitions such as the blockbuster 1980s show *The Tokugawa Collection: The Japan of the Shoguns*, which appeared in Los Angeles, Dallas, Munich, and Paris between December 1983 and May 1985, and in Montreal in 1989.[67] The museum also maintains a detailed website that represents, at the time of this writing, the best online introduction to the art and culture of the samurai class available in English.[68] The Toshogu shrine to Ieyasu at Nikko also has a museum, and has in recent years been active in promoting its collection overseas. In 2005, for example, the shrine cosponsored a major exhibition at the Royal Armouries in Leeds, England, titled *Shogun: The Life of Lord Tokugawa Ieyasu*.[69]

It is tempting to see the modern museumification of Ieyasu's things – Fisher's fourth mode of access – as a sad violation of the artworks' agency, a forced removal from inside of society's networks, and subsequent insertion into the cold confines of underground storage and glass-sheathed display cases. But perhaps these new modes of display should be understood simply as new contexts for relationships to be formed between us and Ieyasu's things. Are we not involved in some form of ritual worship of Tosho Daigongen when we embark upon long pilgrimages and pay not insubstantial fees to be granted access to his collection? For most of the Tokugawa period, these beautiful things were thought to have the potential to house Ieyasu's spirit and serve as a vehicle for requests and responses. Is the desperate desire of modern audiences to imagine a past of heroic actors who transformed their own age so different?

Notes

1 Hayashiya, "Tea Ceramics," 20.
2 I use the terms "art" and "artists" in this essay without problematizing them, but have written elsewhere about the their historical and cultural specificity. See Pitelka, "Wrapping and Unwrapping Art."
3 Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 170.
4 Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*; Bourdieu, *Distinction*.
5 Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 53.
6 Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality*, 57.
7 Fisher, *Making and Effacing Art*; Latour, *Reassembling the Social*.
8 One recent work that addresses the agency of a specific category of Japanese material culture – Buddhist objects – is Rambelli, *Buddhist Materiality*.
9 These events are recorded with few discrepancies in a number of primary sources, including Okubo, *Mikawa monogatari*.
10 See, for example, Okubo, *Mikawa monogatari*, 76–7.

11 Yonehara, *Sengoku busho to chanoyu*, 160–75.
12 Though the order of events is mistaken, Okubo, *Mikawa monogatari* records these movements and the subsequent battle: 76, 78–9.
13 Watsky profiles Sokyu in "Commerce, Politics, and Tea," 18–38.
14 Morris, "The City of Sakai and Urban Autonomy," 23–54.
15 Toki-shi, *Sakai-shu no yakimono*, 28–9.
16 Translated in Souryi, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 200. Also Tani, *Chakaiki no fukei*, 3.
17 Morris, "Sakai: From Shoen to Port City," 156–8.
18 Toki-shi, *Sakai-shu no yakimono*, 19–26.
19 Sogyu's tea diaries, as well as those of his father and son, are collectively known as the "Record of Tennojiya," compiled in Nagashima, ed., *Tennojiya kaiki*. This particular incident is noted in an entry for Tensho 2, 3/27 in vol. 7, 196. Tani also notes the event in *Chakaiki no fukei*, 8, and Watsky in "Commerce, Politics, and Tea," 30.
20 See Slusser's discussion of this event in "The Transformation of Tea Practice," 49.
21 This interpretation, which essentially sublimates the realm of culture to the realm of politics, is typical of most Japanese postwar scholarship on Sakai, and also informs the above-cited work of Morris.
22 This interpretation, informed by the work of Pierre Bourdieu on fields of cultural production, is expressed in the above-cited work of Slusser.
23 These ideas are adopted (and adapted) from Bruno Latour's Actor–Network Theory, outlined in Latour, *Reassembling the Social*.
24 Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 70.
25 Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 71.
26 Latour distinguished between intermediaries, which "transport[s] meaning or force without any transformation," and mediators, which "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry." Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 39.
27 These events are described in the hagiographic but still useful *Mikawa monogatari* and many other sources recording the events of that era. The Japanese literature on the event at Honnoji is extensive, but Lamers' English exposition is as clear and compelling as any previous scholarship: *Japonius Tyrannus*, 215–16.
28 Okubo, *Mikawa monogatari*, 140–1.
29 See Imai Sokyu's comments in the extracts from his diary, published as Nagashima, *Imai Sokyu*, 34; and Tsuda Sogyu's comments in Nagashima *Tennojiya kaiki*, 364. Both also note the assassination of Nobunaga the following day.
30 Katsumata, "The Development of Sengoku Law," 121–2.
31 Okamoto, "Hideyoshi no jidai," 234–5.
32 See Ieyasu's letter in Nakamura, *Tokugawa Ieyasu monjo no kenkyu*, vol. 1, 519–20. English translation from Totman, *Tokugawa Ieyasu*, 46.
33 Oda, "Chaire," 214.
34 Matsudaira, *Ietada nikki*, vol. 1, 160. Ietada mistakenly describes this as "*kotsubo*" or small jar.
35 Nakamura, *Tokugawa Ieyasu ko den*, 230.
36 Matsudaira, *Ietada nikki*, vol. 1, 229.
37 Matsudaira, *Ietada nikki*, vol. 1, 230.

38 Takeuchi, *Tamon'in nikki*, entry for Tensho 14/1/18.
39 Matsudaira, *Ietada nikki*, vol. 2, 25.
40 Matsudaira, *Ietada nikki*, vol. 2, 26.
41 Matsudaira, *Ietada nikki*, vol. 2, 27; also, Kuwata, *Tokugawa Ieyasu*, 102.
42 Matsudaira, *Ietada nikki*, vol. 2, 27.
43 On 1586/12/4 in Matsudaira, *Ietada nikki*, vol. 2, 30.
44 Okubo, *Mikawa monogatari*, 164.
45 Ieyasu's total domain was now valued, in terms of its rice productivity, at more than 110,000 *koku*.
46 Elisonas, "The Inseparable Trinity," 265–7.
47 Nakamura, *Tokugawa Ieyasu monjo no kenkyu*, vol. 2, 209–24.
48 Recorded in the contemporaneous document "Sumpuki," transcribed in Ono, *Ieyasu shiryo shu*, 194–5. A reliable study of the two campaigns at Osaka Castle is not yet available in English. In Japanese, Kasaya's *Sekigahara kassen* provides a recent and thorough overview.
49 Entry for 9/intercalcary 6/Keicho 20 (1615; one month before the shift to Genna 1) in "Sumpuki" in Ono, 203.
50 Tokugawa Bijutsukan, *Ieyasu no isan*, 234.
51 Entry for 16/intercalcary 6/Keicho 20 in "Sumpuki" in Ono, 205.
52 These documents are translated in de Bary *et al.*, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 12–18.
53 Watsky's study of the deeply political art patronage of the Toyotomi family, particularly after Hideyoshi's death in 1598, is instructive on these matters: *Chikubushima*.
54 Tokugawa Bijutsukan, *Ieyasu no isan*, fig. 151.
55 Goto Bijutsukan, *Yamanoue Sojiki*, 78, includes images of the piece and its bags as well as relevant passages from *Yamanoue Sojiki* and other texts.
56 Quoted in Cooper, "The Early Europeans and Tea," 116.
57 The Noh play *Kokaji* is translated in Sadler, *Japanese Plays* and Parker, "Kokaji."
58 Nakamura, *Tokugawa Ieyasu ko den*, 673–82.
59 Tokugawa Bijutsukan, *Ieyasu no isan*, 192–211.
60 Fisher, *Making and Effacing Art*.
61 Sonehara, *Tokugawa Ieyasu*; Takafuji, *Ieyasu ko to zenkoku no Toshogu*; Boot, "The Deification of Tokugawa Ieyasu."
62 See the discussion of swords in Nikko, for example: Nikko Toshogu, *Nikko Toshogu no homotsu*, 84–5.
63 Ito Satoshi *et al.*, "The Early Modern Period," 117.
64 Bodart-Bailey, *The Dog Shogun*, 186.
65 Fisher, "The Future's Past," 588.
66 Otabe, *Tokugawa Yoshichika*, 49.
67 Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, *The Tokugawa Collection*, 7.
68 "Tokugawa Art Museum." http://www.tokugawa-art-museum.jp/english/index.html. Accessed July 13, 2009.
69 Bottomley, *Shogun*.

References

Appadurai, Arjun, ed. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Bodart-Bailey, Beatrice. *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Boot, Willem Jan. "The Deification of Tokugawa Ieyasu." *Japan Foundation Newsletter* 14 no. 5 (February, 1987): 10–13.

Bottomley, Ian. *Shogun: The Life of Lord Tokugawa Ieyasu*. Leeds: Royal Armouries, 2005.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Clunas, Craig. *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Clunas, Craig. *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Cooper, Michael. "The Early Europeans and Tea." In *Tea in Japan: Essays on the History of Chanoyu*, edited by Paul Varley and Kumakura Isao, 101–34. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989.

de Bary, William Theodore, Donald Keene, George Tanabe, and Paul Varley, eds. *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 2: *1600–2000*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Elisonas, Jurgis. "The Inseparable Trinity: Japan's Relations with China and Korea." In *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 4: *Early Modern Japan*, edited by John Whitney Hall, 235–64. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Fisher, Philip. "The Future's Past." *New Literary History* 6 no. 3 (Spring 1975): 587–606.

Fisher, Philip. *Making and Effacing Art: Modern American Art in a Culture of Museums*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Goto Bijutsukan. *Yamanoue Sojiki* [*Record of Yamanoue Soji*]. Tokyo: Goto Bijutsukan, 1995.

Hayashiya Seizo. "Tea Ceramics of the Momoyama Period." In *Raku: A Dynasty of Japanese Ceramists*, by Hayashiya Seizo, Akanuma Taka, and Raku Kichizaemon, 19–21. Paris, France: Maison de la Culture du Japon a Paris, 1997.

Ito Satoshi, Endo Jun, and Mori Mizue. "The Early Modern Period: In Search of a Shinto Identity." In *Shinto: A Short History*, edited by Inoue Nobutaka, translated and adapted by Mark Teeuwen and John Breen, 108–58. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Kasaya Kazuhiko. *Sekigahara kassen to Osaka no jin* [*The Battle of Sekigahara and the Seige of Osaka*]. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2007.

Katsumata Shizuo with Martin Collcutt. "The Development of Sengoku Law." In *Japan Before Tokugawa: Political Consolidation and Economic Growth, 1500–1650*, edited by John Whitney Hall, Keiji Nagahara, and Kozo Yamamura, 101–24. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Kuwata Tadachika. *Tokugawa Ieyasu: sono tegami to ningen* [*Tokugawa Ieyasu: the Letters and Person*]. Tokyo: Shin Jinbutsu Oraisha, 1971.

Lamers, Jeroen. *Japonius Tyrannus: The Japanese Warlord Oda Nobunaga Reconsidered*. Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2000.

Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor–Network Theory.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Matsudaira Ietada. *Ietada nikki* [*Diary of Ietada*], vols. 1 and 2. Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1968.

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. *The Tokugawa Collection: The Japan of the Shoguns.* Montreal: The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1989.

Morris, V. Dixon. "The City of Sakai and Urban Autonomy." In *Warlords, Artists, and Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century*, edited by George Elison and Bardwell L. Smith, 23–54. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1981.

Morris, V. Dixon. "Sakai: From Shoen to Port City." In *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, edited by John Whitney Hall and Toyoda Takeshi, 145–58. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.

Nagashima Fukutaro, ed. *Imai Sokyu chanoyu nikki nukigaki* [*Excerpts from the Tea Diary of Imai Sokyu*]. In *Chado koten zenshu* [*Complete Classics of the Way of Tea*], vol. 10, edited by Sen Soshitsu, 3–64. Kyoto: Tankosha, 1961 [reprint, 1977].

Nagashima Fukutaro, ed. *Tennojiya kaiki* [*Record of Tennojiya*]. Vol. 7 of *Chado koten zenshu* [*Complete Classics of the Way of Tea*], edited by Sen Soshitsu. Kyoto: Tankosha, 1957–1962 [reprint, 1977].

Nakamura Koya. *Tokugawa Ieyasu ko den* [*Writings of Lord Tokugawa Ieyasu*]. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1965.

Nakamura Koya. *Tokugawa Ieyasu monjo no kenkyu* [*Research on the Writings of Tokugawa Ieyasu*], vols. 1–4. Tokyo: Nihon Gakujutsu Shinkokai, 1958–1961.

Nikko Toshogu. *Nikko Toshogu no homotsu* [*Treasures of Nikko Shrine*]. Nikko: Nikko Toshogu Shamusho, undated booklet.

Oda Ei'ichi. "Chaire." In *Chado bijutsu kansho jiten* [*Dictionary for the Appreciation of Art from the Way of Tea*], edited by Ikeda Iwao *et al.*, 141–250. Kyoto: Tankosha, 1980.

Okamoto Ryoichi. "Hideyoshi no jidai." In *Momoyama no kaika* [*Flowering of Momoyama*], vol. 4 of *Kyoto no rekishi* [*History of Kyoto*], edited by Hayashiya Tatsusaburo, 228–54. Kyoto: Kyotoshi, 1971.

Okubo Hikozaemon (Tadataka). *Mikawa monogatari* [*The Tale of Mikawa*]. In *Nihon shiso taikei* [*Collection of Japanese Ideas*], vol. 26, edited by Otsuka Mitsunobu, 685–7. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974.

Ono Shinji and Nakamura Koya, eds. *Ieyasu shiryo shu* [*Collected Primary Sources of Ieyasu*]. Tokyo: Jinbutsu Oraisha, 1965.

Otabe Yûji. *Tokugawa Yoshichika no jûgonen sensô.* Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1988.

Parker, C. K., and S. Morisawa. "Kokaji." *Monumenta Nipponica* 2 (1940): 619–29.

Pitelka, Morgan. "Wrapping and Unwrapping Art." In *What's the Use of Art? Asian Visual and Material Culture in Context*, edited by Jan Mrázek and Morgan Pitelka, 1–18. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.

Rambelli, Fabio. *Buddhist Materiality: A Cultural History of Objects in Japanese Buddhism.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007.

Sadler, A. L. *Japanese Plays: No-Kyogen-Kabuki.* Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934.

Slusser, Dale. "The Transformation of Tea Practice in Sixteenth-Century Japan." In *Japanese Tea Culture: Art, History, and Practice*, edited by Morgan Pitelka, 39–60. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Sonehara Satoshi. *Tokugawa Ieyasu: Shinkakuka e no michi* [*Tokugawa Ieyasu: Road to Apotheosis*]. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1996.

Souryi, Pierre. *The World Turned Upside Down: Medieval Japanese Society*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

Takafuji Harutoshi. *Ieyasu ko to zenkoku no Toshogu* [*Lord Ieyasu and Toshogu Across the Country*]. Tokyo: Tokyo Bijutsu, 1992.

Takeuchi Rizo, ed. *Tamon'in nikki* [*Diary of Tamon'in*], vols. 1–5. Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1978.

Tani Akira. *Chakaiki no fukei* [*The Landscape of Tea Diaries*]. Kyoto: Kawara Shoten, 1995.

Toki-shi Mino Toji Rekishikan. *Sakai-shu no yakimono* [Ceramics of the People of Sakai]. Toki: Toki-shi Mino Toji Rekishikan, 1996.

Tokugawa Bijutsukan. *Ieyasu no isan: Sumpu owakemono* [*Legacy of Ieyasu: Probate of Sumpu Castle*]. Nagoya: Tokugawa Bijutsukan, 1992.

Totman, Conrad. *Tokugawa Ieyasu: Shogun*. Union City, CA: Heian International Inc., 1983.

Watsky, Andrew M. *Chikubushima: Deploying the Sacred Arts in Momoyama Japan*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004.

Watsky, Andrew M. "Commerce, Politics, and Tea: The Career of Imai Sokyu (1520–1593)." In *Japanese Tea Culture: Art, History, and Practice*, edited by Morgan Pitelka, 18–38. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Yonehara Masayoshi. *Sengoku busho to chanoyu* [*Tea Culture and the Warriors of the Age of Warring Provinces*]. Kyoto: Tankosha, 1986.

19

Shiva Nataraja: Multiple Meanings of an Icon

Padma Kaimal

The image type now commonly referred to as Shiva Nataraja ("King of the Dance") may be the most famous form in India's visual arts (fig. 19-1).[1] In survey texts of world art, in India's handicraft shops, even on travel brochures and concert programs, images of this Hindu god have come to denote India itself. And yet this is only one among many forms in which Indian artisans have over the centuries portrayed Shiva's dance. Why did this form, which was specific to the Tamil region in southeastern India and which was not formulated until the ninth or tenth century CE, achieve such prominence? How did this image type gain the power to signify so much?

Certainly the form itself of this sculptural type is visually compelling in the dramatic transverse line of the lifted leg, the radial spray of arms, legs, and locks of hair, the thrilling tension between dynamic action and balanced stillness. Another reason for its fame may be its association with the ambitious Chola dynasty that dominated large portions of southern India between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, and extended perhaps a proto-imperialist presence into Southeast Asia. A key reason for Nataraja's current importance was surely Ananda K. Coomaraswamy's 1912 essay, and the philosophical profundity Coomaraswamy attributed there to Nataraja.[2]

Coomaraswamy was among the very earliest scholars outside India to view South Asian art as valuable, beautiful, and worth collecting in art museums. He convinced the Boston Museum of Fine Arts to purchase many fine examples long before other museums even thought of buying them. His reading of Nataraja sculptures, which he wove from ideas he and his research assistant T. A. Gopinatha Rao found in a variety of texts and songs, was that they portrayed the dance in

FIGURE 19-1 Shiva Nataraja, cast metal, Museum Rietberg, Zurich.

which Shiva destroys both the universe and the bonds on every soul. The fire in one of Shiva Nataraja's hands signifies cosmic destruction while the drum in his opposite hand beats the rhythm of creation. The open palm offers protection. The drooping hand points to the raised foot, which signifies release, offering devotees enlightenment, release from illusion. Shiva's planted left foot offers shelter to the soul. He crushes under his foot a dwarf personifying ignorance. His dance thus represents his mastery over the cosmic cycle and his promise to enlighten the faithful. Shiva is a deliverer, freeing souls from their deeds and egos. He performs his mighty yet tranquil dance in the heart of every devotee, and at the center of the universe that is his home, the south Indian city of Chidambaram. Shiva's dance of simultaneous joy and fury thus represents his mastery over the cosmic cycle and his promise to enlighten the faithful.

This essay generated new enthusiasm for the study of Indic art by revealing the subtlety and sophistication of ideas it could represent. Coomaraswamy's approach was a welcome alternative to surprisingly persistent misperceptions of Hindu deities as monstrous, baby-killing devils.[3] Shiva destroyed not because he was evil but because he was wise enough to know that destruction was a necessary prelude to creation. He was also calm at the center of the whirlwind he created, presiding confidently over the extremes he brought into balance.

Coomaraswamy's interpretation surely continues to help contemporary audiences admire South Asian art. I suspect, however, that Coomaraswamy's interpretation was neither the only nor the first meaning that Nataraja sculptures carried. The meaning of objects, and especially objects communities value, tends to vary from one viewer to the next, and one age to the next.[4] I find Coomaraswamy's reading especially difficult to accept as this sculpture's sole meaning because the earliest surviving Nataraja images are from the tenth century but the texts upon which Coomaraswamy bases his interpretation date to no earlier than the thirteenth century. Those intervening three centuries were, moreover, the same centuries during which the Chola dynasty held power. We cannot be sure, then, that the Cholas made the Nataraja form famous for the meanings Coomaraswamy found in it.

I propose that Shiva Nataraja images may not have carried the meaning Coomaraswamy describes until after the Cholas lost power, and that before then they carried two other meanings. What convinces me are the visual forms of the images themselves and the geographic and chronological patterns of Nataraja sculptures' first appearances in the Chola homeland, the delta of the lower Kaveri river (fig. 19-2). The first meaning the Nataraja icon type carried when it appeared, probably *c.* 900, in bronze at Nataraja's temple in Chidambaram, was Shiva's mighty dance in the crematory grounds. The second meaning I see in these figures is the triumphant warrior king emanating from the center of his kingdom. In this capacity, Nataraja icons functioned as emblems of the Chola kings and emblems of the strong connection between the Cholas and the ancient, legitimating sacrality of Chidambaram. I suspect this second meaning took hold in the later tenth century as members of the Chola family reproduced Nataraja's bronze icon in their stone temples across the Kaveri delta (fig. 19-3).

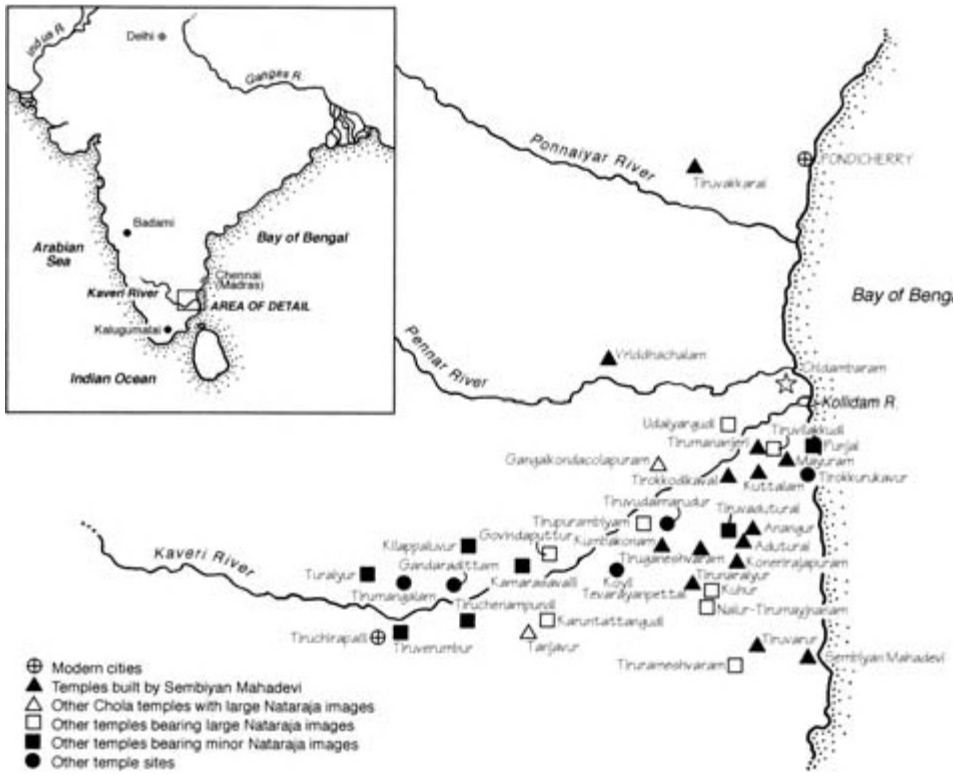

FIGURE 19-2 Map of temples in the Kaveri region that bear Nataraja sculptures on their walls. Graphic design: Julia Meyerson.

The Form and Occurrences of the Nataraja Image Type

Before laying out the evidence for these interpretations, however, I will clarify just what Coomaraswamy and I mean by the Nataraja image type. Nataraja is just one of the many forms to depict Shiva's dances, and dance is only one of the many activities Shiva performs. Nataraja images are those that depict Shiva dancing on a deeply bent right leg as his left leg lifts and crosses his hips (figs. 19-1, 19-3). A plump dwarf lies beneath his right foot. Nataraja has four arms. One left arm crosses the body and falls loosely from the wrist in a gesture (or *mudra*) called *gajahasta*. One left hand makes a gesture called *abhaya mudra* with the flat palm facing forward. The other arms open to the right and left, their elbows partially bent. The left hand holds a fire, the right a drum shaped like an hourglass. In Nataraja's left ear he wears a disc-shaped earring, and his left lobe is distended but empty so that a pendant earring could be attached. Long locks of hair fly out on both sides of his head. Tangled among them are a crescent moon, a datura flower, a spiky crest of *kondrai* leaves, and a small

FIGURE 19-3 Shiva Nataraja, granite carved in high relief in a deep niche, Agastishvara temple built by Chola queen Sembiyan Mahadevi, in Anangur. Photograph by the author.

mermaid-like figure personifying the river Ganga. Encircling the entire composition is a ring of flame anchored to the square base beneath the dwarf.

Until the twentieth century, images of this particular form of Shiva dancing seem to have been produced only in the Tamil region and even there I have found none older than the tenth century. Earlier sculptures in stone and bronze represent Shiva's dance in many other forms, but not in this one. A few figures share some elements of Nataraja's form but not all. For example, they throw one arm across the body but both feet still touch the ground. The few such figures that do raise one leg across the hips carry objects Nataraja does not, such as a trident, axe, or bow. Some figures have 16 arms.[5]

Many objects from the first millenium CE have, of course, not survived to the present. To check for records of any early Natarajas that might have been lost, I looked at descriptions of Shiva's dance in literature from before 900 CE. But here too the descriptions of his dance clearly differed from Nataraja's (he carried a trident or a deer, for example) or they remained ambiguous. Descriptions of a raised leg, for example, or a "foot that is bent in dance" could describe Nataraja but they could just as easily describe the other forms of his dance that survive in early sculpture. None of these poems prove the existence of Nataraja's specific form before 900.[6]

Arguments based on an absence of evidence are risky, though, since they can be overturned tomorrow by a new discovery. Positive evidence is certainly more compelling, and positive physical evidence does exist to suggest that Nataraja was a relatively new visual form in the early tenth century. That evidence comes in the form of four stone reliefs on temples built near the lower Kaveri river (fig. 19-4).[7] All four were built during the first half of the tenth century, and all four look somehow tentative in their presentation of this image type. All are

FIGURE 19-4 Shiva Nataraja, granite carved in low relief on an ornamental crowning arch (at upper center of photo), south wall of the Sadaiyar temple, Tiruchchenampundi, *c.* 920. Photograph by the author.

very small and carved in shallow relief. They occupy marginal locations on the temple wall, well above eye-level and thus where most viewers would hardly notice them. Each is missing at least one element that would become standard to Nataraja's iconography, like the dwarf or the figure of Ganga.

The earliest of the four, from Tiruccenampundi, *c.* 920, suggests an especially recent translation into stone relief from a more three-dimensional model (fig. 19-4). The tiny figure represents the icon from two different points of view. Shiva and his ring of fire appear frontally but we see the dwarf on his square platform from an aerial perspective – a sophisticated solution to the problem of translating a three-dimensional form into two dimensions without losing information about the dwarf. All later images represent Shiva and the dwarf from a single, horizontal point of view, suggesting that audiences had become more familiar with the subject matter and no longer needed the added aerial perspective to explicate the dwarf.

The shapes of Nataraja icons suggest that the image type was first conceived in cast metal because they imply an artistic imagination informed by the technological possibilities of south Indian "lost-wax" metal casting.[8] Their fluid surfaces evoke the soft wax in which Indian metal figures are first modeled. The airy suspensions of his arms, leg, sashes, and locks of hair evoke the flow of molten metal that replaced the melted wax, and only the tensile strength of cooled metal can sustain these extreme projections from the body's core. Stone examples prove this by their failures. On stone Natarajas carved in full relief, the extending left leg, and often the gajahasta arm, had to be shored up by an ugly strut or they broke off (fig. 19-3).[9]

The bronze figure the early stone reliefs "copy" was presumably the image housed in the central shrine at Chidambaram, the town that devotees continue to regard as the home of the living, breathing deity that is Shiva Nataraja. That original sculpture has been replaced by a piece no older than the thirteenth century, and the buildings in the compound have been rebuilt even more recently. The site may have had a sacred identity for many centuries, though, and the predecessors upon which these sculptures and buildings are modeled could have been quite old. Devotional songs from the ninth century describe a dancing form of Shiva already in worship there.[10] Nataraja's shrine, called the *chitsabha*, lies at the center of the vast compound (figs. 19-5, 19-6), usually the oldest part of the temple complex since successive generations of patrons tended to add concentrically outward to south Indian temples.

The peculiarities of the Chidambaram temple contribute to the sense that it is very old. The Nataraja shrine's humped roof and wood pillars are archaic forms that would have looked old-fashioned even in the tenth century by which time temples were being built completely of stone and with pyramidal roofs. Also his Chidambaram shrine faces south, whereas most Shiva temples by the tenth century faced east or in a few cases west. Most peculiar about Chidambaram is that its central shrine contains a figural representation of Shiva instead of the abstract, pillar-like *linga* form that occupies the interior of most Shiva shrines in

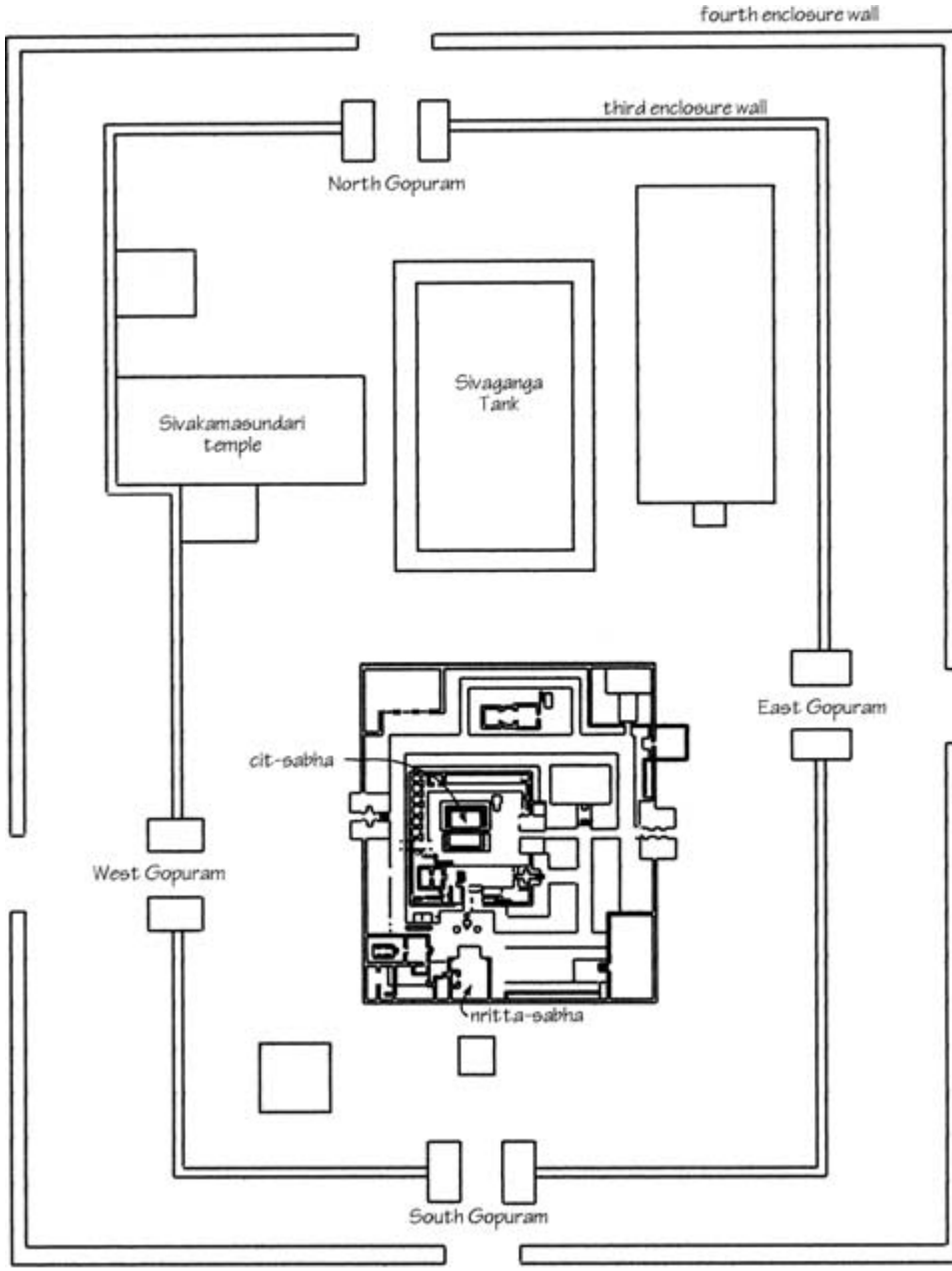

FIGURE 19-5 Ground plan of all four enclosures at Shiva Nataraja's temple complex in Chidambaram. Note Nataraja's shrine, the *chid-sabha*, at the center. Graphic design: Julia Meyerson.

FIGURE 19-6 The *chid-sabha* seen from the east; innermost enclosure of the temple complex at Chidambaram. Photograph by the author.

India.[11] All of these architectural and sculptural suggestions of archaism help the shrine look ancient, and may in fact reflect a Nataraja cult old enough to have preceded those earliest surviving sculptures of him from the tenth century. That is to say, although the specific Nataraja form I am discussing was developed in the tenth century, the worship of Shiva in dancing form is most likely much older, hence the archaic temple.

The Dancing Lord of the Crematory Grounds

In contrast to Coomaraswamy's interpretation of the Nataraja sculptures as Shiva's dance of enlightenment, my sense is that when Nataraja images did first appear, they more readily evoked Shiva's associations with death, cremation, and the destructive aspect of the cosmic cycle. Tamil and Sanskrit texts of the seventh through tenth centuries, moreover, describe Shiva wandering through the cremation grounds like a madman, laughing, weeping, and dancing in ecstasy, surrounded by goblins, his body smeared with ashes from the funeral pyre and ornamented with the bones of the dead.[12]

I see something close to this destructive ecstasy emerging in the visual components of Nataraja figures. Most of those same components were also present in earlier sculptures of Shiva. Nataraja's designers may have known the stories

that survive in Tamil and Sanskrit texts; it seems even more likely that those designers were familiar with existing sculptural language, and that they chose to participate in that language of visual signs when they embedded them in Nataraja figures.[13]

Many of those signs pointed toward death, abandoned places, and the destructive phase of cosmic cycles. The fire surrounding Nataraja and nesting in his hand could evoke many kinds of destruction – in particular, the flames that consume corpses in Hindu funerary ritual. The skull adorning his hair could refer to the bony remnants that survive the crematory fire. Thus Nataraja would be adorning himself with the burnt remains of the dead. Other fierce forms of Shiva also adorn themselves with funerary ash, skulls, and other bones as if they were jewelry.

Nataraja figures wear snakes too as jewelry. These are cobras with their hoods spread, a sign that they are ready to deliver a lethal strike. Snakes flourish in deserted places, which cremation grounds certainly are. Rearing cobras are a frequent feature on Shiva figures, but they are especially prominent on representations of Shiva's wrathful manifestations. Shiva's lifted leg may also refer to snakes: the Sanskrit term describing this posture, *bhujangatrasita*, means "frightened by a snake," and a particularly early carving of Shiva in Nataraja's posture portrays a snake beneath Shiva's suspended foot.[14]

Nataraja's deeply bent limbs and the multiple arms fanning out from his body are signs that mark other figures in the midst of furious and often violent activity such as battling demons. Deep flexions can convey enormous physical strength and effort. Radiating arms can suggest explosive energy. Both create dramatic lines and draw viewers' eyes to the god's heroic actions.

Flexions and fanning arms also suggest dance, which had strong associations with war in ancient Tamil poetry. There the goddess of war danced exultantly in the carnage of the battlefield, triumphant kings performed leaping dances over their slain enemies, and Shiva himself danced to celebrate his destruction of three demon cities.[15] The flying sashes and locks of hair in Nataraja figures suggest a spinning dance. So could his lifted leg, which is poised just where it could provide the momentum to pirouette to his left. The drum he holds could accompany his dance. Drums too played an important role in ancient Tamil warfare.

Various Shiva sculptures from before the tenth century also offer a very different option from Coomaraswamy's interpretation of the dwarf under Nataraja's foot as a demonic personification of ignorance defeated by Shiva's enlightening presence. But dwarves like this play a distinctly benign and even helpful role in earlier sculpture. When Shiva is performing difficult feats, these plump, comic figures pitch in by supporting his body. They reach up with one or two hands, looking much more like eager participants than defeated demons.[16]

Viewed through the lens of earlier Indic sculpture's visual language, then, the features of Nataraja icons suggest infinite destructive energy channeled into dance, Shiva's hair flying and limbs powerfully flexed as he leaps and spins to the rhythm

of his drum. He has ornamented himself with lethal snakes who haunt the crematory grounds, and with bones and flames from the funeral pyre itself. One of his dwarves, a pudgy foil to Shiva's elegant form, helps out by cushioning the one limb that anchors Nataraja to the ground.

Nataraja as a Royal Emblem

Cultic changes taking place at Chidambaram around the tenth century generated a second meaning for the Nataraja icon by attaching his form to another story. This story, the Myth of the Pine Forest, provided the Nataraja icon with a new explanation for looking the way it did. According to Chidambaram's version of this pan-Indic myth, Shiva wished to admonish a group of sages who lived in a pine forest. He visited their grove as the naked, handsome beggar Bhikshatana, and made himself sexually irresistible to the sages' wives. Once they realized Bhikshatana had cuckolded them, the sages tried to destroy him. They hurled weapons at him, including fire, a snake, a drum, a skull, and a demon. Shiva easily caught them all, turning them into adornments and dancing triumphantly with them. His dance took on cosmic dimensions, drawing into itself all of creation. The dance also enlightened the sages and they worshiped him in his form as Lingodbhava, an endless pillar of fire.

Such a retrofitting of an older icon with a new story of supremacy, absorption, and conquest would have given Nataraja fresh appeal to kings. Nataraja became the consummate warrior who could turn his enemy's weapons into trophies of victory. His dance established his kingdom as the cosmos, and placed him at its center. This new story could distance Shiva's dance from the cremation ground, transmuting what may have been a dance about death into a dance that emphasized triumph. And yet Shiva remained energetic and aggressive, still not quite the tranquil deliverer to be found in thirteenth-century texts.

Whether the purpose of these cultic changes was to invite new royal affiliations with Chidambaram or accommodate pre-existing ones, they worked. By the last quarter of the tenth century, the Chola dynasty was fast becoming the dominant power in the region, and it did so while publicly adopting Nataraja as a family deity. Their promulgation of Nataraja is manifest in their heavy investment in architecture that featured Nataraja and Chidambaram.

By 1010, Nataraja appears in sculpture, painting, and inscriptions on the Rajarajeshvara temple of Rajaraja I Chola (r. 985–1014). Each of those three media closely identify this temple with that king. The massive building thus monumentalized deity and king at the geographic center of Rajaraja's political realm. The painting, which is very close to the building's most sacred center, explicitly depicts Nataraja beneath the peculiar humped roof of his shrine in Chidambaram; beside him under a slightly lower roof is a man with three women, probably the Chola king and his queens, and surely presented here as this god's paradigmatic devotees.[17]

Thirty years earlier, the Chola queen Sembiyan Mahadevi declared her devotion to Chidambaram's dancing form of Shiva as she built some dozen stone temples across the Kaveri river delta (fig. 19-2) in areas that lay just outside the Cholas' previous centers of authority. Her prolific patronage and the innovative temples this produced are important reminders to us of the powerful roles women from elite communities could play in art, religion, and politics during the eleventh century. Each of these temples features Nataraja as one of the building's nine major figures (fig. 19-3); hers are the earliest temples to grant him such a prominent location on the temple wall. These temples also house Nataraja in a south-facing niche, which replicates, perhaps deliberately, the peculiar orientation of his shrine at Chidambaram.

Sembiyan Mahadevi's temples make further allusions to Chidambaram by including in their program of nine major figures those of Bhikshatana and Lingodbhava, the forms Shiva assumes in Chidambaram's mythology before and after he assumes the Nataraja form.[18] Unlike Nataraja, Bhikshatana and Lingodbhava had played major roles in sculpture programs at temples before the tenth century, but Sembiyan Mahadevi's temples wove them into a new context with Nataraja. In that new context, Nataraja faced south, Bhikshatana north, and, depending on the orientation of the temple, Lingodbhava east or west, gracing the wall behind the sanctum, while the linga within the temple radiated out the door. Shiva thus radiated out in multiple forms to many directions and from these many temples across the newly expanding Chola kingdom.

These evocations of Chidambaram present Shiva with the very qualities to which the Chola kings aspired. He emanated in all directions from Sembiyan Mahadevi's temples establishing himself like a king as a geographic and psychic center for a vast dominion. As Nataraja, Lingodbhava, and Bhiksatana, Shiva subjugated his rivals. Nataraja's body in particular made centrality visible with his expanding ring of fire, the limbs pivoting around the axis of the navel, the spreading arms and hair and the whirling motion they imply, and the eternally tranquil body at the composition's core. This was the face of Shiva that Sembiyan Mahadevi's temples disseminated across the delta that the expansionist Cholas aspired to dominate next. As the Cholas introduced themselves through temple architecture, they labeled themselves with the dancing Lord of Chidambaram.

Conclusions

Nataraja images have surely meant more things than we can know to the people who have seen them over the centuries, and probably many more than the two I have just presented. That flexibility may be one reason why the form has endured so long. The interpretation Coomaraswamy advanced in 1912 need not continue to restrict the range of meanings we accept for the Nataraja form. Visual, physical, and textual evidence of the tenth century suggests that Nataraja images

grew to new prominence during those years, emphasizing first the dancing lord of the crematory grounds, then the triumphant, imperializing ruler, and only after that the tranquil lord of enlightenment Coomaraswamy describes. Perhaps then the elegant abstractions of his reading gradually displaced the icon's earlier associations with gruesome rampage and imperial power.

Recovering Shiva's associations with gruesome rampage brings with it the risk of undoing Coomaraswamy's good work and reviving in twenty-first-century viewers the misimpression that Hindus worshiped devils. I hope that the world is too small now for such confusions, and that viewers outside as well as inside India will be able to see beyond the simple equation of destruction with evil, just as many people no longer assume that multiple limbs and animal-human hybrids must signal the demonic. In a cyclic model of time, dissolution is as important as creation and is indeed necessary to creation. Cremation signals the end of one life but also the potential for future births and for freedom from suffering. Violent as well as tranquil images of the gods can serve as visualizations and reminders of complex concepts like these.

Notes

1 This essay is a condensed, slightly updated, and more directly argued version of my essay Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja." Readers will find fuller visual evidence and documentation of all my sources in that publication.

2 Coomaraswamy, "The Dance of Shiva."

3 On those perceptions, see Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters.*

4 On the importance of studying many such moments and not simply the moment of an object's origin, see Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*, 11.

5 Examples of Shiva's other dancing forms survive at Nachna and Bhumara; Elephanta's Cave 1; Ellora's Cave 14; Aihole, Badami, Bhairavakonda, Mogalrajapuram, Pattadakkal, Hemavati, Siyamangalam, and the Kailasanath temple in Kanchipuram. For photos, see Berkson and Doniger, *Elephanta, the Cave of Shiva*; Sivaramamurti, *Nataraja in Art, Thought and Literature*, 168–222; Srinivasan, "Siva Nataraja, the Cosmic Dancer"; Zvelebil, *Ananda-Tandava of Siva-Saddnrttamurti*, 13–22; and Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," figs. 5 and 6.

6 For discussion of particular texts, see Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," nn. 16–18.

7 At Tiruchchenampundi, Punjai, Tiruverumbur, and Tiruvaduturai. For photos of the last three and for further discussion, see Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," 395–7.

8 Metal sculptures like Nataraja figures are commonly called "bronzes" though their composition usually involves more types of metal than the tin and copper of bronze.

9 For an example of the strut, see the Brihadeshvara temple at Gangaikondacholapuram: Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," fig. 12.

10 See Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," n. 16.

11 Figural icons do become more prominent in later worship practices too, but outside the central shrine, as in processions outside the temple and pillared halls in outer courtyards of the temple complex. Figural representations at the heart of the

central shrine, by contrast, seem more common in early monuments such as the one- or four-faced lingas in Nachna, Khoh, and Udayagiri, (fifth to sixth centuries): see Williams, *The Art of Gupta India*, figs. 61, 62, 71, 113.

12 On these texts, see Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," n. 48.

13 For examples of these earlier sculptures, see Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," nn. 50–67.

14 On *bhujangatrasita*, see Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," n. 54. On the seventh-century relief carving at Siyamangalam, see Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," n. 55.

15 For sources on these descriptions, see Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," nn. 78–9.

16 For examples, see Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," n. 67 and fig. 20.

17 For illustrations, see Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," figs. 18 and 19.

18 For examples of Bhikshatana and Lingodbhava, see Kaimal, "Shiva Nataraja," figs. 26 and 27.

References

Berkson, Carmel, and Wendy Doniger. *Elephanta, the Cave of Shiva*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. "The Dance of Shiva." In *The Dance of Shiva: Fourteen Indian Essays*, 83–95. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1970.

Davis, Richard H. *Lives of Indian Images*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Kaimal, Padma. "Shiva Nataraja: Shifting Meanings of an Icon." *The Art Bulletin* 81 no. 3 (1999): 390–419.

Mitter, Partha. *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.

Sivaramamurti, C. *Nataraja in Art, Thought and Literature*. New Delhi: National Museum, 1974.

Srinivasan, P. R. "Siva Nataraja, the Cosmic Dancer." *Roopa Lekha* 26 (1955): 4–12.

Williams, Joanna G. *The Art of Gupta India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982.

Zvelebil, Kamil V. *Ananda-Tandava of Siva-Saddnrttamurti: The Development of the Concept of Atavallan-Kuttaperumanatikal in the South Indian Textual and Iconographic Tradition*. Tiruvanmiyur, Madras: Institute of Asian Studies, 1985.

Further Reading

Barrett, Douglas. "The Dancing Siva in Early South Indian Art: The Sixth Annual Mortimer Wheeler Archaeological Lecture." *Proceedings of the British Academy* 62 (1976): 181–203.

Barrett, Douglas. *Early Cola Architecture and Sculpture: 866–1014*. London: Faber and Faber, 1974.

Dehejia, Vidya. *Art of the Imperial Cholas*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

Kulke, Hermann. "Royal Temple Policy and the Structure of Medieval Hindu Kingdoms." In *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, edited by A. Eschmann, Hermann Kulke, and G. C. Tripathi, 125–37. New Delhi: Manohar, 1978.

Kulke, Hermann, and Deitmar Rothermund. *A History of India*. London: Croom Helm, 1986.

Nagaswamy, R. "The Temple of Nataraja (Chidambaram)." In *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past*, edited by Catherine Asher and Thomas Metcalf, 179–85. New Delhi and Oxford: American Institute of Indian Studies and IBH, 1994.

Peterson, Indira. *Poems to Siva: The Hymns of the Tamil Saints.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Rao, T. A. Gopinatha. *The Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. I.2, part 1. Madras: Motilal Banarsidass, 1914.

Smith, David. *The Dance of Siva: Religion, Art and Poetry in South India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Younger, Paul. *The Home of Dancing Sivan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

20

Sifting Mountains and Rivers through a Woven Lens: Repositioning Women and the Gaze in Fourteenth-Century East Java

Kaja M. McGowan

The *Desawarnana* or "Depiction of Districts" (formerly known as *Nagarakretagama*) is a poem written by Prapanca in *kakawin* verse-form whose "uncommon character," according to P. J. Zoetmulder, "has no parallel in Old Javanese literature as we know it."[1] It was written in 1365 in praise of King Hayam Wuruk (1350–89), who ruled over Majapahit, one of Indonesia's largest kingdoms, during a period when its power extended well beyond the shores of Java. The *Desawarnana*'s apparent historical characteristics have been accepted somewhat uncritically by scholars for almost a century, and as such, its tantalizingly descriptive surface has been instrumental in providing a wealth of information on fourteenth-century Javanese cultural and social history: court life, funeral rituals, and sanctuaries reflecting various configurations of local ancestor worship, Shaivite and Buddhist religious dispositions.[2]

Few have paid heed, however, to Slametmuljana's assertion that "the *Nagarakretagama* is first and foremost a kakawin, and not a history-book."[3] By exploring how the work conforms to the literary requirements of the kakawin genre,[4] I will provide an alternative reading of those seemingly linear structures of the text selected for history's "utter visibility" at the expense of features deemed too magical, mythological, or allegorical for inclusion. One such feature consists of

a magically protective double *ikat*[5] cloth called *gringsing* (*geringsing*) still woven today in the Balinese village that bears its name, Tenganan Pegerinsingan. It continues to be used in Balinese rituals as a protective bridge between worlds, both seen and unseen. Because close cultural ties existed between Bali and East Java in the early tenth century, followed by the colonization of Bali by Majapahit after 1343, the magical potency of gringsing, as described in Prapanca's text, thrived beyond the borders of Bali at a very early date. Extending across media as well, certain gringsing patterns appear to mirror stone reliefs carved on temples in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century East Java.[6]

Recognizing that practices of looking are culturally, historically, and discipline-specific activities, this chapter will explore the enigmatic conversation between the woven lines of kakawin text and stone, enlivening what has been rendered invisible in a predominantly masculinist academic discourse. Through the feminine agency afforded by gringsing cloth, this essay serves as a preliminary foray into articulating a working methodology for repositioning women and "the Gaze" in Prapanca's text. Following the film theorist Laura Mulvey's lead, an audience's visual activity is locked between an active pole – the (male) look or gaze; and a passive pole – the (female) image on the screen, a relationship that loyally retraces centuries of Euro-American optical static geometries.[7]

Before a repositioning of the Gaze can be attempted, however, I must begin by examining the practice of royal progresses in East Java during the second half of the fourteenth century, particularly to the stone temple, Candi Palah (now called Panataran near Blitar), which was once the state temple of Majapahit and was a key site for ritually inaugurating at least two of the royal progresses in 1359 and 1361 described by Prapanca in the *Desawarnana*. Supomo refers to these visits on the part of King Hayam Wuruk as "an act of yoga, leading to a mystical union between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic Lord of the Mountains."[8] But this predominantly male focus on the mountains as a source for yogic legitimacy between King Hayam Wuruk and the local deity, Lord Girinatha, has obscured the fact that these progresses, weaving back and forth in an erotically charged atmosphere, demanded the almost immediate transition from visiting the mountainous terrain of Palah/Panataran to enjoying the southern rocky coast, for example, at Lodaya, a poetic union reflected in the phrase "sea and mountain" (*pasir wukir*). When going south, or southeast, the royal progress would have had to cross the Brantas river long before arriving at the ocean.[9] It is this elemental fusion of "mountain and river" (*wukir wulusan*) that arguably sets the stage for Prapanca's systematic enumeration of remarkable places in the Brantas basin in Canto 17. This mapping follows closely upon a visit to Palah, precedes the listing of the four royal progresses outside the basin, and culminates in the poet's signature introduction.

In what follows, I argue that this attention to the Brantas must be understood in relation to a possible Tantric system where royal women are likened to tubular vessels (*nadi*) in the body, which have an important function in yogic meditation. Rather than being static emblems, the royal women in the progresses at Candi

Palah had the capacity to excite and restrain the energy of their king, thereby influencing the wealth and fertility of the realm. The analogue of the divine couple, a king's sexual contact with his queen activated his royal energy, just as the goddess (*shakti*) in yogic practice activates the god's divine creative power through sexual contact with him. As *rajalakshmi*, or the embodiment of the king's authority, royal women could assume the divine role of Vishnu's shakti, "an essential element binding the king to the fertility of his realm."[10] Such "poetics of control" were tied not only symbolically but also productively to water, both to the mouths of sacred rivers and the sea and, by extension, to jars of holy water through ritual ablutions like the female-centered *sangkapani*.[11] Such rituals imply that poetic phrases like "mountains and rivers" encourage an interactive aesthetic distinct from the Gaze, frequently referred to in the kakawin literature as *lango*.

Perhaps best translated as "rapture," the aesthetic of lango promises an interactive form of viewing, an experience of "swooning into oneness that blurs the distinction between subject and object."[12] It can refer to a beautiful view as well as the person affected by its beauty. From the standpoint of handbooks of kakawin aesthetics, poetic writing required not only the confluence of mountains and water sources, but also literary embellishment, emotional states or *rasa*, eroticism, and the performance of yoga.[13] When describing the royal progress, Prapanca uses two verbs (*mahasahas macangkrama*) that Tony Day translates directly as "travels about from place to place. In modern Javanese, *cangkrama* is associated with sexual pleasure, and a sexual motive is also present in the contexts where *cangkrama* is used in Old Javanese poetry."[14] I explore this seemingly aimless wandering from the perspective of a highly gilded cloth whose pattern is specifically mentioned in the text – *lobheng lewih gringsing* – very possibly a pattern by the same name still revered by Tengananese today (fig. 20-1).

With its clearly defined central *meru* (mountain-axis), like a temple floorplan surrounded by four circular quadrants, the pattern suggests a lotus with four petals, similar to Prapanca's mapping of the four royal progresses, circling and returning from the Brantas basin, as if petal by petal. We will never know if Prapanca's choice of pattern was intentional, or even if the gringsing mentioned in the text is still the same pattern produced today, but the visual connections are undeniable and compelling. During yogic meditation, it is the female principle (shakti) that ascends the meru of the spine from a red lotus with four petals called the *muladhara*, the nadi as sacred "rivers" twisting and rising to the thousand-petaled lotus at the crown of the head where the sacred waters of heaven flow back down, often depicted in the form of gossamer rainbow-like ribbons of cloth. When repositioning the feminine in Prapaca's text, I will return to that precise textual and spatial layering of royal women as nadi being mapped prominently according to regions on the two branches of the Brantas.

The sacred, multi-colored gringsing cloth, complete with sun, serpent (*naga*), and mountain motifs is appropriate as a cloth marking a doorway between worlds, revealing a symbolic confluence in cloth similar to the sculptural *kala-makara* motif found over temple gates – *kala* (a demon's mask) as the fiery sun crowns the arch, while the two ends terminate in *makara* (elephant fish) or naga with

FIGURE 20-1 Gringsing lubeng, Tenganan Pegringsingan, 166 cm × 60 cm, probably woven around 1930; this half of the original cloth was acquired by the owner in 1978 (courtesy of private collector).

heads turned outward like the streams of water they are meant to convey. These composite images symbolize the universe being repeatedly dissolved and reformulated by two primordial elements, fire and water. The promised dissolution of gringsing and kala-makara and the related swooning sensation of a lango aesthetic open up a non-representational principle and a productive materiality more

or less invisible to the heavily ocular and heliocentric hegemony of the European gaze. In what follows, I will describe in some detail the encounter between text and temple relief that occurs in Prapanca's text. I will then analyze two earlier scholarly encounters to illustrate the evolving discourse of "the Gaze," and finally I will provide an alternative third reading wherein the embodied materiality of the sumptuous cloth canopies adorning shrine-like carriages, narrated in text and carved in stone, will make available a woven lens through which to view a previously overlooked performative and ritualistic sphere shared by royal men and women alike in early modern Southeast Asia.

The Royal Progresses: Encounters between Text and Temple Relief

Four royal progresses are recorded chronologically in Prapanca's text as they unfold through the East Javanese countryside: in 1353, west to Pajang, near present-day Surakarta; in 1354, north to Lasem on the Java Sea; in 1357, south to Lodaya and the Indian Ocean; and, finally in 1359, east to Lumajang, nearly to Bali. In this last journey, the only one described in sumptuous detail, four royal women figure prominently – complete with their distinguishing "marks" – Hayam Wuruk's sister, cousin, aunt, and mother. These women are followed by his wives, their carriages all "adorned with canopies of red *lobheng lewih gringsing* painted with gold" (Canto 18:4). Hayam Wuruk's tours of his realm were repeated pilgrimages to the most important sites of the state cult: first Palah, the original name of Panataran, the temple of Girinatha as "Lord of the Mountain" and the divine origin of the Majapahit dynasty; followed by certain deification temples of members of the previous dynasty, combined with select temples commemorating deceased rulers of the Majapahit kingdom. Large rituals were enacted to ensure the enduring worship of Hayam Wuruk's ancestors in these state temples. It is to the state temple of Palah/Panataran that I now turn, and particularly to the relief from the *Krishnayana kakawin* depicting a popular form of marriage by capture. The *Krishnayana* narrative is sculpted on the second terrace of the main temple, and is thought to date from the reign of Hayam Wuruk (1350–89 CE), when Majapahit was flourishing.

Prapanca must have been instrumental in celebrating Majapahit's lotus-like prosperity. In the only instance where the four royal women are again mentioned – this time without their "marks" but, as in the case of the Princess of Jiwana, "with a host of servants and with her husband" (in that order) – Prapanca compares his king, Hayam Wuruk, first to Krishna, then to Buddha (Canto 84:1–3), and culminating as an incarnation of Sri Girinatha, "Lord of the Mountain" (Canto 92:2), at Palah/Panataran. For Hayam Wuruk to be hailed as victorious Krishna (an incarnation of Vishnu) suggests the possibility of a profound encounter between the emergent lines of Prapanca's poetry and the almost contemporaneous "life of the stone" unfolding at Palah/Panataran. The Krishna reliefs – sculptures

FIGURE 20-2a Main temple of Panataran, second terrace, *The Battle between Krishna and His Rivals* (courtesy of KITLV Press, code 87829).

that predate Prapanca's text – are fitting illustrations on a royal state temple enshrining the divine origin of the ruling dynasty. Relating to the surrounding environment, the temple reliefs are believed to replicate that space, incorporating the mountains as the sources of water and volcanic fiery energy.

One relief depicts both a battle scene and a wedding by capture from the *Krishnayana* (fig. 20-2a and 2b). In the scene depicted, Rukmini kneels at Krishna's feet with face averted in a chariot drawn by four horses on the left. They are in flight from Krishna's adversary, Rukma (Rukmini's brother) and his attendants (on the right), who are exchanging arrows in hot pursuit. Both carriages are draped with auspicious stag-headed canopies. While Rukma's charioteer is falling down forward, his horses in chaotic formation, Krishna's carriage is comparatively calm and orderly with all four horses in proper alignment. In the center of the composition, Rukma can be seen to have fallen backward on the ground, surrounded by his attendants, while one of Krishna's followers aims a spear at Rukma's chest. Rukma holds the tip of the spear as if to suggest a possible moratorium on his own demise. This relief more or less faithfully depicts what is described in the only extant East Javanese version of the *Krishnayana*, written possibly in the twelfth century:

> The arrows from the bow of King Krishna without fail hit the chariot of the prince, which was shattered . . . Look, the charioteer is hit and killed together with the horses. The prince fell from his chariot, head down. His crown was broken, its stones got loose and sprang away. Also his bow was in pieces, cut through by arrows. He thought he was about to die, no way to escape. Princess Rukmini, seeing her brother, was deeply moved. Crying aloud, she embraced the legs of King Krishna,

FIGURE 20-2b Detail from Figure 20-2a, *The Battle between Krishna and His Rivals*, with a close-up of the stag-headed canopies on Krishna's carriage to the left (courtesy of KITLV Press, code 87829).

> not knowing shame she breathed heavily when she looked up. There on the thighs of the king was a stream of tears.[15]

Adrian Vickers has shown how the rhythmically violent thrusts of weapons wielded are often tinged with sexual connotations in the discourse of Java's and, by extension, Bali's courtly worlds. Webb Keane has also alluded to the trope of warfare as referring in part to a commonly held view of marriage by capture in ancient times, a "snatching in the field" often carried out with full agreement between bride and groom.[16] In the *Krishnayana*, for example, Rukmini's marriage by capture at the competent hands of Krishna can be seen to have been orchestrated largely by the bride-to-be and her mother.

As we will see, in the first two scholarly encounters, the focus is primarily on the "battle" and not on the "marriage," elevating the political configuration in all its hierarchical trappings at the expense of the human interactive sphere, and thereby consigning Rukmini's role to the margins. The third encounter will reinstate the marriage element, however unorthodox it may appear, reclaiming the subtle metaphorical connection between war and eroticism in order to

reposition Rukmini in her chariot, and thereby shed light on Prapanca's women in their, presumably similar, conveyances. Each of these encounters will be sifted in various theoretical and methodological ways through the surrounding countryside of East Java. Introduced chronologically, these "performances in the 'field'" are all staged re-enactments of at least two earlier visits paid by Prapanca in the company of his king, the first in 1359, just before they set out on their legendary journey to Lumajang, and then in 1361 with his retinue just prior to their journey to Lodaya.

Barbara Watson Andaya suggests that approaching Southeast Asia by reference to human interaction rather than political configurations is fundamental for the viability of a "woman's history" that is both regional and comparative.[17] Before attempting to chart alternatives to the Gaze through a repositioning of the feminine, I will begin, by way of contrast, with a reading of two scholarly encounters between Prapanca's text and the stone relief from Palah/Panataran where the ocular hegemony of the Gaze still holds sway.

The Optical Gaze: Encounters between Text and Stone

We will never know precisely what kind of visual sensibilities King Hayam Wuruk, his devoted Prapanca, and the feminine cortège would have brought to bear on the reliefs at Palah/Panataran during their visits. It is enticing to imagine that "solid wall" of living carriages described in Prapanca's text meeting with an equally solid wall of stone reliefs correspondingly alive with carriages. How would the intertextuality of reliefs at Panataran temple have been received? Would Rukmini's seemingly diminutive position at the feet of Lord Krishna have resonated for king, bard, and royal women alike? Would they have recognized their own stately carriages in the detailed conveyances in stone?

What we do know is how Euro-American artists and scholars have interpreted these reliefs in relation to what for 85 years was believed to be the only surviving copy of Prapanca's manuscript (formerly Cod. Or. 5023) first discovered in 1894 in the palace library at Cakranagara, Lombok, during a retaliatory expedition against the island by the Dutch. Theodore P. Galestin included a drawing done in his own hand inspired directly from this relief to introduce Pigeaud's translation of that manuscript (fig. 20-3). In Galestin's severely cropped rendering of the scene entitled *A Battle* we are meant to come face to face with fourteenth-century Majapahit court life, in this case perhaps some kind of everyday royal progress unfolding. Was the image selected in direct response to Pigeaud's general quandary as to whether Majapahit carts "had wheels with spokes and rims or solid wheels made of tree-trunks"?[18] Such questions may have been exacerbated in large part by the several words for "cart" used as if indiscriminately in Prapanca's text. In the end, Galestin's drawing is more interesting in terms of what it erases. It is fascinating for its ruthlessly unapologetic, optical "framing" of the Panataran relief, and its purposeful translation of things deemed too

FIGURE 20-3 *A Battle*. Drawing by T. P. Galestin, introducing Theodore G. T. Pigeaud's *Java in the Fourteenth Century: A Study in Cultural History (The Nagara-Kertagama by Rakawi Prapanca of Majapahit, 1365 AD)*, vol. III: *Translations*, p. xv (courtesy of KITLV Press).

mythological and fantastical into the "utter visibility" of history. Here, the framing of the king's "carriage" plays on the dual meaning of the word as both the royal body, particularly the contours of the head, and a conveyance with a mighty wheel complete with spokes like so many static compass points. This is Prapanca's text being interpreted as projective geometry at its clearest, a reflective symmetry summed up eloquently in all its totality by Clifford Geertz:

> Since each of the princesses represented one of the compass points (marked on her cart by traditional symbols and on her person by her title, which associated her with the quarter of the country in the appropriate direction from the capital), and the king represented the center in which they all were summed, the very order of the march conveyed the structure of the cosmos – mirrored in the organization of the court – to the countryside. All that was left to complete this bringing of Heaven's symmetry to earth's confusion was for the countryside, struck with the example, to shape itself, in turn, to the same design.[19]

Visual analysis of Galestin's rendering reveals only a highly selective segment of that orderly design, a triangulated perspectival composition giving the man in the chariot on the left prominence over his fallen victim on the ground to the right, whose carriage in all its chaos on the left has been cropped from view. He represents the king as the central hub of that celestial symmetry, a single viewpoint where the viewer – like the four princesses as static spokes – has no choice but to line up either inside the scene, as its subject, or as its exterior, its object and its victim. Galestin's mode of selection from the actual narrative river of stone sheds light on this process of asserting or reasserting the power of the male Gaze, not only at the expense of the seemingly victimized woman at the feet of the man in the single chariot, but with respect to everyone else depicted.

In order to see the male Gaze at work, it pays to quote here in full from the caption supplied for Galestin's drawing. We can only assume that it is Pigeaud (or perhaps Galestin in collaboration?) who wrote the convoluted caption to

accompany the drawing, but it serves in the visual analysis that follows as a way to divine what details of the relief are stressed and what are eclipsed in the securing of the male Gaze as optical. In this hierarchical display, where male power is determined by the nature of the headgear worn and the weapons wielded, this lone woman is rendered a static compass point, a spoke on a motionless wheel. In the lengthy caption provided in Pigeaud's volume, all reference to the actual mythological narrative depicted is withheld until the final sentence in order to further "historicize" the moment. It is the final admission/omission on the part of Galestin that forever defines the limited contours of our vision:

> A battle: the party of five men (one lies on the ground, wounded) at the right apparently is trying to recover a Princess who is carried off by a Prince riding on the car drawn by four horses at the left. The attire and the weapons of the fighting men are peculiar. Several pursuers wear a headdress resembling the diadems (*jamang*) of modern Javanese *wayang* puppets and a kind of coats of mail as a protection of the breast. They are armed with short pikes and round bucklers or with kinds of curved stabbing knives, daggers or small swords with tassels on the hilt, showing not much resemblance to modern Javanese crisses. Most men of the pursued party at the left (probably being of higher standing than the others) have their hair made up in a chignon at the back of their heads. Their weapons are the same as those used by the other party except for the bow of the Prince on the car. The decorated triangle is the car's wooden back-screen and the standing poles are the supports of the roof of plaited bamboo that has been removed for the occasion of the flight. Behind the wounded man's buckler the head and hand of a clownish servant (*panakawan*) appear. Apparently he is trying to crawl away from danger. Drawn after a stone relief of Candi Panataran, central temple (*c.* 1347 AD). Represented are scenes from the Old Javanese romantic poem *Kersnayana*. The Prince's crown has been left out as belonging more to mythology than to real life.[20]

By omitting the tip of the prince's crown, Galestin defines his perspectival vanishing point, his "horizon" if you will, for his own purposes. But what other details does Galestin's drawing/caption seek to repress?

The caption reveals the somewhat aggressive truncating of the image for the sake of so-called historical clarity, thereby eclipsing all details that might have afforded the feminine character a voice. We are provided with an elitist ranking, where visual supremacy would appear to be given to the "real life" nature of heads at the expense of their heavily "mythologized" feet. Our eyes are trained to see only the "Prince riding on his car" with his high chignon now devoid of crown and his preferred weapon of choice – the lone bow – clasped in his left arm. By describing the pursuers as wearing "peculiar" headdresses resembling that of modern *wayang* puppets with outdated weapons, the ocular ranking of the royal bodily "carriage" is almost complete. But what has happened to the canopies overhead? By conferring the decorative element of the lone "car" solely on its triangular wooden back-screen, Galestin eclipses the stag-headed, hooved, and floral cloth-like elements connected to the standing poles with lotus

rosettes. Instead, he claims that "the supports of the roof of plaited bamboo . . . have been removed for the occasion of the flight." Like the prince's crown, have these cloth-like elements been eradicated because they too did not seem to belong to "real life"? Once these stag-headed canopies have been designated as unfit for the optical male Gaze, they remain as if virtually unseen by all ensuing scholarship.

Galestin's rendering as seen through Mulvey's account of the Gaze is determined within institutions of masculinist, even rapist, power. In the "prince's" shadow, the "princess" is forced to conform as one static spoke of a wheel set in a landscape inevitably arranged to mirror a charismatically male, celestial symmetry. Here resistance is unheard of, but in our next encounter between Prapanca's text and the Panataran relief as skillfully introduced by the art historian, Marijke Klokke, opposing narratives are built into each point of the image's field. That each point possesses powers of resistance creates a far more complex and potentially volatile arena of power in vision than the Gaze, as a static concept, has been able to suggest. I shall explore Klokke's particular framing of the encounter between text, stone, and the surrounding environment through Mieke Bal's concept of focalization. Unlike Mulvey, whose gaze is optical and scenic in its figuration, Bal introduces an alternative, where sight is figured as semiotic. The advantages of Bal's sense of the image as visual narration – as distinct from scenic view – begin to emerge when one considers the interpersonal nature of visual representation as an interactive, intertextual framing that allows for multiple points of view. The first step is to register signs rather than scenes as the building blocks of vision. The space is that of a potentially interactive discourse where multiple narratives may be coaxed to unfold, rather than a highly politicized, hierarchical projective geometry.

Destabilizing the Optical Gaze

Galestin's encounter between Prapanca's text and the *Krishnayana* reliefs achieves the same effect as the preliminary observations of Panataran provided by Jonathan Rigg in 1849, who concluded that though "the sculpture . . . evidently represents a series of historical occurrences . . . they are certainly not mythological, but represent simple human actions, without distortion or the interference of the Hindu deities with any of their distinguishing attributes."[21] By contrast, Klokke's conclusions embrace the mythological elements, while similarly downplaying interference from foreign Hindu deities. Referencing Prapanca's text as a "state chronicle" describing the Majapahit kings in communion with the state temple of Panataran, Klokke locates Hayam Wuruk as a model king aspiring to Krishna's heroic ideals as located in a popular cult of local mountain worship in all its everyday ancestral trappings. Klokke maintains that the themes and orientation of the narrative reliefs should be interpreted in the context of the ritual policy of the Majapahit kings and the political function

of the temples ensuing from that policy, thereby effectively bringing Prapanca's text face to face with the Krishna reliefs at Panataran. In that context, it does not seem surprising to Klokke that it is the adult phase of Krishna's life and his heroic deeds as a king that have been selected for depiction at Panataran, rather than his equally heroic childhood or the youthful phase of his life, characterized by his divine love.[22] Klokke rules out love and by extension "marriage," divine or otherwise, from these reliefs. I will argue presently that divine love is manifest, but its delineation is much more subtle.

Considering visual art as narrative is interesting in light of Klokke's encounter with Prapanca's text and the Krishna reliefs in stone at Panataran. For Klokke as for Bal, it is possible for the narrator to shift the point of view of the story to one or more of its characters through focalization.[23] Klokke does this by bringing the surrounding landscape at Panataran to bear on her textual perceptions. Narrative art, for Klokke, is more than any other form of plastic art connected with the word. It is inspired by a text, written or oral (or both, as the case may be), and evokes that text by way of a visual medium displayed in stone. Bal's approach is fitting here. The decoding of narrative art presupposes familiarity with texts. Where Galestin's rendering accompanied by the caption leaves the mythological narrative until the end, focusing instead on the everyday aspects of "real" history, Klokke makes the mythological narrative the guiding force behind her analysis, establishing at the outset that the Krishna reliefs at Panataran are thought to date from the reign of Hayam Wuruk (1350–89 CE). She also urges her readers not to discount oral traditions, especially in their recent forms – performative and gestural – as providing potential clues to the scenes.

Klokke unlocks the mysteries by setting up a relationship between subject (*Krishnayana* text) and object (Panataran relief), with each pole of that relationship operating as an object of focalization. Focalization refers to a relationship, and in Klokke's masterful analysis the *Krishnayana* text and the stone reliefs must be studied separately and together, and only then in reference to the surrounding environment. At the heart of the focalization, of narrative text, stone relief, and surrounding environment is a hub of a wheel that shifts and destabilizes the static gaze envisioned by Galestin. Klokke references the presence of gesture, but she does not make the vital connection to the powers of gesture as an extension of the gaze that allows for movement. Our eyes are redirected from the separate static spokes of the wheel, mirrored in the carriage of the king, to that hub where all is shifting in patterns of resistance, but we are unable to see beyond a certain point toward a participatory model based on interaction and motion.

In the moment when Klokke is theoretically poised to explore the narrative reliefs as participatory, she instead, much like Galestin, defines the relief as "embattled" and hence on the side of the demonic and inauspicious. This occurs through her analysis of the images of Krishna with Rukmini, where the marriage by capture scene becomes pivotal. She looks to Krishna in his role as "divine lover" in India, and resolves that "Krishna's pastoral, erotic aspect does not seem to have had a large impact in ancient Java," automatically assuming that no surviving

Old Javanese texts or ancient temple reliefs represent this erotic phase of his life.[24] Instead, she argues that the warrior king phase was favored with stories that emphasize Krishna's heroic aspect rather than his erotic. She capitalizes on his role as a slayer of demons and rival kings at the expense of what I maintain is a more subtle eroticism, where Rukmini's "poetics of control" resides in her gaze (albeit averted) as gestured embrace.

The visual version of the *Krishnayana*, through its selection of themes, is very clear in its depiction of a model king. According to Klokke, "this king is the human incarnation of a god who annihilates demonic powers, has the ability to call upon the gods to establish his kingdom, worships Vishnu at full moon and Shiva at sunrise, travels through beautiful nature, visits hermitages, defeats enemies, and is successful in his quest for the princess of his love" just like Hayam Wuruk. But what of Rukmini's quest? How might her life have served as a model for Majapahit men and women? Klokke does not concern herself with these possibilities in large part because of the way she argues for the focalization of text, stone, and surrounding landscape as one whose structuring principles produce an underlying parallelism in which multiple narratives arrange themselves in patterns of resistance. Klokke writes:

> The Krsna reliefs are fitting illustrations on a royal state temple enshrining the divine origin of the ruling dynasty. But the temple was more than that. The reliefs are positioned in such a manner that they relate to the natural environment, which was conceived of as a cosmological space in which divine and demonic spheres are opposed. As a consequence the temple replicates that space and, most importantly, incorporates the sphere of the mountains, which, as the sources of water, the dwelling-places of the gods, and the containers of sacred energy, are believed to represent the most sacred space within that order.[25]

According to Klokke's structuring principles then, the reliefs on the rear side of Panataran's main temple depict auspicious themes "of mountain and rising sun – where holy water plays a role," while the front faced west, associated with the "lowland" and containing themes "related to demons, battles, and death."[26] Such a scheme forces our "embattled relief" of Krishna's elopement with Rukmini into a demonic realm of death and destruction, much at odds with the fluid, riverine aspects of the relief that argue for its potential divinity. In this scenario, Rukmini's agency, an agency that leads in part to the magical appearance of the stag-headed canopies, is forever eclipsed. Both woman and cloth are rendered invisible. Klokke, in conclusion, describes Krishna as a "model king," successful in his quest for the princess of his love, but this vision is all about Krishna's agency. For Klokke, pursuing visual art as narrative is still occupied with maintaining ocular clarity.

Forcing the front and rear of the temple into consistent patterns of resistance, further enhanced by the surrounding landscape as "horizon," however, does not allow for more elemental fusions to occur, where patternings emerge collectively

through the rhythmic intersections of land and bodies. It is to these elemental fusions of fiery mountains and rivers, everywhere apparent in East Java's active volcanic terrain, that I now turn.

Repositioning Women and the Gaze

In the end, even the most "historicist" account is rooted in an ongoing encounter with the work in the present. My objective here is to acknowledge salient aspects of this encounter as I reposition women in Prapanca's text and, by extension, the Panataran relief in question. Again, I draw inspiration from Andaya's pioneering work on gender history in Indonesia, and in the region more broadly, where she maintains that "the documentary dominance of men can to some extent be countered by attentiveness to other receptacles for historical memories."[27] To that end, she suggests three enduring sources where the gendering of objects opens up unique perspectives in Southeast Asia: cloth production, vernacular architecture, and the physical environment.[28] All three sources can be seen to cohere in a distinctively feminine moment in Prapanca's *Desawarnana*, encouraging readers to experience what are potentially non-linear structures.

Euro-American concentration on the content of literary works has encouraged a pronounced separation of "words" and "writing" from performance and from the physical surroundings and tangible objects by which they were animated. Not only is it important to follow Andaya's recommendation to look *outside* written documentation for clues to reposition women in premodern Java, but we need to broaden our concept of just what might have constituted "written documentation" in fourteenth-century Majapahit. By looking *inside* Prapanca's text to the environments typically conducive to poetic inspiration in kakawin, I shall attempt to reposition the feminine presence. Toward that end, I take my inspiration from Robson's commentary on his recent translation of Prapanca's text, where he surmises that "the detailed description of the journey of 1359 was probably based on notes made by Prapanca on the trip itself," and that "the placement of a subject and the place allotted to it may well have played a part in the poet's plan."[29] Consequently, Robson encourages scholars to explore the text in its entirety "from the viewpoint of their own specialization." As I am an art historian with an interest in textiles, vernacular architecture, sacred landscape, and performance traditions, Robson's charge solicits from me a Tantric engagement with the text, and I shall, accordingly, unpack certain non-linear structures at play in Prapanca's kakawin through a Tantric lens, but first it is important to establish a key distinction between how a worshiper of Tantra (a Tantrika) avails him or herself of detailed descriptions of objects, and what might generally be construed as a scholar's application of such discursive practices in pursuit of historical accuracy.

While an historian is most often concerned with what a detailed object (or series of objects) might "represent," a Tantrika's engagement is with what the

object(s) can "do," not only in this world, but on the divine plane as well. Tantra is productive. A follower of Tantra needs objects as potential *yantra*, tools that in their realistic detail are like ladders of ascent pointing to transformative experiences between worlds. Infinitely permeable, these are details that when set in motion act as accelerators, propelling a person into momentary states of ecstatic release. Within a Tantric context then, Robson's repeated claims that Prapanca's text must be analyzed in its entirety takes on a whole new meaning. Prapanca's richly descriptive text becomes a kind of "tool" or visual aid for those who know how to use it, a diagrammatic symbol for a field of energy, a possible yantra for Tantric union. Zoetmulder has already made invaluable connections with regard to Javanese kakawin being a form of yantra, but due to the uniquely historical reception of Prapanca's text such claims have been largely overlooked. While fully freighted with objects enticing to scholars in pursuit of historical accuracy, here for the first time the heightened detail, particularly with regard to a specific type of cloth and its distinctive pattern, may in fact reveal Prapanca's powers of description as an asset to be turned to a special kind of account. In other words, the gringsing's presence may serve as a metaphor for an audience's response to Prapanca's sinuous tale as it unfolds across the East Javanese landscape. The relation between Prapanca's description of the object and the (imagined) work of visual art can be read as analogous to that between the reader (or listener) and the poem. To put it in less abstract terms, the poet's response to lobheng lewih gringsing becomes a model for our response to the text – a kind of *mise en abime* – a miniature replica of a text embedded within Prapanca's text that mirrors or even, arguably, transcends the *Desawarnana*.

Let us now return to the decidedly feminine moment in Prapanca's text where cloth, built forms, and the surrounding landscape can be seen to cohere in a complex multidimensional way. Under these circumstances, the *Desawarnana* was arguably intended to serve multiple functions depending on his audiences' powers of reception, where a spectrum of possible readings unfold somewhere between linear description and graphic representation. Zoetmulder explores the instances in kakawin where a poet refers to the act of writing a poem as erecting a "temple of words" (*candi bhasa*) with allusions to stone monuments like Palah/Panataran as sites into which a poet's deity may descend and become manifest.[30] As literary yoga, the poem itself literally becomes a non-linear form – a "book monument" – as Tantric tool for transformation. As such, Prapanca's text can be experienced as much more than "writing"; it becomes a "tangible object" (yantra) with performative capabilities.

Prapanca's description of royal women in their separate, cloth-covered carriages comes face to face with a solid wall of stone carriages likewise draped with auspicious canopies. Placing these two allusions to cloth in conversation will help us to tease out the feminine and to reposition women in Prapanca's descriptions of royal progresses through fourteenth-century East Java. But in order to do this, we must first examine Prapanca's classification of royal progress to determine its yantra-like qualities as a yogic tool of Tantric mastery.

Tantra's Tools: Royal Progresses as a Woven Yantra for a Mystical Marriage

> The hundreds of carriages they rode in had different marks: As for the Princess of Pajang, all her carriages bore the mark of the bright sun, and the Princess of Lasem's teeming carriages were painted with a splendid white bull. The Princess of Daha had the sign of the *sadaha* flower, and her carriages glowed with gold paint, but the main one was the Princess of Jiwana, whose carriages all bore as mark masses of *lobheng lewih*. Now the King of Majapahit's carriages were numberless and bore as mark the *bael*, adorned with canopies of red *lobheng lewih gringsing* painted with gold. All the various chiefs transported the King's wives, in the first place Her Majesty the Queen, and as for all the wives of the lower officials, their carriages were permitted to form the vanguard of each contingent. At the rear there came the carriage of the King, adorned with gold and glowing jewels; its appearance was different: it was a palanquin with screens, with gleaming lac; broad, and its brightness shining roundabout, dazzling. (Canto 18:2–5)[31]

Although it is impossible today to divine the precise meanings of these "marks," it is the way in which they are arranged, and adorned with auspicious cloth that reveals how Prapanca skillfully legitimates royal succession by tracing Hayam Wuruk's descent through two female lines that both spring from his maternal grandmother, Rajapatni.[32] Though Rajapatni has been a subject of interest for scholars, it is her two daughters and their female progeny, emphasized in the procession above in a circular relationship to Hayam Wuruk, starting with his sister, his cousin, her mother (his aunt), and his mother – whose sign by the way is "masses of *lobheng lewih*" – who have been largely overlooked. One classification of women that Prapanca may be referencing here, and one that appears often in Tantric literature, is in the form of a virtual strand of female relatives arranged spatially in a circle, or in Prapanca's case set out in separate carriages in ever-shifting landscapes of royal progress. Whether actually related or not, Tantrics defined themselves as family members, as can be divined in the following passage from the *Chakrasamvara-tantra*: "Stay only with female messengers: Mothers, sisters, daughters, and wife. Practice in a circle, like this, and not in any other way."[33] Statements about union with female family members, practicing in circles – albeit a convoluted series of circles set in motion through a repeated pattern of royal progress – can be seen to refer primarily to religious lineages created by Tantric affiliations and the necessity of familial loyalty, reflected during Majapahit times through legitimating succession to the throne by tracing descent through the female line. Creese has observed that the Majapahit festivals described in Prapanca's text were state occasions. She writes:

> Concerned as he was with the public celebration of the realm, the poet Prapanca does not describe individual life-cycle events such as weddings, which in any case may not have taken place among members of the royal family during the six-year period (1359–1365) covered by the *Depiction of Districts*. Nevertheless, the

> elaborate preparations and festivities for the court festivals of Majapahit in this fourteenth-century eyewitness account parallels those that surround the planning and the celebration of *kakawin* weddings.[34]

Not only does it parallel these individual life-cycle events, but I would like to suggest that Prapanca's kakawin envisions a uniquely Tantric form of "marriage" as a seemingly public (but to those adept enough to discern its non-linear strategies, more allegorical) celebration of the realm.

Tantra is derived from the verbal root *tan*, meaning "to weave." While all things tend to be interwoven in Tantra, including the intimate lives and bodies of men and women, in the case of medieval East Java, there has been a marked tendency to focus on two extremes, either on the solitary nature of asceticism (where the scholarship on Rajapatni as a venerable, shaven-headed nun finds its niche), or to sensationalize the demonic, destructive, and orgiastic aspects of Tantric literature. In these limited scenarios, women are either isolated as an anomaly, absent, or when present appear to function only as impassive objects of male subjugation. This has been at the expense of exploring Tantra's intimate and mutually more participatory features, where uncompromising attitudes of homage and respect are frequently afforded women. Indeed, one of the things that perhaps can be said to distinguish a Buddhist bard like Prapanca, and mark his religious progress (and by extension the spiritual goals of his royal patrons), would be his ability to see women as divine.

Adhering to a trend first developed in India, Tantra of the Diamond or Thunderbolt Path (*Vajrayana*) came to Central Java as an integrated aspect of Shaivism and Buddhism. Strongly tinged by concepts and practices aimed at deliverance by erotic and magical means, this new variant spread to East Java and Bali and was absorbed into local agrarian forms of worship. With it came a cult of female counterparts and renewed attention toward increasingly feminine mandala forms mapped on local landscapes. Tantra establishes direct correlations between the universe and the human body, specifically channeled into a series of wheel-like *chakra*, or psychic centers of energy located from the base of the spinal cord to the top of the head that play an important role in meditation. Literally "wheels," these chakra, generally symbolized by lotuses, are connected by nadi (from the Sanskrit root *nad* meaning motion, vibration) which are the channels or streams of the subtle body through which the vital currents flow. While there are essentially unlimited nadi, the three most important are the central channel, Susumna, and its two flanking channels: the white, 'lunar' nadi, Ida, on the left, representing the divine feminine nectar over which the gods and demons fought; and the red masculine, 'solar' nadi, Pingala, on the right, symbolized by the sun. Two currents of psychic energy flow through Ida and Pingala from the base of the spine, spiraling in opposite directions around the Susumna, which meet between the eyebrows (as Shiva and Shakti united), from there rising to the highest psychic center, and finding temporary fulfillment in the flowering of the thousand-petaled lotus, Sahasrara, above the crown of the

head, from whence the coiled-up rainbows of cloth-like ribbons of mist are often depicted falling back down to earth. In India, this feminized hydraulic circulation of nadi is sometimes endowed with the names of the three most sacred rivers, the Ganga, the Yamuna, and the mythological Saraswati.[35]

In my reading of the *Desawarnana*, I maintain that Prapanca is recreating a similar sacred geography of fluid condensation mapped on Trowulan, the capital of Majapahit, where royal women are being elevated in their separately "wheeled" and caparisoned carriages as part of a Tantric system harnessed to the unique features of the various districts on the two branches of the Brantas river. Prapanca introduces the royal family, beginning with Rajapatni in her role as goddess Paramabhagavati, "an excellent parasol for the world" (Canto 26: 2.1b). Her two daughters are then introduced as Princesses of Jiwana and Daha, in whose districts on the right and left branches of the Brantas they are revered as "Sudewi divided in two" (Canto 27: 4.1d) a reference to Vishnu's shakti, Shri Lakshmi. Their forked placement on the river sets the stage for the Tantric system that ensues, where the names of three tubular vessels in the body are arranged, right, left, and center respectively. Hayam Wuruk and his spouse conclude the configuration, presented as comparable to Kama, god of love and Susumnadewi (Canto 28: 7.3d). As the king's wife, cousin, and sister, respectively, these three royal women are compared to Susumna, Pingala and Ida. It is appropriate that Hayam Wuruk's chief wife is represented by the symbolic center of the Brantas, located literally in the lap of the Majapahit capital itself. It is tempting to see her placement in Prapanca's text in relation to a stone sculpture found in nearby Blitar depicting a vase of lotuses framed by a stag-headed arch (fig. 20-4). Like the vase from which a central lotus blooms, she is flanked by her sisters-in-law, the king's younger female relatives, his cousin and his sister respectively, the two budding branches of the Brantas with Pingala on the right side of the body, where the upper course of the river runs southwest toward Daha (also called Kadiri); and Ida on the left, in the direction of Jiwana or Janggala (also called Kahuripan), near the mouth of the "Golden River." What we have here is a mapping of royal women's body parts on Majapahit geography.

This unpacking of the feminine constellation of Majapahit royal women coupled with a systematic enumeration of regions along the Brantas river is followed by the mention of Prapanca's four great progresses (Pajang 1353, west of the Brantas; Lasem 1354, north of the Brantas; Lodaya 1357, south of the Brantas, and Lumajang 1359, the most detailed and final progress, directed toward the east of the Brantas, and weaving around the mountain ranges and back in a pattern suggestively shaped like a *vajra* (a short metal weapon symbolic of a thunderbolt or diamond). Associated with the Tantric mapping of sacred rivers is the centrality of shakti (the female creative force of the universe) and the union of male and female through intimate yogic embrace. Whereas Mahayana Buddhism offers a gradual process of purification over many lifetimes, Tantra insists that enlightenment is possible to achieve in a single lifetime. Devotees who have attained such liberation become *jivanmukta*

FIGURE 20-4 *A Vase of Lotuses Framed by an Arch of Deer*, stone, height 75 cm, found and photographed by A. J. Bernet Kempers when in the collection of the Kabupaten at Blitar, East Java and reproduced here from Plate 229 in Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (courtesy of Harvard University Press).

("one-who-is-liberated-while-still-alive") and have access to considerable power. They can become masters not only of their domain but also of the universe, attaining a kind of magical autonomy and rainbow-like perfection (*siddhi*) often visualized through the miraculous appearance of fully animated cloth-like forms as evidence of the permeability between the divine plane and the human, the human and the divine. I would argue that what we have in the *Desawarnana* is a literary form of *nyasa* (literally "setting upon, placing down"), wherein Prapanca imposes a textualized bodily construction on a sacred physical terrain.[36] Nyasa becomes a strategy then for effecting "natural circulation" through

elemental and magical means, thereby realizing the entire physical universe within himself (and, by logical extension, the "body" of the royal lineage of Majapahit). Prapanca's penname – meaning "confused, perplexed, bewildered" – suddenly takes on renewed significance as a potentially desired state of disorientation, leading to transformation through magical empowerment.

Discourses of magic may seem dubiously outmoded to modern readers, but within a Tantric context they are accepted as evidence of spiritual attainments. Effective ritual performance requires yogic mastery of the body and the elements (earth, air, fire, water, and space), and this can be accomplished through knowledge of ritual gazes combined with hand gestures (*mudra*), sacred syllables (*mantra*), cosmic diagrams (*mandala*), and objects (*yantra*) that when wielded appropriately can, among other things, effectively control weather, perform miraculous cures, ripen crops, and deliver religious lessons by way of powerful initiations. Prapanca's role as court poet required just such yogic mastery of the elements, and his *Desawarnana* serves as an effective ritual performance combining all of the above. Anak Agung Gede Sobrat's *Magical Amulet* (fig. 20-5) reveals just such a performance on the part of a powerful devotee who can be seen to fly through the air straddling, not a stag, but the Balinese equivalent of a cow-headed rainbow cloth conveyance whose patterned energy finds its resonant threaded counterpart in every other yantra-like object in the composition from his double vajra, gringsing belt to his billowing scarf to his spatially oriented fluttering and enfolded weaponry. Prapanca, in his desire for yogic mastery, can be seen to wield similar allusions to richly patterned textiles as a way of tying together the otherwise chaotic threads of multiple royal progresses unfolding.

Judith Becker alludes to a moment in Prapanca's text where Tantra is referenced, suggesting a direct connection with how Tantric rituals may have been institutionalized within the Javanese courts, namely through the teachings of specially appointed religious priests or functionaries called *purohita*. Becker's translation of Prapanca reads:

> All honored monks, Tantric Buddhists, were witnesses of the mandala drawing. The honored purohita was the principal officiate, knowledgeable in the system of nadi [the "veins" of the esoteric body]. He was virtuous, true and accurate in his knowledge of the scriptures, of the three tantras. (Canto 64: 3)[37]

Robson translates this reference to the "veins" quite differently, suggesting instead that the Abbot is "diligent in the foundation of Nadi."[38] Is nadi then a sacred place or a Tantric ritual practice mapped on the body, or both in a way that would be completely in keeping with the esoteric nature of this material? Though it is impossible to know precisely what texts are being referenced here, clearly some form of yogic mastery of nadi is at play in Prapanca's *Desawarnana* where the power of the universe flows through and is, arguably, like a mandala being "drawn" on a Majapahit landscape. This energy (shakti) is not something

FIGURE 20-5 *Magical Amulet*, 1938, by Anak Agung Gede Sobrat (1917–92), Padang Tegal, Bali, tempera on paper, 32 cm × 24.5 cm (courtesy of Puri Lukisan Museum, Ubud, Bali, PL/89/L).

that Prapanca (or Hayam Wuruk by extension) can harness or steal, contrary to what is suggested in some sources. The women choose when and on whom to bestow their blessings. By conferring energy and power upon a man, they are not thereby depriving themselves but rather sharing their energy with one who has garnered favor by meeting various requirements imposed, such as displaying ritual etiquette, using secret signs, and making offerings and gestures of obeisance toward women. Prapanca's text may indeed reflect his desire to curry just such favors for Hayam Wuruk, through his literary gestures of obeisance to the royal lineage of Majapahit women.

Perhaps it is Prapanca's concerted efforts to maintain the circulatory flow of nadi on these multiple royal progresses that help to shed light on Zoetmulder's

grave concerns as to whether Prapanca's contemporaries would have considered the *Desawarnana* an outstanding specimen of kakawin. Zoetmulder asks a key question here:

> What *kawi*, if it was his intention to write a normal "literary" *kakawin*, would have let slip the opportunity offered him in the account of the royal journey for inserting an extensive description of the landscape? Yet Prapanca gives no such descriptions.[39]

Prapanca's reasons for curtailing the description of his king resting "near a lake with lotus-flowers in full bloom," suggest that he had other "lotuses" in mind similar to those perhaps commemorated in the Majapahit period stone sculpture described earlier (fig. 20-4). Framed by its distinctive stag-headed aureole with the one-eyed kala head (*kala-ekachaksu*) at the top possibly representing the eye of the sun, this sculpture argues for a reconfiguration of the Gaze that potentially sheds light not on but through matter. Like the honored purohita, knowledgeable in the system of nadi, Prapanca's text unfolds an attempt at "mandala drawing," somewhere between linear description and graphic representation. Arranged accordingly, a geneological thread of women as lotus-like evocations of Rajalakshmi (or Sudewi) is introduced, each situated with a male counterpart in their separate carriages as logical extensions of specific regions along the Brantas that, when set in motion, would seem to bring together these waterways so central to the wealth of the realm and to life.

Conclusion: Reconfiguring the Gaze as "Strange Method" or Embodied Materiality?

In 1914, P. V. Van Stein Callenfels concluded that the Panataran sculptor(s) used a "strange method" in their selection of themes. Why were two episodes that followed closely in the *Bhagavatapurana*, namely Muchukunda's battle with Kalayavana and Krishna's battle with Rukma over his elopement with Rukmini, placed at the beginning and ending of the narrative sequence on the second level of the main temple at Panataran?[40] Both reliefs are, in fact, situated on either side of the stairs as if for comparative balance while devotees ascend, an ascent which, by the way, leads the visitor up to what Klokke referred to as the "front" side in all its demonic and embattled glory. I will argue, in conclusion, that the secret to unlocking this so-called "strange method" requires finally acknowledging the need to reposition women and secure an alternative to the Gaze in fourteenth-century East Java. It also necessitates a willingness to relinquish a more modern Euro-American orientation of reality where a desire for order and the need to secure clearly discernible "horizons" leads to an unquestioning kind of causality with regard to framing the surrounding world. Instead, viewers must learn to quite literally "embrace" a lango aesthetic, where a participatory

relationship is at play in which highly gendered elemental fusions of fire and water as "mountains and rivers" (wukir wulusan) can repeatedly occur, rife with emotional ambiguity and disorder. These are elemental fusions so dazzling and emotionally charged that we may need to avert our eyes, or if we struggle to see, accept that our vision of the surrounding landscape may be confused, and that such fuzziness may be a desired aesthetic. Once we accept that a certain amount of disorientation may have been the poetic "order" of the day, we may attempt to reconstruct what might have been the visual sensibilities of Prapanca, Hayam Wuruk, and the royal women in their canopied carriages as they traveled repeatedly both to and from Panataran.

Both Galestin and Klokke select "horizons" that do not include the stag-headed canopies over the chariots. In their assessments, Rukmini's seemingly supplicant stature at the feet of Krishna speaks to a political configuration that renders such gestures static, passive, and servile, where the lone woman is an unwilling victim of violent circumstances. But what if we could extend our metaphoric wheel from ocular clarity, where static spokes or shifting hubs are cleanly delineated, to actually setting the wheel in motion where visibility becomes blurred, and our reception reflects more of a fully embodied relationship to the surrounding landscape?

Movement signified by gesture is arguably a more adequate way of thinking the body than vision. How might this change our relationship to Rukmini and, by extension, Prapanca's royal female entourage? Here I would like to draw on the splendid analysis of the Panataran temple complex as developed by Judith Ann Patt, who writes:

> At Panataran, any sense of formal planning and easily understandable artificial order was always absent. Rather, the impression as one proceeded from the open landscape to the final crowded drama of the main temple courtyard must have been that the entire complex had developed slowly and naturally. Yet precisely because this impression is so distinct and so well executed, it is probable that the effect was calculated, not spontaneous and accidental. The dating of some of the key elements, such as the gateways and the main temple, indicates that they and the overall layout were conceived as a whole at the beginning and that this effect of dramatic disorder, reflecting the natural landscape, was desired.[41]

This is perhaps as close as one can come to Zoetmulder's description of the experience of lango. When Prapanca describes that detailed "solid wall" of carriages draped with red gilded gringsing, perhaps he had in mind the wall of carriages in the *Krishnayana* reliefs, complete with their stag-headed canopies, an image that was arguably meant to be set in motion so that we press beyond "seeing" in a mimetic way into a sensual domain where all the senses rule in a state of rasa. This challenges us as viewers in the twenty-first century to consider that what van Stein Callenfells concluded was a "strange method" at work, may in fact have been a magically efficacious embodied materiality intended to trigger profound emotional responses in a visually adept audience.

With van Stein Callenfel's "strange method" in place, let us return to Rukmini's gestured embrace in the relief, which is meant to be seen in relation to Muchukunda's fiery victory (as witnessed by Krishna in hiding) on the left, when the sage's powerful gaze and accompanying gesture incinerate the ogre, Kalayavana, and his minions. Here Rukmini's initial gaze produces tears that, when combined with heavy breathing in the text, lead to a subtle gestural "victory" in stone. It is arguably Rukmini's powerful initiation by water that leads to Krishna's transformation to a non-violent response to his brother-in-law, Rukma, much in contrast to Kalayavana's outcome.

> Princess Rukmini, seeing her brother, was deeply moved. Crying aloud, she embraced the legs of King Krishna, not knowing shame she breathed heavily when she looked up. There on the thighs of the king was a stream of tears.[42]

This is an embodied gaze where all the senses are engaged, and the eyes partake at the last through weeping. It is Rukmini's seemingly demure gesture that is in fact responsible for single-handedly elevating her husband to a heightened state of compassion for living things, particularly in this case her brother. Through her ritual of "initiation" by watery tears, Krishna's intended violence is suspended. Rukmini's gestural embrace can be seen to act upon the external world (Krishna's thighs) as a result of inner transformation, thereby effecting a non-violent outcome. As such, Rukmini's emotions reconnect her with her earlier association with Vishnu's consort, a logical conflation when we consider that Krishna is a reincarnation of Vishnu. Then Rukmini assumes the magically effective watery guise of Rajalakshmi – like Prapanca's virtual strand of royal women in the *Desawarnana* – and the detailed imagery of rainbow-like canopies draped on carriages invites the possibility for exploring an auspicious moment of embodied materiality, a Tantric "marriage" in the making. This repositioning of women in fourteenth-century East Java is concerned with the gaze not as "shedding light on matter" but as "shedding light through matter" by seeing and then pressing beyond the loosely woven margins of palm-leaf text and stone. Both interactive and inherently political, this reconfiguration of the gaze – disorderly by design – challenges us as embodied readers (and viewers) to apply a lango aesthetic. What is at stake? We risk sifting mountains and rivers through a brightly woven gringsing lens, not only for the mutual delight and transformation of Majapahit audiences in the premodern Southeast Asian past, but for men and women everywhere who strive to read with rasa.

Notes

1 Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan*, 350.

2 Initial research was carried out by Brandes, *Nagarakretagama*; Kern and Krom, *Het Oud-Javaansche*; Poerbatjaraka, "Aanteekeningen"; and Pigeaud, *Java in the*

Fourteenth Century, whose translation, based on the first (and only) manuscript discovered in Lombok in 1894, set the stage for much of the early scholarship. Robson's more streamlined 1995 translation of the text, *Desawarnana (Nagarakrtagama)* was initiated by the discovery of new manuscripts in Bali in 1979 by H. I. R. Hinzler and the late J. Schoterman. Any quotes from the manuscript are Robson's unless otherwise stipulated.

3 Slametmuljana, *Prapantja*, 3.

4 Though controversy surrounds the precise meaning of the word, Old Javanese kakawin are believed to correspond closely with Sanskrit court epics called *kavya*. See Teeuw *et al.*, *Siwaratrikalpa of Mpu Tanakung*, 3.

5 Ikat means literally "to bind," a process in which resist patterns are applied to both warp and weft threads prior to weaving, so that the final pattern only emerges upon completion.

6 Ramseyer, "Magical Protection and Communal Identity," 130.

7 Following Mulvey, "Gaze" is given an upper case initial when the explanatory concept is being referenced, and lower case when referring to an actual instance of vision. See Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" and "Afterthoughts."

8 Supomo, "Lord of the Mountains," 292.

9 During the Majapahit period, it seems that visiting the banks of certain rivers was equivalent to visiting the coast. See Robson, *Desawarnana*, 129.

10 Worsley, "Mpu Tantular's Kakawin Arjunawijaya," 172.

11 An ancient ritual believed to be similar to the present-day Javanese *siraman*, when a bride undergoes a ritual bathing preceding the wedding, usually administered only by experienced female relatives. See Creese, *Women of the Kakawin World*, 158; Klokke, "The Krishna Reliefs," 31.

12 Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan*, 172–3.

13 Rubenstein, *Beyond the Realm of the Senses*, 180–1.

14 Day, "Meanings of Change in the Poetry," 111–10.

15 Santoso, *Krishnayana*, Canto 53:11–13.

16 Vickers, *Journeys of Desire*, 65; and Keane, *Signs of Recognition*, 141.

17 Andaya, *The Flaming Womb*, 11.

18 Pigeaud, *Java in the Fourteenth Century*, vol. IV, 55.

19 Geertz, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma," 133.

20 Pigeaud, *Java in the Fourteenth Century*, vol. III, 142.

21 Rigg, "Tour from Sourabaya," 240.

22 Klokke, "The Krishna Reliefs," 38.

23 Bal, *Looking In: The Art of Viewing*, 46–7.

24 Klokke, "The Krishna Reliefs," 19.

25 Ibid., 38.

26 Ibid., 36.

27 Andaya, *The Flaming Womb*, 61.

28 Andaya, *The Flaming Womb*, 62–3.

29 Robson, *Desawarnana*, 8–14.

30 Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan*, 185.

31 Robson, *Deswarnana*, 38–9.

32 Rajapatni died in 1350. Her final obsequies (*sraddha*) are described in detail in Cantos 63–9 of the *Desawarnana*. See Guan, "Sraddha Sri Rajapatni," 73–88.

33 Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, 58–9.
34 Creese, *Women of the Kakawin World*, 69.
35 Sinha, *The Great Book of Tantra*, 104.
36 Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 378–86.
37 Becker, *Gamelan Stories*, 10. Her translation is an adaptation from Pigeaud, *Java in the Fourteenth Century*, vol. III, 74.
38 Robson, *Deswarnana*, 71: 64, 3c.
39 Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan*, 354–5.
40 Stein Callenfels, "Een bas-relief."
41 Patt, "The Use and Symbolism of Water in Ancient Indonesian Art and Architecture," 384.
42 Santoso, *Krishnayana*, Canto 53:13.

References

Andaya, Barbara W. *The Flaming Womb: Repositioning Women in Early Modern Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Bal, Mieke. *Looking In: The Art of Viewing*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.

Becker, Judith. *Gamelan Stories: Tantrism, Islam, and Aesthetics in Central Java*. Tempe, AZ: Program for South East Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1993.

Brandes, J. L. A. *Nagarakretagama; Lofdicht van Prapanjtja op koning Radjasanagara, Hayam Wuruk, van Madjapahit, naar het eenige daarvan bekende handschrift, aangetroffen in de puri te Tjakranagara op Lombok* [*Nagarakretagama: A Panegyric by Prapanca on King Rajasanagara, Hayam Wuruk, of Majapahit, according to the only known manuscript, seized from the palace of Chakranegara in Lombok*]. Battavia: Landsdrukkerij; The Hague: Nijhoff, 1902.

Creese, Helen. *Women of the Kakawin World: Marriage and Sexuality in the Indic Courts of Java and Bali*. London: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 2004.

Day, J. Anthony. "Meanings of Change in the Poetry of Nineteenth-Century Java." PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1981.

Geertz, Clifford. "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power." In *Local Knowledge*, by Clifford Geertz, 121–46. New York: Basic Books, 1983.

Guan Kwa Chong. "Sraddha Sri Rajapatni: An Exploration of Majapahit Mortuary Ritual." In *The Legacy of Majapahit*, edited by J. Miksic and E. Sri Hardiati, 73–88. Singapore: National Heritage Board, 1995.

Keane, Webb. *Signs of Recognition: Powers and Hazards of Representation in an Indonesian Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Kern, H., and N. J. Krom. *Het Oud-Javaansche lofdicht Nagarakrtagama van Prapanca (1365* AD*)* [*The Old Javanese Panegyric Nagarakretagama by Prapanca*]. Text translated and with annotated discussion from the published writings D1. VII–VIII of Prof. Dr. H. Kern, with notes by Dr. N. J. Krom. The Hague: Nijhoff [KITLV Press], 1919.

Klokke, Marijke J., ed. "The Krishna Reliefs at Panataran: A Visual Version of the Old Javanese Krishnayana." In *Narrative Sculpture and Literary Traditions in South and Southeast Asia*, edited by M. Klokke, 19–41. Leiden: Brill, 2000.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," and "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.'" Reprinted together in *Feminism and Film Theory*, edited by Constance Penley, 57–68, 69–79. London and New York: Routledge, 1988.

Patt, Judith A. "The Use and Symbolism of Water in Ancient Indonesian Art and Architecture." PhD dissertation: University of California, Berkeley, 1979.

Pigeaud, Theodore G. T. *Java in the Fourteenth Century: A Study in Cultural History. The Nagarakertagama by Rakawi Prapanca of Majapahit, 1365 AD*, vol. I: *Javanese Texts in Transcription*; vol. II: *Notes on the Texts and the Translation*; vol. III: *Translations*; vol. IV: *Commentaries and Recapitulation*; vol. V: *Glossary, General Index.* The Hague: Nijhoff [KITLV Press, Translation Series 4], 1960–3.

Poerbatjaraka, R. Ng. "Aanteekeningen op de Nagarakrtagama [Notes on the Nagarakrtagama]." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 80 (1924): 219–86.

Ramseyer, Urs. "Magical Protection and Communal Identity." In *Textiles in Bali*, edited by B. Hauser-Schaublin, M. L. Nabholz-Kartaschoff, and U. Ramseyer, 117–136. Berkeley and Singapore: Periplus Editions, 1991.

Rigg, Jonathan. "Tour from Sourabaya, through Kediri, Blitar, Antang, Malang and Passuruan, back to Sourabaya." *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia* 3 (1849): 235–52.

Robson, Stuart O. *Desawarnana (Nagarakrtagama) by Mpu Prapanca*. translated from the Javanese. Leiden: KITLV Press [Verhandelingen 169], 1995.

Rubenstein, Raechelle. *Beyond the Realm of the Senses; The Balinese Ritual of Kekawin Composition*. Leiden: KITLV Press [Verhandelingen 181], 2000.

Santoso Soewito. *Krishnayana: The Krishna Legend in Indonesia*. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1986.

Shaw, Miranda. *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Sinha, I. *The Great Book of Tantra*. Rochester, NY: Destiny Books, 1993.

Slametmuljana, ed. *Prapantja; Nagarakretagama, diperbaharui kedalam bahasa Indonesia* [*Prapanca; Nagarakretagama, updated in Indonesian*]. Djakarta: Siliwangi, 1953.

Smith, Frederick M. *The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

Stein Callenfels, P. V. Van. "Een bas-relief van het tweede terras van Panataran [A bas relief from the second terrace at Panataran]." *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkekunde*, 56 (1914): 344–52.

Supomo, S. "'Lord of the Mountains' in the Fourteenth-Century Kakawin," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 128 (1972): 281–97.

Teeuw, A., S. O. Robson, T. P. Galestin, P. J. Worsley, and P. J. Zoetmulder. *Siwaratrikalpa of Mpu Tanakung: An Old Javanese Poem, Its Indian Source and Balinese Illustrations.* The Hague: Nijhoff [KITLV Press, Bibliotheca Indonesica 3], 1969.

Vickers, Adrian. *Journeys of Desire: A Study of the Balinese Text Malat*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2005.

Worsley, Peter J. "Mpu Tantular's kakawin Arjunawijaya and Conceptions of Kingship in Fourteenth Century Java." In *Variation, Transformation and Meaning: Studies on Indonesian Literatures in Honour of A. Teeuw*, edited by J. J. Ras and S. O. Robson, 163–90. Leiden: KITLV Press [Verhandelingen 144], 1991.

Zoetmulder, P. J. *Kalangwan: A Survey of Old Javanese Literature*. The Hague: Nijhoff [KITLV Press, Translation Series 16], 1974.

21

Dead Beautiful: Visualizing the Decaying Corpse in Nine Stages as Skillful Means of Buddhism

Ikumi Kaminishi

Introduction: Paintings as *Upaya kaushalya*

"*Uso mo hoben* (lying is a skillful means)" is a Japanese phrase often used in defense of a white lie without referencing its original source in Buddhism. To tell a lie is, of course, unethical but also an infraction of Buddhist moral precepts, yet to lie for the sake of awakening the unenlightened is a Buddhist practice of *upaya kaushalya* ("skill in means").[1] The premise of upaya kaushalya is a creed that Shakyamuni Buddha's *dharma* is too profound to understand in its doctrinal essence, and thus requires alternative explanations. Expedient lies in a specific Buddhist context are, therefore, a legitimate didactic technique of Mahayana Buddhism. Inevitably, different skills benefit different kinds of individuals, depending on their preparation and level of understanding. For the sake of illuminating abstract ideas in visual images, paintings, too, serve as useful teaching tools for conveying Buddhist tenets. This essay studies such religious images to explore further what might happen if illustrated expedient lies become taken as truth.

In its application, as John Schroeder points out, upaya kaushalya combines compassion and wisdom, which form the essence of Mahayana Buddhism; compassion towards the unawakened and suffering beings, and wisdom to guide them skillfully towards enlightenment.[2] A famous and often-cited example of skillful means is demonstrated in the parable of "The Burning House," a chapter in the *Lotus Sutra*. In this parable, a man comes home to find his house on fire

and his children inside the burning house. The father calls out to them, but the children are too engaged in games to hear the father's alarm. In order to lure them out of harm's way, the father shouts that a cart full of enchanting toys awaits the children outside the gate.[3] Michael Pye points out that the parable elucidates how even a lie can be a skillful means of persuasion if utilized with compassion and wisdom.[4] The father here represents a compassionate, wise teacher while his children symbolize the people who have yet to open their eyes to Buddhism. Using a storytelling method, a basic method of Buddhist skillful means, the parable of "The Burning House" teaches an act of compassion. Telling a metaphorical narrative is also a skillful means.

Upaya kaushalya depends on teaching ability itself rather than Buddha dharma, and thus the end (enlightenment) justifies the falsified discourses, so long as it helps release others from suffering and brings them to enlightenment. Teaching with images therefore helps visualize abstract concepts of Buddhism. In Japan, there has long been a ritualized practice of preaching alongside pictures of Buddhist paradises and hells in order to help audiences understand Buddhist doctrine.[5] Medieval Japanese Buddhists named this visual method *etoki* or "explaining pictures." Performers of etoki used painted scrolls to narrate moralizing stories in front of live audiences and this tradition continues to be used at various temples today.[6]

The enduring nature of etoki tradition is a testimony to how adept picture-storytelling was in accommodating audiences with different cultural, social, and historical backgrounds. But what if a viewer sees something beyond the intended illustration in paintings used during etoki performances? What happens when, like a foreign word that has lost its meaning in the course of translation, these false discourses lose their original purpose and are accepted as truth? Like the altering of an original message in a children's "Telephone" or "Whisper down the lane" game, this phenomenon reshapes an original message into an entirely different one.

Divergences in Buddhist teachings have occurred over time. One such case is evident in the use of a painting in the genre known as *kusozu* in Japanese, which means "the pictures of the nine stages of a decaying corpse" (hereafter referred to as "nine-stage decomposition"). It is a gory subject that details a decomposing female body but was initially intended as a skillful means to help monks understand the Buddhist canon of impermanence. Through an investigation of the nine-stage decomposition, including its related Indian Buddhist literature, I show how cultural or social conditions compel different interpretations. Specifically, the nine-stage decomposition pictures engendered new kinds of texts and traditions in medieval Japan, in the same way that the "whispers down the line" game does, by replacing its original meaning with issues and problems concerning the female gender.

A scroll painting titled *Kusoshi emaki* (fourteenth century) or, in a rather lengthy English translation, the *Illustrated Hand-scroll of the Poem of the Nine Stages of Decaying Corpse*, is one of the earliest examples of this genre (fig. 21-1).[7] It originally belonged to Jakkoin, a subsidiary temple of the Tendai Buddhist headquarters at Enryakuji, and currently belongs to the Kyushu National Museum,

Publisher's Note:
Image not available
in the electronic edition

FIGURE 21-1 *Illustrated Handscroll of the Poem of the Nine Stages of a Decaying Corpse*, fourteenth century. Handscroll, ink and color on paper. Kyushu National Museum, Dazaifu, Fukuoka Prefecture. Photograph by Shin'ichi Yamazaki.

Fukuoka Prefecture. The handscroll graphically depicts the process of corporeal decay. The scroll opens with an image of a young woman, dressed in simple attire without any contextual explanation or any hint of time or place. The "before death" picture introduces the woman in her prime as a beautiful lady with long hair. Her clothing of a black top and red trousers reveals her as a court lady of noble birth.[8] Unrolled from right to left, the rest of the scroll reveals images depicting the decomposition of the woman's body from immediately after her death to the scattering of her bones. In sequentially presenting the same body on a blank background, the viewer's attention is focused solely on the body. The corpse has no identity, except for its class (aristocratic) and gender (female).

A descriptive title accompanies each of the nine stages in progressively decaying order: (1) newly deceased, (2) distension, (3) rupture, (4) exudation of blood, (5) putrefaction, (6) discoloration and desiccation, (7) consumption by birds and animals, (8) skeleton, and (9) disjointing.[9] In the first image, the newly deceased corpse lies on a green mat. An embroidered white robe loosely covers her, exposing her ample right breast, while her black hair flows to one side like wavy water. The subsequent pictures are uncomfortable to behold. In the second and third images, "distension" and "rupture," the corpse has darkened skin, disheveled hair, and a distended abdomen that exudes pus and blood. The fourth and fifth images, "exudation of blood" and "putrefaction," show the bloated body gradually deflating as maggots infest the flesh. In the sixth picture, "discoloration and desiccation," the body appears as a desiccated cadaver. The seventh, "consumption by birds and animals," depicts the custom of offering dead bodies to nature; here dogs and crows feast on the body's flesh, which has strangely become ample again. The eighth picture, "skeleton," shows the skeleton in its entirety, and the ninth, "disjointing," shows the bones broken apart and scattered.

The ghastly imagery on the *Kusoshi emaki* is accompanied by a set of nine poems grouped as "the contemplations on the nine stages of a decaying corpse." By the medieval period, two versions of this poetry existed. Both were written in Chinese and attributed to historically eminent scholars; one to the Japanese Buddhist priest Kukai (774–835) and the other to the Chinese poet Su Tongpo (1063–1101). It is unlikely that either set was actually written by their supposed author, as literary texts were often given honorary attributions to renowned scholars. Fusae Kanda remarks that both attributions allude to these supposed authors' legendary esteem in each culture for their intellectual distinction.[10] While there are some variant discrepancies between the two versions, including the different ordering of the decaying process, both convey general observations on corporeal decay.

Literary Background and the Meaning of the Decaying Corpse Images

The pictorial depictions of corporeal decay originate from scriptural sources, including the oldest one, an ancient Indian canon called *The Middle Length Discourse*

of the Buddha (*Majjhima Nikaya*), which collected Shakyamuni Buddha's sayings in the ancient Pali language within 100 years of the Buddha's death. The treatise compiles 152 discourses (*suttas*) between Shakyamuni Buddha and his disciples on various subjects ranging from the concepts of non-self and nirvana to the practices of meditation and wandering. The discourse on the meditation of corpse appears in the tenth sutta, entitled "The Foundations of Mindfulness" (*Satipatthana Sutta*). Here the Buddha elucidates the four-step mindful contemplation: "the body as a body" (to recognize breathing, life-bearing, decaying bodies), "feelings as feelings" (to see pain as in an acute sensation of suffering), "mind as mind" (to understand deluded mind affected by lust) and "mind-objects as mind-objects" (to detach from hindrances).[11] The discourse, in short, explores the relationship between the Four Noble Truths and mindfulness meditation. In the exposition of "the body as a body," the Buddha begins with the meditation technique on breathing, then preaches monks to be mindful of various bodily functions, and to practice "The Nine Charnel Ground Contemplations" facing a one- to three-days old dead, bloated body with oozing matter, or a corpse devoured by crows, vultures, dogs, or worms. Then monks are to observe a skeleton with flesh and blood, a blood-smeared fleshless skeleton, skeleton with sinews, simply disconnected bones, and lastly the skeletal scattering of bleached white bones. Although the order of decomposition is different from the nine illustrations in the Kyushu Museum scroll, the scripture proves the theological foundation of nine-stage meditation in ancient India.

"The Nine Charnel Ground Contemplations" offer Shakyamuni's audience a chance to realize the fate of his body that meditates is not different from fate of the body that decays in front him. The practice teaches the concept of non-self and helps one detach from physical reality. Note that the practice, which goes back to Shakyamuni, was not gender specific in his day; indeed, the Buddha repeats that every body is of the same nature without exception.[12] In this context, meditation on a corpse leads to understanding the fundamental Buddhist truth of impermanence.[13] In other words, the decomposing corpse serves as a metaphor for transience by demonstrating the truth that the concrete body is mere illusion. To this end, an illustrated handscroll, which unrolls like a reel of film to show the deterioration of the body step by step, is an effective medium that unites time and space in conveying the principle of impermanence and the illusory nature of material reality.

Contemplation on the decaying corpse as an aid to visualize transience is manifest in ancient Theravada Buddhist practices.[14] One of the earliest Indian scriptural sources that intimates the idea of illusion is the "Adoration to the Three Treasures" (Skt. *Mahayanavimshaka*), attributed to Nagarjuna (act. late second to early third centuries CE), an eminent Indian Buddhist scholar and philosopher. The text advocates the philosophy of the "Middle Way," the key Mahayana Buddhist practice. The *Mahayanavimshaka* is a short text, consisting of only 20 verses, yet it succinctly analyzes the nature of impermanence, *samsara* (delusion and illusion), and *karma* (causes and consequences). Of

the 20 verses, it is the eighth that utilizes artistic imagery in its explanation of illusion:

> As a painter is frightened by the terrible figure of a yaksa [the demon-like fearful lord of hell] which he himself has drawn, so is a fool frightened in the world (by his own false notions).[15]

Illusion here is visually equated to painted images, demonstrating how world view is often tied to and controlled by the sense of sight. Vision is a powerful sensory experience in terms of both illustration and comprehension; we "see" when we "understand." Visual recognition would assert the physical reality of material objects. But visual reality is, after all, false, for all material things are impermanent in nature. The practice of meditating in front of a visibly decaying corpse could therefore lead to understanding the fundamental law of impermanence.

Resorting to visual sensation has roots in Shakyamuni's teaching style. In the collection of the Buddha's spoken teachings of impermanence known as the *Dhammapada* ("sayings of the dhamma," or dharma), the Buddha poetically yet graphically points to deteriorating beauty and integrity of a body. The *Dhammapada*, a seminal text in the Pali canon compiled under the *Minor Collection* (the *Khuddaka Nikaya*, which dates after the *Middle Length Discourse of the Buddha*), is revered as recording the Buddha's sermons by his disciples in 423 verses.[16] Verses 147 through 149 in the *Old Age* category read:

> Oh, see this beautified image; 147
> A mass of sores erected.
> Full of illness, highly fancied,
> Permanence it has not – or constancy.
>
> Quite wasted away is this form, 148
> A nest for disease, perishable.
> This putrid accumulation breaks up.
> For life has its end in death.
>
> Like these grounds 149
> Discarded in autumn,
> Are grey-hued bones.
> Having seen them, what delight?[17]

The verses identify the human body as a source of disease and pain. The ability to see the gray-hued skeleton, the symbol of death, beneath the skin of a corpse was thought to provide a greater understanding of impermanence in the meditating person. Because of this, the contemplation of decaying corpses became a practical teaching method. In this sense, the practice can be considered one of the upaya kaushalya, skillful means, on the path toward enlightenment.

Sirima's Story: Why a Woman's Body?

"The Nine Charnel Ground Contemplations" and the *Dhammapada* instruct readers to regard the flesh as nothing more than a perishable covering for the bones. All bodies, regardless of gender, are, of course, subject to disease, old age, and death, yet Buddhist hagiographical canons tend to view the decaying body as exclusively female. The Kyushu Museum handscroll depicts the image of a female corpse, despite the fact that neither version of the literary source specifies the gender of the dead. Liz Wilson, who has studied this tendency in Buddhist literature in her book *Charming Cadavers*, explains that this particular style of meditation on female bodies is much like shock therapy for celibate monks to help eliminate sexual attraction to women.[18]

Buddhaghosa (fifth century CE), an enormously influential scholar-monk, describes ten kinds of foulness in corpses that monks could meditate upon at the charnel yard in his *Visuddhimagga* ("the path to purity"): the bloated, the livid, the festering, the cut up, the gnawed, the scattered, the hacked and scattered, the bleeding, the worm-infested, and the skeletal.[19] Buddhaghosa's descriptions of these stages closely match the nine-stage contemplation imagery. Each stage, with specific characteristics, corresponds to the meditator's degree of understanding. As a means of spiritual purification, he advocates meditation on decaying *female* corpses in his commentary on the *Dhammapada*.[20]

As a narrative strategy in his *Dhammapada* commentary, Buddhaghosa adds a story of a woman named Sirima as a preface to verse 147: Sirima, a courtesan famous for her beauty in the city of Rajagriha within King Bimbisara's kingdom of Magadha, converts to Shakyamuni's teachings and begins aiding the local monastic community. During her community service, she attracts the romantic interest of a young monk. When she unexpectedly takes ill and dies, Shakyamuni instructs the king to expose her body in a cemetery. After the body has been exposed to the elements for a few days, the Buddha assembles monks and laymen to have a sale of the former courtesan's remains. Upon seeing the now bloated corpse, no man offers to buy the dead Sirima, even for a reduced price, and ultimately no one even wishes to take it for free. As for the enamored monk, the sight of Sirima's beautiful body decaying in the charnel yard helped open his eyes to the futility of attachment.

The use of a personal name, Sirima, turns the generic image of a beautiful body into a concrete identity. This specific name works as a mnemonic reference for the intended moral, much like Peter in *Peter and the Wolf*. Inserting the story of Sirima prior to verse 147, in other words, piques the interest of readers in this otherwise abstract passage. This is an example of how a narrative serves as a skillful means to guide readers to enlightenment. This stratagem, the use of moralizing tales, is yet another instance of upaya kaushalya.

Buddhaghosa's commentary expands the short verse into a full narrative of Silima, which helps visualize the concept of transience, but at the same time

it introduces an entirely different issue in Buddhism: misogyny. Although the *Dhammapada* verse 147 reads, "Oh, see this beautiful image," it is not at all clear if the image is male or female. Yet in Buddhaghosa's commentary he appropriates a female body into the text, as though the Buddha had always meant for a woman's beauty to demonstrate material impermanence. In this context, the body of a courtesan symbolizes both a sexual object and a commodity, a being with a name but no agency.

In Buddhist hagiographic traditions, the female body represents the embodiment of sexuality and desire.[21] As Liz Wilson argues, the female body often occupies a specific pedagogical place within "object lessons" for meditation practiced by male subjects.[22] Buddhist scriptures (written by and for men) abound with narratives in which male protagonists discover the truth of impermanence through a woman's body. The hagiographies of the Buddha (such as *Buddhacharita* of Asvaghosa, second century CE) make Shakyamuni Buddha's life prior to his Great Departure an ideal example of a man renouncing the world. The well-known story goes that Prince Gautama, a *bodhisattva* and future Shakyamuni Buddha, encountered suffering when he ventured outside the palace of luxury and pleasure in which his father, King Suddhodana, had previously sheltered him. After his exposure to suffering, Gautama viewed his sleeping harem of beautiful maidens within the palace as analogous to the recumbent corpses within the cremation ground.[23] This unflattering allusion was meant to lessen the sexual appetites of readers, particularly male readers.

The female bodies in Buddhist hagiographic literature are subject to men's ideological discourses, which conveniently mask the validity of the monk's difficult path of celibacy. The women depicted in that literature tend to be mute, and in some stories their bodies, especially when they become the loci of sexual desire, appear deformed or even mutilated. Yet these women are not without agency: those in Gautama's harem and Sirima herself represent women of status, wealth, and beauty. Therefore when these women fall from their prominence, they display greater examples of illusory and transitory bodies – hence, the object of meditation. These fallen women act as figures whose repulsive nature must be contemplated by men.[24] Within patriarchal Buddhist tradition, where the scriptures were written by and for men, the female body, devoid of agency, serves as an expedient means for men in the path of celibacy.

Substitution of Real Bodies with Images

Facing a rotting corpse is exceedingly morbid, especially in Japan where death was regarded as the source of contagious pollutants. Yet several illustrations of this subject survive in various formats and arrangements.[25] The popularity of this subject is astonishing. "Breaking the indigenous taboos and encouraging people to face a corpse for the sake of devotion," to borrow Kanda's expression,

"required a new theological foundation."[26] I argue that these new theological foundations (as there must have been more than one) helped define and identify new branches in the medieval Japanese Tendai (Ch. Tiantai) School of Mahayana Buddhism, namely the Zen and Pure Land sects.

Chinese and Japanese Tendai monks, following Indian Buddhist tradition, incorporate the discourse of the nine-stage contemplation as the foundation of their discipline. The Chinese monk Zhiyi (538–97 CE), the founder of Tiantai School of Buddhism, promoted the very practice in his *Discourse on Mahayana Meditation and Contemplation* (Ch. *Mohe zhiguan*, J. *Maka shikan*, *c.* 594).[27] Zhiyi formulated the basic concept of visualizing a putrefying body as a method of meditation, which had been promoted in Tendai's sectarian branches.

The use of painted images, however, noticeably varied between Zen and Pure Land sects. Fundamental Tendai Buddhists found paintings to be an object of mental focus. The eminent Zen monk Muso Soseki (1275–1351), for example, even practiced painting as a form of visualization (mental concentration), according to his biography: "[Muso Soseki, age 13] drew the painting of nine stages and hung it on the wall for steadfast contemplation to attain the ability to see his own body nothing as but a skeleton, and others [as] but cadavers."[28]

Pure Land Buddhists, in contrast, adopted the images of the nine-stage contemplation for better explaining Pure Land tenets.[29] In the influential treatise *Essentials of Salvation* (*Ojo yoshu*, 985), a foundational text for Pure Land Buddhism, Tendai monk Genshin (942–1017) discusses not only the perpetual cycle of rebirth but also offers a detailed examination of the human realm, one of the Six Realms of transmigration theology. It is during this examination that Genshin cites (though without elaboration) the nine-stage meditation from Zhiyi's text, *Discourse on Mahayana Meditation and Contemplation*.[30] The nine-stage contemplation constitutes evidence of truth in the transient life in the human realm.

Several paradigms have shifted just as messages change in the "whispers down the line" game: originally a cadaver was a teaching device for the mindful contemplation of impermanence, and a female cadaver helped celibate monks as an expedient token object to meditate upon in order to understand the dharma and to purge sexual desire at the same time. The Tendai Buddhist tradition tended to focus solely on the impurity of the female body, both living and dead. The impure body helped realize the concept of transience and impermanence during meditation. In contrast to Tendai and Zen Buddhists who used the paintings during private meditation, Pure Land Buddhists used the images during public sermons aimed at potential converts and donors. To pursue a discussion of painting's role and to further explore the relationship between guided reading of images and texts as skillful means, I have chosen to focus on the Pure Land use of nine-stage contemplation.

Publisher's Note:
Image not available
in the electronic edition

FIGURE 21-2 *Painting of the Impure Aspect of the Human Realm*, late thirteenth century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper. Shoju Raigoji, Shiga Prefecture.

Pure Land and Nine-Stage Contemplation Images

Genshin's text was the source of a set of 15 silk hanging scrolls entitled the *Six Realms of Transmigration* (*Rokudo-e*; late thirteenth century), probably used for the ritual performance of etoki at Shoju Raigoji in Shiga Prefecture. The Six Realms of Transmigration is a concept that exercises the idea of causes and consequences (*karma*). The concept conceives of the existences of living beings in six types. In descending order, these types are heavenly beings, human beings, warring titans, animals, hungry ghosts, and finally beings suffering in hell. Transmigration is endless, tied to the perpetual suffering of births and deaths (samsara), which can only be broken by achieving rebirth in Amida Buddha's Pure Land. Early medieval monks such as Ryonin (1072–1132) and Honen (1133–1212) cited Genshin's treatise when they preached that the Pure Land faith was a form of enlightenment.

The Shoju Raigoji set of *Six Realms of Transmigration* scrolls includes a painting of the nine-stage decaying corpse entitled *Painting of the Impure Aspect of the Human Realm* (fig. 21-2). Unlike a handscroll, the hanging scroll format allows all the images to be viewed at once in a single frame. Here the nine bodies are arranged in the order of decay, with the newly deceased corpse at the top right, the scattered bones at the bottom right, and the seven phases of corporeal decay in between. The images of nine-stage decomposition closely resemble those on the Kyushu Museum's *Kusoshi* scroll, but the composition differs as the bodies of the Shoju Raigoji lie within a natural landscape. Because the dead bodies simultaneously appear in a single landscape, they show a synchronic assembly of corpses at the different stages of decomposition rather than the diachronic process of the same body decaying over time. The landscape includes seasonal symbols such as cherry blossom, pine trees, and maple leaves, which not only establish a time frame but also add poetic sentiment.

The text in the cartouche, ascribed to Genshin's *Essentials of Salvation*, states that one of the aspects of the human realm is the impure nature of all corporeal bodies.[31] This view ties a Pure Land tenet, the concept of purity, to the canon of the nine-stage contemplation. Incorporating such a tenet means that the body becomes a metaphor not only for impermanence but also for impurity. Such a view of the body as an impure entity was appropriated into debates concerning the impurity of the female body, similar to the appropriation of a woman's putrefying body into images of the nine-stage contemplation.

The belief that the female body embodied impurity became a major issue for Buddhist proselytizers in medieval Japan.[32] Pure Land Buddhists subsequently turned androcentric discourse into their cause; women were no longer considered individual token objects, but rather a gender in need of salvation. This represents a paradigm shift. One of the influential sources that connected the corpse and the female body was Kukai's own statement on the practice of seeing beyond women's bodies. He wrote that whenever he met a beautiful woman, he imagined

her as a skeleton, lying in a grave.[33] This strategy would cause women to elicit horror, not sexual arousal, in men, by way of their grotesquely deformed bodies.

This conflated viewpoint of the concept of transience and the female body as foul had already existed in Zhiyi's discourse. Zhiyi studied the *Treatise of the Great Perfection of Wisdom* (Skt. *Mahaprajnaparamita upadesa*, translated by Kumarajiva from Sanskrit to Chinese in 405 CE), which commented on the living female body as impure in its discussion of mindfulness.[34] The bridge between transience and impurity demonstrates, as Liz Wilson argues, misogynistic Buddhism. Hitomi Tonomura also writes, "(T)he decomposing female body, unlike the male, serves as pedagogical symbol, a medium through which to convey the Buddhist messages of impermanence."[35]

An androcentric view shaped medieval Buddhists' arguments concerning the need for the salvation of women. Scholars point out the strong relationship between Pure Land Buddhism and the emergence of the nine-stage contemplation practice in Japan after Honen adopted Pure Land concepts from the *Essentials of Salvation*, which promoted the contemplation of the impure body.[36] Rather than arguing against the idea of female impurity, Pure Land monks offered to women a path of salvation in Amida Buddha's Pure Land through contemplation and devotion. Such a liberated interpretation characterizes medieval Pure Land Buddhism. The concept of impurity that derived from the practice of contemplation introduced yet another practice into the search for salvation, namely the devotional contemplation of Amida's pollution-free world, that is the Pure Land.

Salvationism by nature assumes a congregation, the subject of salvation. It is in this context that etoki performance presented a dynamic of the sacred. In the late medieval and early modern periods, several Pure Land Buddhist temples started to show paintings depicting a female corpse in the nine stages of decay, often on special dates such as the anniversary of the temple's founding or during the annual festival for the dead. Until quite recently, two major temples, Mandaraji in Aichi Prefecture and Saifukuji in Kyoto, held etoki rituals on their paintings of the nine-stage decomposition. Today, they annually display their paintings together with scrolls depicting both hell and the Pure Land, and offer explanations to the viewer when asked. Etoki is an interactive performance that responds to contemporary tastes and trends. Preachers teach the Buddhist concept of karma, pointing to appropriate scenes on the paintings, sometimes remarking on relevant current events and lifestyle issues.

The paintings used during the etoki performances at Mandaraji and Saifukuji are hanging scrolls, a form which accommodates a larger number of viewers than a handscroll. Instead of arranging nine images from right to left, the "pre-death" scenes and the nine scenes of decomposition appear together on the hanging scroll, with two or three decomposing images typically appearing in each register. The individual scenes of decay largely depict the same condition of the body as those in the nine-stage decomposition scroll from the Kyushu Museum. These later paintings tend to have thicker and more carefree brushstrokes, giving the figures a somewhat cartoon-like appearance.

FIGURE 21-3 *Painting of Ono no Komachi's Decaying Corpse*, seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. Set of three hanging scrolls, ink and color on paper. Anrakuji, Kyoto. Photograph by W. Johnston.

A singular phenomenon emerged in association with etoki performances that focused on the nine-stage paintings: the formerly anonymous corpse found an established identity. The performers of etoki at the Pure Land Buddhist temples Mandaraji (in Konan City, Aichi Prefecture) and Anrakuji (in Kyoto) (fig. 21-3) identify the painted subject as the dead body of Ono no Komachi, and at Saifukuji (in Kyoto), Empress Danrin.[37] The two women are historical figures; Ono no Komachi was a ninth-century court lady, while Danrin was empress to the eighth-century emperor Saga. Both were famous beauties, a fame that was established during their lifetimes and grew legendary after their deaths. Kanda argues, however, that due to a lack of historical and archival evidence, these identifications must be false.[38] She considers such "inaccurate appellation" a result of popular desire within a general audience to connect the legendary beauties with the harsh reality of the nine stages. While these identifications are indeed unsubstantiated, I find this kind of appropriation itself compelling as an instance of another upaya kaushalya. Rather than dismissing the potential identities as false, therefore, I pursue the context. Although both women are worthy of investigation, here, I concentrate on the case of Ono no Komachi. Popular legends of Komachi, which were first established in the late medieval period, helped the association of her name with the withering corpse.

Komachi's Images

The link between Ono no Komachi (act. ninth century) and the nine-stage decomposition is interlaced with her reputation. Various medieval folk stories and myths recount her poetic brilliance, purportedly stunning looks, and proud yet flirtatious nature. Her reputation as a talented poet was canonized shortly after her death. The scholar and poet Ki no Tsurayuki (872–945) who compiled the imperial poetic anthology *Kokin wakashu* (*Kokinshu* for short, 920) names Komachi as one of the six most notable poets of the recent past. The selected six poets eventually became immortalized as the "six poetic sages" (*rokkasen*), of which Komachi is the only female member. In his commentary, Tsurayuki evaluates Komachi's poetic style as sentimental (*awarenaru*), and not forceful but feminine (*onna no nayameru*).[39] In this source, at least, there is no mention of her haughtiness, much less promiscuity.

Despite the fact that very little historical information about Komachi survives, her reputation has been solidified through the five medieval Noh plays that feature her as a character. Sara Strong writes that medieval Noh playwrights, however, did not base their portrayals of Komachi on their readings of classical literature but rather on early medieval commentaries.[40] The text, *Ogisho* (Collection of Poetry Secrets), written by a courtier, scholar, and poet named Fujiwara no Kiyosuke (1104–77), contributed to establishing Komachi as the *femme fatale*.[41] Strong translates the section in question and explains how a lexical concern over the meanings of words led to wholly unconnected accounts of Komachi.[42] Kiyosuke discusses a poem in *Kokinshu*, 761, which reads:

ariake no	Sound of the snipes'
shigi no hanegaki	Beating wings at dawn,
momohagaki	A hundred beating wings –
kimi ga konu yo wa	On the nights you do not come
ware zo kazu kaku	I am the one who marks the number.[43]

The poet, Kiyosuke explains, marks the number of nights her lover does not visit, and laments that the number of marks is as much as a hundred, like the number of times that a snipe beats its wings as it flies by. Kiyosuke then introduces a proposition made by other scholars (which he himself does not support), that this poem was confused with another similar poem. The other poem reads:

akatsuki no	Marking the edge
shiji no hashigaki	Of the carriage bench at dawn,
momoyo kaki	Marking a hundred nights –
kimi ga konu yo wa	On the nights you do not come,
ware zo kazu kaku	I am the one who marks the number.[44]

Clearly the two poems are nearly identical, except for the inclusion of a carriage bench in the second line. Kiyosuke elaborates at length upon this difference. He cites a story in a poetry treatise titled *Utarongi* (Poetry Discussion), which describes how a haughty lady tested the sincerity of a courting man by promising an actual meeting (i.e. marriage) on the hundredth consecutive night he visited her and slept on the carriage bench. During each visit, the man carved a mark on the bench as evidence that he had stayed there. The man successfully visits for 99 nights, but on the day of the hundredth visit, one of his parents dies and he is unable to complete his task. That night, the woman carves a mark on the bench herself. Kiyosuke does not name this poet as Komachi, but later commentators and playwrights took it to be Komachi. The Noh play, *Sotoba Komachi*, renders the identity of the amorous suitor by the name Junior Captain Fukakusa. This misreading further mythologizes Komachi as a disdainful beauty of the imperial court interested in toying with the affections of many eligible men. The stature of Fujiwara no Kiyosuke as an eminent classical scholar influenced and gave legitimacy to this mythologizing.

The identification of Ono no Komachi as the corpse in the nine-stage theme is, however, not simply because of her famed beauty, but because she herself understood the nature of transience. In other words, the significance of Komachi in a Buddhist context is due to the legend that tells of how, after squandering away the prime years of her beauty with love intrigues, she finally reached old age and ruin. The sad end of the famous beauty, who lived out her pathetic last years in destitution, is as well-known as the tales of her success at court. The medieval Noh plays of Komachi emphasize this Buddhist angle with the portrayal of the noblewoman as seductive yet haughty and cruel towards the men who courted her. This treatment was thought to be what lead to her downfall.[45] The image of a 100-year old Komachi suffering from haunting by the Junior Captain's spirit makes both an arresting art composition and a compelling plot for a play. The image

of the aged Komachi as a beggar woman derives from the combining of Ono no Komachi with the protagonist of a ninth-century tale about a woman named Tamatsukuri no Komachi.[46] Popular interest in the mysterious life of Ono no Komachi resulted in a fictionalized version of her life-story, an eleventh- or twelfth-century text entitled *Rise and Fall of Tamatsukuri no Komachi* (*Tamatsukuri no Komachi shi sosuisho*).[47] In this story, the protagonist Tamatsukuri no Komachi, an amorous courtesan with fame and beauty, recounts how she enjoyed the prime of her life but ultimately aged into a miserable old woman who wished to be born into the Amida Buddha's Western Paradise. The tale concludes with the narrator preaching the law of evanescence while aggrandizing the merit of Pure Land devotion. The Noh play, *Kayoi Komachi*, draws its plot from the storyline of Komachi's legendary 100 courting nights while highlighting the characters' repentance and salvation from hell with the assistance of a Buddhist monk. These Komachi stories represent different cases of Buddhist skillful means.

Color vs. Emptiness

There are several somewhat paradoxical characterizations of Komachi in existence. On the one hand, she is portrayed as a heartless woman who pushed away and tormented the men who loved her, yet on the other she is reportedly a coquette with an insatiable desire for physical love. Medieval commentators on classical literature also identified Komachi as a character in the *Tales of Ise*, a woman who exchanges love poems with the protagonist. This woman is labeled *irogonomi*, which Sara Strong translates as "coquettish."[48] Yet to describe a woman as irogonomi, literally "color affinity," implies that she is more than coquettish. A woman of irogonomi generally engages in flirtations while possessing a wanton manner. Komachi's reputation as irogonomi seems to associate with her celebrated poem in the imperial anthology:

hana no iro wa	The color (*iro*) of the flowers
utsuri ni keri na	has faded indeed
itazura ni	in vain
waga mi yo ni furu	have I passed through the world
nagame seshi ma ni	while gazing at the falling rains.[49]

The poem expresses Komachi's grief over the fading color of the flowers, which in effect alludes to her own loss of beauty and waning feminine ability to attract male suitors.

The word "color" serves as a *double entendre* here; it not only relates to the Buddhist concept of physical form but also to the idea of sexual affinity. Color, an optical phenomenon, acts as the agent that defines the contour and surface of physical objects.[50] Physical form is a concept used to teach the idea of "no-form," or emptiness, in one of the most important Mahayana Buddhist

scriptures, the *Heart Sutra* (Skt. *Prajnaparamita Sutra*, *c.* first century CE). The scripture describes a scene in which Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva lectures on the profound course of the Perfection of Wisdom to a gathered crowd led by an elder named Shariputra. The core of the *Heart Sutra*, as Donald Lopez puts it, is the statement: "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form."[51] The phrase succinctly expresses the concept of non-duality, or the lack of distinction between physical forms and emptiness (Skt. *shunyata*). Various skillful means strategies serve to edify those who are trapped in physical world.

Avalokiteshvara explains that visual form constitutes one of the objects of the six basic senses, and since there is "no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind" within emptiness, there is "no form, sound, smell, taste, touch nor concepts."[52] The discourse explicates the universal truth that no physical form exists permanently. The word "form" in the original Sanskrit text is *rupam.* Rupam relates to the idea of solid bodies and defined forms, with its root *rup* meaning "to form." When the Tang Chinese monk Xuanzang (*c.* 600–64 CE) translated the scripture into Chinese in the mid-seventh century, he took the meaning of rupam as color. This is a fascinating word choice. The Chinese translator saw the visual property two-dimensionally, rather than seeing the corporeal aspects of material objects three-dimensionally. Thus Xuanzang's translation of the phrase literally reads: "Color is emptiness; emptiness is color." The canon asserts the universal truth that no color is permanent, hence it is "empty." In this context, Xuanzang's translation of form as color is quite appropriate and even illuminating; the fact that all color fades with the passing of time accentuates the idea of transience. Color has corporeality, and is therefore transient. Komachi's poem resonates with this Buddhist precept.

As for the second connotation of color, the meaning derives from its first signification, the property of "form," to connote physicality in the sense of attractiveness. In East Asian cultures the word for color (in Japanese, *iro*, which can also be pronounced *shoku* and *shiki*) also connotes sexually related concepts, such as a flirtatious demeanor, seductive movement, or an erotic expression. In the folk etymology, the root of the Chinese character for color is said to be the image of a couple engaging in sexual intercourse with the woman on the bottom and the man on top. Thus, the Chinese character for color itself signified sexuality as well as color hues. The concept of color that extends beyond the property of the optical sense includes sensual responses aroused by visual excitement to the phenomenon of light. That is why the medieval view of Komachi as having "color affinity" meant she had an expansive sexual appetite. Medieval etoki performers who displayed the painting of nine-stage contemplation incorporated the sensual meaning of color into their doctrine and pictorial art by collapsing two levels of sensory responses to color: the optical and the sexual.

Komachi, as the subject of the nine-stage decomposition, served as a moralizing model to present a karmic connection between sexuality and suffering. Medieval literary critics saw Komachi as a seductive flirt whose pitiable old age was the karmic result of her arrogance. This view is so lasting that modern etoki

performances admonish the frivolity of attachment to physical beauty. The late abbot of Mandaraji in Aichi Prefecture, when he performed etoki on the temple's painting of Komachi as the nine-stage contemplation on decaying corpse until the 1970s, would admonish male viewers that the path to enlightenment was thwarted by desire, especially sexual desire for women. Toward female audiences, he lamented the increasing number of superficial beauties who would spend money on expensive name-brand cosmetics.[53] The reasoning behind his rebuke of the vain pursuit of physical beauty was that feminine beauty is literally skin-deep, merely an evanescent illusion, which teaches impermanence.

This semantic study of form as color reveals the meaning beneath the skin of the female corpse: the word color that signifies form in the physical world signifies an abstract concept of "emptiness." Emptiness is void of any sense of existence perceivable by vision, touch, or concept. The juxtaposition of color and emptiness parallels the juxtaposition of female and male because of color's other definition, sexual affinity, as found in the feminine countenance. Its counterpart, emptiness, therefore takes the masculine gender. The world of color, in other words, represents the world of ignorance caused by attachment and desire to material things. The gendering of the Buddhist concept of color and emptiness produces the gender of the deluded and the enlightened as feminine and masculine respectively.

Conclusion

A didactic approach of Buddhist skillful means promoted the practice of contemplating a female cadaver as a way to face the obstacle squarely by substituting revulsion for desire. As metaphor, the depiction of the seventh-stage illustration of the Kyushu Museum scroll in particular is revealing. A large black dog, with its front paws spread on the belly and intestines, thrusts its head in the woman's genital area, while the other dog eats her breast away to show her thoracic cavity and ribs. In this way, her sexuality is removed by the most crude and brutal of methods.

Visual metaphor as a skillful means can be the source of a completely different result. For example, Tawaraya Sotatsu (d. *c.* 1640), an artist and a fan-shop owner in Kyoto who often appropriated pictorial images from past works of art, created folding screens using painted fans as decorative motifs (fig. 21-4). One of the fans, which is pasted on the screen owned by Sanboin of Daigoji Temple in Kyoto, shows a simple landscape scene with two dogs in the foreground. When examined closely, we notice that Sotatsu lifted the images of the two dogs from the nine-stage contemplation on decaying corpse. The dog with its neck awkwardly twisted is the exact copy, like a clone, of the dog in the seventh-stage illustration of the Kyushu Museum scroll. While the nine-stage contemplation on a decaying corpse is religious artwork, the images also have dynamic application beyond a religious framework. Sotatsu's dogs do not openly reveal the original

Publisher's Note:
Image not available
in the electronic edition

FIGURE 21-4 Tawaraya Sotatsu. *Two Dogs in Landscape*. Early seventeenth century. Detail on a screen painted with fans from a pair of eight-panel screens, color on paper. Sanboin, Daigoji, Kyoto.

source, yet this source would have been obvious to those who were familiar with the nine-stage contemplation painting. While remaining a subtle tribute, Sotatsu's painting removes altogether the sexually offensive corpse from the Buddhist picture.

An interpretation of nine-stage contemplation images as evidence of Buddhist androcentrism is certainly possible. A negative view toward women echoes the negative attitude toward the human body found in Buddhist texts. Sara Strong has reminded us that the authors of the scriptures were almost exclusively men. However, through her examination of Theravada texts, Sue Hamilton clarifies that the historical Buddha's attitude toward the body is neither positive nor negative, as the body is not the source of karmic consequences.[54] I find that Buddhist texts maintain a consistent gender assignment in concert with the dichotomous positions between form and emptiness, desire and enlightenment.

Remarkably, the idea of transience, emptiness, and the ephemeral in opposition to color, sexuality, and corporeality became conflated in the image of the nine-stage contemplation. What was originally meant to teach transience through meditation on a decaying cadaver drew attention to the corpse itself, and the use of the female corpse conveniently helped monks to practice detachment from material desire. The female, with her materiality, sexuality, and impurity, becomes

a focus for the discourse of salvation. Such dynamics reveal active uses of skillful means, including the use of paintings as objects of contemplation and as occasions to offer a live performance of etoki to explain abstract concepts of impermanence. The nine-stage contemplation is an example that demonstrates a kinetic chain of transforming religious meanings as the result of an effort to explain historically shifting, abstract concepts. These continuously generating layers of meaning show, I believe, the diverse and skillful utility of Buddhist upaya kaushalya.

Notes

1 Pye, *Skilful Means*, 1.
2 Schroeder, *Skillful Means*. Liz Wilson recognizes that skillful means as "salvific stratagems" is a typically Mahayana concept, she also points out how the idea of expedient crosses over the school divisions: Wilson, *Charming Cadavers*, 116–22.
3 "Simile and Parable," *The Lotus Sutra*, trans, Burton Watson, 56–79.
4 Pye, *Skilful Means*, 37–40.
5 Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*.
6 See Kevin Carr's essay in this volume (chapter 2) for a different example of etoki practice.
7 Kanda, "Behind the Sensationalism," 6.
8 Chin, "The Gender of Buddhist Truth," 281.
9 Kanda, "Behind the Sensationalism," 24.
10 Ibid. I leave the detailed explanation of the corresponding images (four versions of this subject matter) and two literary versions to Kanda's excellent study so as to proceed to the discussion of meditation on the decaying corpse.
11 Bhikku Bodhi, "Satipatthana Sutta" in *The Middle Length Discourses*, 145–55.
12 Ibid.
13 Chin, "The Gender of Buddhist Truth," 278.
14 Bond, "Theravada Buddhism's Meditations on Death"; Wilson, *Charming Cadavers*, 11. See also, for the same discussion, Wilson, "The Female Body as a Source of Horror."
15 Jamieson, *A Study of Nagarjuna's Twenty Verses on the Great Vehicle*, 8.
16 Carter mentions that the Dhammapada has north Indian origin but when Buddhism infiltrated Sri Lanka in the third century BCE, the Buddha's sayings (dhammapada) and commentaries were established as Pali canon: Carter and Palihawadana, *The Dhammapada*, xii.
17 Carter and Palihawadana, *The Dhammapada*, 214–17.
18 Wilson, *Charming Cadavers*.
19 Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*, 185.
20 Ibid. See Bond, "Theravada Buddhism's Meditations," and Wilson, "The Female body as a Source of Horror."
21 Wilson, *Charming Cadavers*, 17. A hagiological question considers the Buddha's approach toward religious women. While some scholars tend to see the Buddha as limiting, others see a feminist side of the Buddha. Collett discusses the range and history of Western scholarship on the gender issue in Buddhist hagiography, "Buddhism and Gender."

22 Wilson, *Charming Cadavers*, 3. Other notable studies of this subject include Paul, *Women in Buddhism*; Horner, *Women under Primitive Buddhism*; and essays in Cabezón, *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender*.
23 Asvaghosa, *Buddhacarita*.
24 While the primary objective of such teachings was to assist celibate monks in their repression of sexual arousal, the same method was also applicable to Buddhist women as well. South Asian Buddhist nuns during the first millennium *CE* adopted the male gaze in their contemplation of female, not male, bodies, in the process of decomposition. Wilson, *Charming Cadavers*, 5.
25 Chin, "The Gender of Buddhist Truth," 277–317. Kanda, "Behind the Sensationalism," 24. On this subject, I sought advice from my colleague Joseph Walser, a Buddhist scriptural expert, on possible sources for the idea of the nine stages of the decaying body and whether or not the practice was formulated in India. A classical writing on nine stages is the *Mahasatipatthana Sutta* (Foundations of Mindfulness) of the *Digha Nikaya*. Nine charnel ground meditations are mentioned in this text. In terms of the English language art historical scholarship, there are only two previous studies of this genre: in "The Gender of Buddhist Truth," Chin explores the gender symbolism in kusozu; while Kanda, "Behind the Sensationalism," investigates textual references to the imagery in Buddhist writings.
26 Kanda, "Behind the Sensationalism," 35.
27 Sekiguchi, "Etoki to Kusozu," 135–6.
28 Chijiwa, "Shi no nioi," 102; Shun'oku Myoha, *Muso Kokushi nenpu*. The translation is mine.
29 See the discussion of Genshin and his use of *Makashikan* in Kawaguchi, "Kusozu," 125–6, and Kanda, "Behind the Sensationalism," 24.
30 Genshin quotes passages directly from the *Mohe zhiguan* several times. He argues the merit of meditation as a means to reach paradise. Genshin, *Ojoyoshu*, 69.
31 The entire translation of text in the cartouche is in Kanda, "Behind the Sensationalism," 32.
32 Marra, "The Buddhist Mythmaking of Defilement," 50.
33 Kukai, *Hizo hoyaku*.
34 I consulted with Joseph Walser by email on this point. I am grateful for his expert help.
35 Tonomura, "Black Hair and Red Trousers," 145.
36 Kanda, "Behind the Sensationalism," 29.
37 Empress Danrin (786–850), née Tachibana no Chikako, was a consort of Emperor Saga (786–842; r. 809–823). She established the first Zen temple named Danrinji, hence her nickname Empress Danrin. Legend has it that she left an instruction not to cremate her body but rather to leave her corpse as an offering to birds and animals while the process of decomposition was to be pictorially recorded. Obviously the legend is a retroactive fabrication following the nine-stage decomposition paintings. The etoki ritual with the painting of Empress Danrin's nine-stage decomposition extols the virtue of this noble woman: Her bequest demonstrates an act of compassion to the helpless, a bodhisattva act. See for more details, Nishiyama, "Danrin Kogo kuso setsuwa o meguru zuzo," 45.
38 Kanda, "Behind the Sensationalism," 34.
39 Ki no Tsurayuki, *Kokin wakashu*, 59.
40 Strong, "The Making of a *Femme Fatale*," 391–2.

41 Miyoshi, *Ono no Komachi kokyu*, 223–32.
42 Strong, "The Making of *Femme Fatale*," 402–3.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid. Miyoshi gives a slightly different reading of Fujiwara no Kiyosuke's commentary: Kiyosuke misread "Shigi no hagaki" with "shiji no hagaki." The poem in question describes a flock of unidentified birds in flight, but an incorrect reading of an unconventionally abbreviated word gave an entirely different reading as a "cart" visiting for 100 nights. Miyoshi, *Ono no Komachi kokyu*, 223.
45 Strong, "The Making of a *Femme Fatale*."
46 Miyoshi, *Ono no Kamachi kokyu*, 202–23. The story is popularly attributed to Kukai, but Miyoshi believes this dating is too early, especially considering the Pure Land Buddhist sentimentality.
47 Miyoshi Teiji shows at least seven sources from the period to support the proposition. Miyoshi, *Ono no Komachi kokyu*.
48 Strong, "The Making of a *Femme Fatale*," 398.
49 Ono no Komachi, poem 113 in Ki no Tsurayuki, *Kokin wakashu*; English translation, Mostow, *Pictures of the Heart*, 59.
50 Nakamura, "Shiki," 574.
51 Lopez, *The Heart Sutra Explained*, 57. Nakamura explains that rupam (form) has something to do with the idea of solid bodies and defined forms, with its root rup, meaning "to form": Nakamura, "Shiki," 574.
52 *Heart Sutra* (trans. Inagaki).
53 Kawaguchi, "Kusozu," 127–8.
54 Hamilton, "From the Buddha to Buddhaghosa," 52.

References

Asvaghosa, *Buddhacarita* (*Acts of the Buddha*); translated and edited by E. H. Johnston. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1936, 1984.

Bond, George D. "Theravada Buddhism's Meditations on Death and the Symbolism of Initiatory Death." *History of Religions* 19 no. 3 (1980): 237–58.

Buddhaghosa Bhadantacariya. *Visuddhimagga*. Translated by Bhikkhu Nyanamoli, vol. 1. Berkeley and London: Shambhala, 1976.

Cabezón, José Ignacio, ed. *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Carter, John Ross and Mahinda Palihawadana, trans. and ed. *The Dhammapada: A New English translation with the Pali Text, and the first English translation of the Commentary's Explanation of the Verses with Notes*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Chijiwa, Itaru. "Shi no nioi [The Scent of Death]." *Zusetsu Nihon no bukkyo* 3, *Jodoshu*. Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1988.

Chin, Gail. "The Gender of Buddhist Truth: The Female Corpse in a Group of Japanese Paintings." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 25 nos. 3–4 (1998): 277–317.

Collett, Alice. "Buddhism and Gender: Reframing and Refocusing the Debate." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 22 no. 2 (2006): 55–84.

Genshin. *Ojoyoshu* [*The Essentials of Salvation*]. Edited by Ishida Mizumaro, vol. 1. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992 and 2003.

Hamilton, Sue. "From the Buddha to Buddhaghosa: Changing Attitudes Toward the Human Body in Theravada Buddhism." In *Religious Reflection on the Human Body*, edited by Jane Marie Law, 46–63. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Horner, I. B. *Women under Primitive Buddhism: Lay Women and Alms Women*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1930.

Inagaki, Zuio H., trans. *Heart Sutra*. Accessed 17 June 2010. http://www.euroshinshu.org/www12.canvas.ne.jp/horai/heart-sk.htm, October 2000.

Jamieson, Robert Craig. *A Study of Nagarjuna's Twenty Verses on the Great Vehicle (Mahayanavimsika) and his Verses on the Heart of Dependent Origination (Pratityasamutpadahrdayakarika) with the Interpretation of the Heart of Dependent Origination (Pratityasamutpadahrdayavyakhyana)*. New York: Peter Lang, 2000.

Kaminishi, Ikumi. *Explaining Pictures: Buddhist Propaganda and Etoki Storytelling in Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Kanda, Fusae. "Behind the Sensationalism: Images of a Decaying Corpse in Japanese Buddhist Art." *The Art Bulletin* 87 no. 1 (2005): 24–49.

Kawaguchi, Hisao. *Etoki no sekai – Tonko no kage kara* [*The World of Etoki – a Shadow of Dunhuang*]. Tokyo: Kazama Shobo, 1981.

Kawaguchi, Hisao. "Kusozu [On Kuso Images]." *Kokubungaku, Kaishaku to kansho; Tokushu: Etoki—ima kokubungaku no chihei o terasu* 47, no. 11 (Oct. 1982): 125–8.

Ki no Tsurayuki. *Kokin wakashu* [*Collection of Japanese Poems Past and Present*] (920). Edited by Ozawa Masao. Vol. 7. Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1971.

Kukai. *Hizo hoyaku* [*Secret Treasury Key*]. In *Gendaigo no Hizo hoyaku to kaisetsu* [Modern translation and commentary on the *Hizo hoyaku*], translated and edited by Shoun Toganoo. Koya-cho, Wakayama: Koyasan Shuppansha, 1949.

Lopez, Donald S. Jr. *The Heart Sutra Explained*. Albany: State University of New York, 1988.

Marra, Michele. "The Buddhist Mythmaking of Defilement: Sacred Courtesans in Medieval Japan." *Journal of Asian Studies* 52 no. 1 (1993): 49–65.

Miyoshi, Teiji. *Ono no Komachi kokyu* [*Ono no Komachi Study*]. Tokyo: Shintensha, 1992.

Mostow, Joshua. *Pictures of the Heart: The Hyakunin Isshu in Word and Image*. Honolulu: The University of Hawai'i Press, 1996.

Nakamura Hajime. *Bukkyo go dai jiten, jo* [*Buddhist Dictionary*, vol. 10]. Tokyo: Tokyo shoseki, 1975.

Nanamoli, Bhikku, and Bhikku Bodhi, trans. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995.

Nishiyama, Mika. "Danrin Kogo *kuso* setsuwa o meguru zuzo – hanpon no sashie no shokai [On the Images Surrounding the Stories of Empress Danrin's *Kuso* – Introduction of Printed Images]." *Etoki kenkyu* 16 (2002): 94–8.

Paul, Diana. *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in Mahayana Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Pye, Michael. *Skilful Means: A Concept in Mahayana Buddhism*. 1st edn. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd, 1978; 2nd edn. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

Schroeder, John. *Skillful Means: The Heart of Buddhist Compassion*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001.

Sekiguchi Shizuo. "Etoki to Kusozu [*Etoki* and *Kusozu* Scroll]." *Issatsu no koza: Etoki, Nihon no koten bungaku* [Lecture: *Etoki* as a Japanese Classical Literature], Series 3. Tokyo: Yuseido Shuppan, 1985.

Shun'oku Myoha, ed. *Muso Kokushi nenpu* [*Chronicle of the Zen Master, Muso*], vol. 1, 1354. Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku fuzoku toshokan. Kyoto University Archive. Digital archive record: *Muso Kokushi goroku & nenpu*, 3 vols. http://ddb.libnet.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/exhibit/i098/image/03/i098s0126.html.

Strong, Sara M. "The Making of a *Femme Fatale*. Ono no Komachi in the Early Medieval Commenatries." *Monumenta Nipponica* 49 no. 4 (1994): 391–412.

Tonomura, Hitomi. "Black Hair and Red Trousers: Gendering the Flesh in Medieval Japan." *American Historical Review* 99 no 1. (1994): 129–54.

Watson, Burton, trans. *The Lotus Sutra*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

Wilson, Elizabeth. *Charming Cadavers: Horrific Figurations of the Feminine in Indian Buddhist Hagiographic Literature*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Wilson, Elizabeth. "The Female Body as a Source of Horror and Insight in Post-Ashokan Indian Buddhism." In *Religious Reflections on the Human Body*, edited by Jane Marie Law, 76–99. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Further Reading

Faure, Bernard. *The Power of Denial: Buddhism, Purity, and Gender*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Gross, Rita M. *Buddhism after Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis and Reconstruction of Buddhism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Murcott, Susan, trans. and ed. *The First Buddhist Women* (*The Therigatha*). Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1991.

Ruch, Barbara, ed. *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002.

22

In the Name of the Nation: Song Painting and Artistic Discourse in Early Twentieth-Century China

Cheng-hua Wang

Introduction

Comparable to Renaissance painting in the early study of European art history, the painting of the Song dynasty (960–1279) in China featured prominently in the establishment of the discipline of Chinese art history. In America after World War II, scholars of Chinese art, as the first and the second generations in a field that had recently come onto the academic scene, acknowledged that Song painting played a central role in the later history of Chinese painting, which extended from the tenth to the twentieth century. This history is dominated by scroll and album paintings, formats easier to circulate than those of mural and screen paintings of previous dynasties, thereby aiding in the formation of a complicated networking of artistic styles and a rich tradition of artistic discourses. For the past millennium, with a gamut of styles that influenced many different painting schools in later periods, Song painting has been considered the origin of the trajectory of Chinese painting to which later painters and critics recurrently referred.

Song painting did not assume its canonical and seminal status in Chinese painting history exclusively by the discursive power of the modern disciplinary field of art history. In fact, two historical periods marked watershed moments at which Song painting became the center of the artistic discourse that engaged cultural elites, steered the direction of artistic creation, and carved out a social space for

artistic discussion. This essay tackles the second watershed moment that witnessed the canonization of Song painting – the New Culture Movement (*Xinwenhua yundong*, *c.* 1915–early 1920s) in modern China (*c.* 1840s–1940s). This movement, which was originally intellectual and sociocultural but later exerted great impact upon practical politics, epitomized the desperate aspiration and persistent struggle for an autonomous, modernized, and powerful China among the cultural elites in particular and the educated classes in general. The most salient goal of the movement was to indoctrinate China with the ostensibly "western" values of democracy and science, but its reverberation was felt in every aspect of the historical development of modern China. It is thus not exaggerating to conclude that the movement and its defining power lie at the core of how historians understand modern China. The artistic aspect of this movement has, however, been left unstudied.

While examining the second watershed moment, this essay also integrates the discourse on Song painting from the first watershed moment in the late Ming dynasty (*c.* 1560s–1644) into the discussion of how the modern discourse on Song painting re-enacted and reshaped the traditional one. The purpose of this essay is twofold. First, it seeks to investigate the context in which the modern discourse on Song painting emerged and was codified. The process involved the transformation of a traditional discourse to meet the challenge of a global trend linking art to national spirit and high civilization in a world of national competition. Second, this study discusses not only what the discourse was but also how new forms and channels of knowledge-making forged it, and thereby helped engender a heretofore nonexistent public space for artistic discussion.

The purpose of this essay clearly reflects the recent advances in the study of modern Chinese art, which has created an ever-broadening range of topics and approaches in the past decade. The study of modern Chinese art has no longer limited itself to traditional questions regarding stylistic lineage and the successive development of different schools of painting. In contrast, it has opened up new areas and reconfigured the parameters of possible topics for future research. For example, responding to new developments in art historical studies that emphasize art consumption and cross-cultural interactions, recent research has considered art exhibitions in modern China and the international trade of Chinese art.[1]

This essay particularly gives further thought to the research on the two main axes in the development of modern Chinese art. The first axis – the traditional mode of artistic expression – has long been investigated by art historians but requires critical perspectives for future exploration. For example, much research has examined the early twentieth-century critique of the Orthodox painting school of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), whose strength was ink landscape in a prescriptively narrow range of styles.[2] The view that the Orthodox tradition encountered a formidable challenge in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has become a central theme in the studies of the development of modern Chinese ink painting. These studies, while commendably placing modern Chinese art within the context of a greater tradition, still present a limited view

of modern Chinese intellectuals' ideas. Indeed, these intellectuals articulated a more far-reaching reflection on Chinese art, and they did not look at China in isolation but as a significant part of world civilization.

The second axis relates to the cross-cultural dimension of the development of modern Chinese art. The issues involved, such as the Sino-Japanese formation of the category of "literati painting," have attracted much attention in scholarship, and, undoubtedly they will continue to generate intellectual inquiry.[3] The cross-cultural approach has demonstrated the intrinsic perspective to the study of modern Chinese art that treats the new artistic trends in modern China as unreflective corollaries of previous developments in traditional China. However, as thriving as it may be, the approach still awaits further exploration into the extent to which complicated artistic interactions on a global scale redefined even the most basic conceptual categories regarding how and what art was.

By integrating these two axes – the traditional and the cross-cultural – one might achieve a better understanding of the context in which modern Chinese intellectuals gave art a new sociocultural meaning and status. In this context, the intellectuals' perception of Song painting, which included the conceptual category of a group of paintings and their immanent quality as a whole, played a vital role. The special attention paid to Song painting did not merely result from its aesthetic quality and historical pedigree; these features had long been attached to it by the modern period. Rather, the modern Chinese intellectuals who prioritized Song painting had a clear ideological agenda in mind and sought to gain a discursive power that could change the course of the development of modern Chinese art. Canon-formation in modern China, as in other cultures and societies, involved a complex process of negotiation and competition.

Song Painting as the Representation of Chinese Art

On May 5, 1918, Xu Beihong (1895–1953), one of the most influential painters and art educators in twentieth-century China, delivered a lecture to the members of an art association of Peking University in the first fine arts museum in China. The association, which represented a new form of solidarity for art lovers, played a pioneering role in modern Chinese social and art education. The museum opened to the public in 1914, displaying a small part of the imperial collection from the fallen Qing dynasty.[4] Xu's lecture began with a discussion of the significance of a nation's art and its relationship to national spirit (*minzu jingshen*) as well as the status of a nation's civilization (*wenming*). As the lecture indicates, art became such a pivotal category in Chinese culture that it embodied national spirit and civilization.

Xu Beihong was certainly not the first intellectual in early twentieth-century China to examine the category of art within the framework of nationalism and to treat art as the foundation of China as a modern nation. What was different about Xu's lecture was that it linked art to particular aspects of a nation – that

is, its spirit and civilization; and, moreover, his specific statement that "before the fifteenth century, our painting was the world's best" unwittingly localized the abstract concept regarding art, national spirit, and world civilizations to the historical development of Chinese painting.[5]

Xu's ideas are not isolated statements aimed solely at China, but rather they betray a keen comparative perspective. Xu, in his claims that "Our nation was representative of Oriental art" and that "before the fifteenth century, our painting was the world's best," accepted the western artistic tradition as the competitor to China. In fact, the idea that Chinese painting was superior to that of Europe before the fifteenth century constitutes the key to understanding Xu's lecture and its associated artistic and sociocultural trends. In that regard, certain questions may arise: Why did Xu choose the turn of the fifteenth century as the watershed moment in the cultural competition between China and the west? What, according to his way of thinking, triggered their reversal of positions in the status of painting in the world, and how did his perception of China's past glory within the framework of a global history of painting interact with modern Chinese discourse on art, national spirit, and civilization?

It would appear that Xu Beihong's view regarding the turn of the fifteenth century as a watershed moment in the development of Chinese and European painting disregards the paintings of the Song and the following Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). But in fact, his statement implies the rise of European painting during the Renaissance and the relative decline of Chinese painting after the Yuan dynasty, two approximately synchronic phenomena that reversed the standing of Chinese and western painting in his global perspective. As such, for Xu, the Yuan period represented a period of transformation, during which China gradually turned away from the era that preceded it, the Song dynasty. In this sense, the Song dynasty was considered the golden age of Chinese art and the last dynasty to support China's premier status in world art.

Xu Beihong's deployment of Song painting in modern national competition was further illuminated by his second lecture given in the same month of 1918 and to the same art association. In this lecture, he encapsulated his views on the state of Chinese painting, its future development, and its comparison to western painting.[6] The second lecture, shortly turned into an essay as was the first lecture, also provided a glimpse into his perception of Chinese painting tradition: the Song dynasty represented the culmination of Chinese painting's development from the tenth century to modern times.

The main goal of Xu's second lecture was to rectify the perceived weaknesses of Chinese painting in adopting western styles that rendered artworks realistically, both in form and in content, usually by modeling painted images of real scenes and objects. Xu thus criticized the conventional Chinese process of learning how to paint by copying the works of old masters and by following a particular school of painting. This critique evidently pointed to the common practice of the Qing Orthodox school of painting, which, though losing its previously unchallenged status, continued to be a dominant style in ink painting

during the 1910s. In contrast to his critique of the Orthodox school, Xu seemed to detect a stylistic tendency in Song paintings that could capture the "substance" of the real world, one that was akin to western painting.

Xu Beihong's aesthetic vision is far removed from that of the literati, the traditional privileged class most likely to commit thoughts to paper and which, after its emergence in the Song dynasty, thus came to monopolize artistic discourse in imperial China. The aesthetic views shared by mainstream literati painters and critics prioritized an inherent quality of brushwork that expressed the character or mind of the artist, which was believed to be superior to formal likeness achieved purely through an artist's technical skill. Xu's promotion of formal likeness and substantial renderings of three-dimensional objects and background countered the ingrained aesthetic tenets of Chinese painting promoted by the literati class.

The ideological stance revolving around Song painting did not originate with Xu Beihong's lectures of 1918. Kang Youwei (1858–1927) posited an even more ambitious agenda in 1917 that ranked Song painting as the highest not only in the development of Chinese art but also in that of the world. Xu's view of Chinese painting, including its capacity to compete in the arena of world art, was very much influenced by Kang Youwei, who was already a veteran politician and well-known thinker when the two first met in Shanghai in 1916.[7] At that time, Xu was a poor though promising young painter who had just come to the big metropolis to start his career. As the son of a professional painter specializing in portraiture, a genre of painting outside the literati painter's ken, Xu learned his trade from his father and was therefore not proficient in the styles and subjects traditionally placed on the upper rung of the Chinese aesthetic ladder, such as landscapes in ink.[8]

In Shanghai, Xu Beihong broadened his artistic and intellectual scope through his connection to a society sponsored by a wealthy merchant. Such networking enabled him to meet nationally famous figures like Kang Youwei, who was an enormous influence on his unswerving adherence to realistic styles and modeling after nature.[9] Once formed, the aesthetic view of Xu Beihong did not change much, even after he spent eight years in Europe as an art student and even after various modernist artistic movements were introduced and popularized in China in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the 1917 catalog of his own collection of Chinese painting, Kang Youwei attempted to display his wide-ranging knowledge about the art of various countries and periods. Based on such an understanding, Kang formulated his own explanation of the development of world art and maintained that Song painting was the sole source of the world's realistic style. For him, even the achievement of Renaissance painting lay in the fact that it directly inherited the legacy of Song painting. To be more precise, he believed that Marco Polo took Song painting back to Europe and ushered in the highly developed verisimilitude of Italian Renaissance art. Moreover, he argued that the expressive tendencies developed in literati painting of the Yuan dynasty, a deviation from the realistic Song model,

further contributed to the reversal of the comparative status of Chinese and European art at the turn of the fifteenth century.[10]

This argument regarding the Song origin of Renaissance painting is a case of overcompensation, which was a distinct feature in the collective mentality of modern Chinese intellectuals that developed due to their frustrated experiences in tackling the immense and inescapable challenges posed by the west and Japan.[11] In its war-torn history from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1940s, China had gone through a series of humiliations inflicted by the imperialist aggressions of western and Japanese colonial powers. What made Chinese intellectuals feel humiliated were not only military defeats but also scientific, ideological, and cultural inadequacies of China as a nation when compared to foreign powers.

That Kang Youwei was a steadfast believer in the universalized capacity of Confucianism partly explained his argument that the development of a realistic style in Europe originated in Song painting.[12] Given that the Song period witnessed the revival and efflorescence of Confucianism, Kang's assertion of Song painting as a universalized value in art seemed to fit with his advocacy of the Chinese intellectual tradition of Confucianism. For him, both Confucianism and Song painting evidenced that the Song dynasty could emanate universalized values.

Kang Youwei not only insisted that he found illusionistic effects emerging earlier in Chinese tradition than they did in the Renaissance, but he also placed his discussion of the Chinese painting tradition – and its contemporary degeneration – in a global context in which art was a form of national competition. As he explained, given the realities of national competition, though he liked the paintings by the Four Masters of the Yuan dynasty, who were the patriarchs of literati painting, he felt compelled to choose Song painting as the representative of Chinese art and to regard the expressive tendencies in Yuan painting as a sign of decline.

During the late 1910s, for those concerned about the present and future of Chinese painting with regard to art reform and national competition, the substantial depiction of the physical world evident in Song painting became the ultimate model for the direction that painting should take. In addition to Kang Youwei, intellectuals with national fame and far-reaching influence expressed a similar view of Song painting. Cai Yuanpei (1868–1940), the president of Peking University, concurred with the notion that Song painting perfected the development of Chinese painting, from which Renaissance painting learned its landscape elements.[13] In 1918 the other proponent of Song painting, Chen Duxiu (1879–1942), then a dean of Peking University and the editor of the influential journal *New Youth* (*Xin qingnian*), determined that Chinese art urgently required a revolution to eliminate the expressive tendencies first developed in Yuan literati painting and fully elaborated in the Qing Orthodox school. He strongly argued that contemporary Chinese painting should grasp the western realistic spirit (*xieshi jingshen*), with which Song painting resonated.[14]

Cai Yuanpei and Chen Duxiu were both regarded as progressive intellectuals of the New Culture Movement. In contrast, Kang Youwei, a loyalist to the fallen

Qing dynasty, was considered reactionary in politics and culture. A major example of his reactionary stance was his attempt to institutionalize Confucianism as the national religion. In an issue of *New Youth*, Chen Duxiu strongly condemned Kang's agenda for Confucianism and its implied return to the imperial system. In the same issue, Cai Yuanpei conveyed his disagreement with Kang while making a less politicized but equally devastating attack on Confucianism as the national religion, arguing that religion as a form of sociocultural and ideological force was obsolete and should have been replaced by art.[15] Yet, no matter how different they were in their stance on the political system and Confucian tradition, these intellectuals all saw in Song painting a realistic style that could hold a universal meaning.

Thus, in the late 1910s, the quest for a kind of painting technique based on lifelike renderings of real scenes and objects, one that amounted to a realistic style, fully penetrated discourse on how to reform Chinese art. This new voice reflected a broader artistic phenomenon connected with the overriding intellectual cult for materiality and utilitarianism that began in the late nineteenth century. This artistic phenomenon grew to maturity during the late 1910s, the best manifestation of which was the rediscovery of Song painting.

Song Painting, National Spirit, and High Civilization

The discourse on Song painting was less aesthetic than political, a response to a worldwide national competition of civilizations. In this new situation of national competition, art became a crucial component of a nation's civilization and, indeed, an embodiment of a nation. Art assumed this symbolic role perhaps even more appropriately than literature because "art" as a cultural category comprises not only abstract concepts but also material, three-dimensional objects. Compared to literary works, works of art are better at conveying abstract ideas, such as national spirit and high civilization, in a visually holistic way. The best example comes from the exhibition culture of universal expositions, which proliferated after 1850. These expositions, in which art was arranged by nation and presented as the highest achievement of a nation's civilization, were the essential manifestation of national competition by means of visual media.[16]

The idea of civilization, which was placed at the center of historical thinking during the eighteenth century, gave rise to the importance of art in defining a nation. Here, "civilization" represented a nation's total achievement in the highest level of creative activity, and it contained several stages of evolution, moving from the barbarous to the civilized. The birth of the history of civilization thus shifted the focus of historical concern from political events and the life of rulers and aristocrats to a nation's cultural endeavors and traits, such as art and religion. It was commonplace in nineteenth-century Europe to view a nation's history through its artistic, rather than its economic or political development.[17]

The close identification between a nation and its artistic expression made art an instrument for national solidarity and a sign of national identity. However, as the advanced nation-states and the imperialist powers were one and the same during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the competition in art between any two nation-states acquired a global and universalized dimension. While each nation-state wielded its homogenizing power to construct and consolidate national culture within its political boundaries, the imperialist system set up a hierarchical order in politics and civilization between the imperialist nations and their colonized subjects. A uniform standard of high civilization was applied to judge the progress of any society, impelled by the belief that there was only one path to becoming civilized, a trajectory in which attaining the civilization of western Europe and America represented the ultimate goal. Identical to the process of a nation's evolution, the development of world civilizations proceeded on this fixed, linear, and teleological path from barbarous to civilized, with different societies or nation-states arriving at different stages of civilization at different times. After all, the word "civilization, unlike culture, suggests both a process . . . and comparative evaluation," and it represents the finest fruit culminating from the evolution of human societies.[18]

The concept of "national spirit" also had its share in the shaping of a world order, similar to the project of civilization. Georg Wilhelm Hegel (1770–1831) first coined the term *Volksgeist* to mean "national spirit" and took "nation" as the basic unit that could be measured on the scale of the development of world history according to its stage of self-realization. National spirit was the totality of a nation's self-realization in world history, best manifested by its expression in cultural categories such as language, religion, and art.[19] The idea of "national spirit" played a fundamental role in German and Austrian art historical discourse at the turn of the twentieth century, in which different artistic mediums and styles had their own corresponding position in the project of civilization.[20] And the realistic style of Renaissance painting embodied the highest achievement in the evolution of world civilizations.[21]

The neologisms of *minzu jingshen* (national spirit) and *wenming* (civilization) and the ideas they connoted became widespread and powerful in modern China, beginning in the early years of the twentieth century. In fact, they were so prevalent and pervasive that specific examples of their impact on Chinese intellectuals seem almost unnecessary. That Xu Beihong, in his lecture, cited these neologisms without explanation also corroborates that these terms were already common by the late 1910s.

German aesthetic and art historical discourse entered China from different routes of dissemination, one of them being via Japan. Germany and Japan, as latecomers to a world of nation-states, each posited art as the representation of its civilization, and attempted to establish an identification between works of art and national spirit. The German disciplines of aesthetics and art history provided the theoretical foundation for the development of art policies in Japan during the Meiji period (1868–1912) as they gradually gained prominence in the syllabuses of

the imperial universities. From the beginning, the study of art history in Japan, especially as pursued at Tokyo University, was closely tied to the survey of national treasures. Thus, it had a vital role in the national project that emphasized the symbolic status of works of art in nation-states. The discourse centered on national spirit retained its power in Japanese art historical research even after it went out of fashion in Europe and America after World War II.[22]

The above-mentioned notion promoted by some Chinese intellectuals regarding Song painting seems to have been modeled after the Japanese category "*nihonga*" (Japanese painting). This category was formulated in the late nineteenth century to meet the classification of art demanded by the newly flourishing international expositions, in which Japan actively took part. Regardless of the definition of nihonga, which changed with the development of art in Meiji Japan and later, the Kano school was selected as one of the representations of Japanese national spirit because of its realistic yet traditional style. Influential art critics of that time, such as Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908) and Okakura Kakuzo (1863–1913), proposed that this style, which demonstrated Japanese virtuosity in depicting nature, struck a balance between artistic modernization and Japanese historical legacy. As such, the Kano school could represent Japan to the world in the international arena of exhibitions without any sense of inferiority.[23]

Generally speaking, Japan was the most important source of sociocultural and intellectual trends for China during the first two decades of the twentieth century and, in many cases, Japan helped introduce China to Euro-American ideas and technology. Many important intellectuals had direct contact with Japanese culture and scholarship and shared similar views with some Japanese intellectuals. For example, Japanese artist and scholar Nakamura Fusetsu (1868–1943), likely a friend of Kang Youwei, wrote a book on the history of Chinese painting in 1913, in which he expressed similar aesthetic judgments to those of Kang, such as the high achievement of the Song painting and the transitional role of the Yuan painting.[24]

In China itself, *New Textbook of Art History for Normal Colleges* (*Shifan xuexiao xinjiaokeshu meishushi*) of 1917, which was probably the first book in China to evince a consciousness of modern art historical writing, further testifies to the influence of Japan in China's formulation of the concept of the interconnections between art and nation. For instance, this textbook began with a proposition that one could understand a nation's culture and character by observing the evolution of its art, an important tenet of the German art historical studies mentioned above. The book was a patchwork of previous art historical writings, in particular Nakamura's book.[25]

The framework of the 1917 textbook also follows the German tradition of dividing artworks into four categories – architecture, sculpture, painting, and decorative arts – except that it had to adapt to the Chinese time-honored classification of *shuhua* (calligraphy and painting) by incorporating calligraphy into the section on painting.[26] This tribute to the German art historical tradition was only a small part of the German influence on Chinese intellectual terrain.

The German philosophy of idealism, including the branch of aesthetics, manifested itself in the writings of modern Chinese intellectual leaders as early as the first years of the twentieth century.[27]

One such leader was Cai Yuanpei, who studied philosophy and art history in Germany from 1907 to 1912. Cai was one of the most important figures in modern Chinese education reform, as well as the most determined and influential proponent of German aesthetics and art historical studies. His promotion of art as a crucial element in national education and as an ideological and sociocultural force to replace religion gave art an unprecedented status in Chinese history. Modern China, after the collapse of its traditional value system, urgently required a way to heal its fragmented society and solve its cultural crisis, and through education, Cai attempted to unite China ideologically by forging Chinese identity with the symbolic power of art.[28] Although Germany and China faced different modern situations, Cai's emphasis on art as a critical human faculty that could take the place of obsolete religion and that could become the ideological and social denominator of the educated classes reflected the role of art in a German artistic discourse heavily shaped by its idealist philosophy.[29]

This discussion of the pervasiveness of German philosophy in modern China does not tackle the issue of how Chinese intellectuals appropriated foreign artistic discourses by selection, reformulation, and elaboration. In other words, what was the agency of Chinese intellectuals in the circulation and use of German aesthetics and art history, introduced either directly from Germany or through the lens of a Japanese version? To begin with, the choice of Song painting to represent Chinese art was based on an understanding of Chinese artistic tradition, not an unconscious following of German aesthetic thought. For example, Hegelian aesthetics took free-standing sculpture as the best manifestation of mankind's freedom, liberated from the constraints of architecture and utilitarianism.[30] The introductory passage from a survey book of Chinese painting by Chen Shizeng (1876–1923), an influential art educator and theorist, offers a solid explanation for the choice of painting as the focus of modern Chinese artistic discourse. Chen argued that even though architecture, sculpture, and painting each had had a long history in China, the first two categories did not produce a viable discursive space for intellectual discussion; it was in the realm of painting that Chinese intellectuals had developed a long tradition of art theories, which made painting a continuous force for contemporary discussion on art.[31]

Chen Shizeng's case provides an example of how Euro-American thought and Chinese intellectual resources were negotiated in the making of modern Chinese sociocultural and intellectual trends, and, more often than not, the negotiation even involved a third party – the Japanese, who had already appropriated Euro-American ideas. Chen demonstrated his awareness of the European artistic framework of architecture, sculpture, and painting in his introduction to his book, which was a loose translation of the Japanese scholar Nakamura's work. Leaving aside the issue of plagiarism, it seems evident that the book further exemplifies a multilateral negotiation among the art traditions of China, Japan,

and Euro-America in the development of Chinese intellectuals' respective discourses on art.

As for the complexities of negotiations in the discourse on art, national spirit, and a nation's civilization, the foreign art historical methodology that contributed to the supreme position of Song painting was only part of the story. In fact, the establishment of Song painting as the representation of Chinese art was a reformulation of a time-honored dichotomy between Song and Yuan painting in a modern Chinese context of nationalism and national competition. And along with it, the binary opposition between the characteristics assigned to these two periods of painting became the most important modality in contesting the role of modern Chinese art in building a new nation.

The Song–Yuan Dichotomy and the Polarity of *Xieshi* (Realistic) and *Xieyi* (Expressive)

The discussion on the differences between Song and Yuan painting reached its apogee in the late Ming period, when artistic discourse flourished among an unprecedentedly wide range of the educated classes. In this discussion, the Song and Yuan modes of painting were defined by contrary characteristics, and, as such, the comparison of the Song and Yuan aesthetic standards assumed a structure of binary opposition. This structure, which set up corresponding aesthetic and sociocultural parameters, affected the entire value system with which late Ming elites viewed art, determining the criteria for such fundamental issues as what the stylistic and generic canons should exclude and include.

The advocates of Song painting declared that the skill to convincingly depict complicated scenes and motifs in a well-designed composition was the basic requirement for art. Consequently, painting genres, such as those depicting architecture or figures, that required craftsmanship and were often produced by professional painters, should have their rightful position in the established value system. In this sense, a painter's educational background or artistic motivation was not as important as how well this painter mastered his profession.

By contrast, the Yuan promoters belittled professionalism in painting – a professionalism that was demonstrated in the choices of styles and was frequently associated with the painter's sociocultural status. Instead, they searched for consistency between a painting's brushwork and the painter himself, ideally someone from the literati class who did not earn a living from painting. The two genres most favored by literati painters, because they provided opportunity to display an entire spectrum of brushwork that could express the painter's character and thought, were monochrome landscape and, to a lesser degree, flower-and-bird painting.[32]

In the late Ming, the Song–Yuan polarity of painting was not argued along the lines of the correlation between painting and nature. The dividing line between the Song and Yuan modes was drawn over the issue of whether a painter had

to acquire professional skill to depict scenes or motifs, such as an architectural setting or human figures, with a degree of convincingness. As such, the argument had nothing to do with the visual approximation between what we see in the natural world and what we see in painting. But the modern version of the Song–Yuan dichotomy, as exemplified by Kang Youwei and Chen Duxiu, based its discussion of formal likeness on visual verisimilitude. This new development emphasized the high achievement of western painting techniques in achieving a formal likeness that aimed at realistic, illusionistic effects – that is, xieshi. From this perspective, Song painting became the category of Chinese art that could compete with western achievements in a realistic style and, similar to the Kano School in Japan, could present China on the world stage with a comparable achievement in art. Xieyi, expressiveness, was thus the quality in Yuan painting that was antithetical to xieshi in Song painting, and, to men like Kang and Chen, it was the cause of China's decline in painting. In this sense, the Song–Yuan dichotomy was transformed into a generalized antithesis of realistic style versus expressive style. This polarity of xieshi and xieyi was institutionalized in modern Chinese artistic discourse in terms of nationalism and national competition.

Traditionally, the term xieshi, whose etymology can be traced back to the sixth century, referred to the literary writings that took real things as objects of delineation.[33] Its modern usage denoting "realistic" or "realistic quality" came from Meiji Japan, as did the associated term *xieshi zhuyi* ("realism").[34] While the neologism xieshi was still fairly new in Chinese artistic discourse in the late 1910s, it is evident that the matching of xieshi with the Euro-American concept of realistic style and its implication of national competition on the global stage in art and high civilization were well established.

Concomitant with the exaltation of xieshi was the consideration of the proper training to achieve this effect. Since the concepts of materiality and substantiality had been emphasized in educational reform in modernized schools since the late Qing period, xieshi and its associated skill *xiesheng* (drawing from life) had become an intrinsic part of course work in modern China throughout professional art schools and secondary schools.[35] Xiesheng thus became the government-endorsed method of learning to create realistic effects in painting and drawing. Similar to xieshi, the term xiesheng underwent a significant transformation in early twentieth-century China; for its original meaning pointed to the genre of flower-and-bird painting, especially in the critical period when the genre came to fruition in the Northern Song period (960–1126). Even though it originally implied the method of modeling after real flora and fauna, xiesheng in the Song period did not take on the strict definition of a standardized procedure in achieving realistic effects, as it has in modern China. Moreover, the principal goal of modeling after nature during the Song period was to create an atmosphere of naturalistic vividness in flowers and birds, not identical to that of xiesheng in the modern Chinese sense of realistic western painting techniques.[36]

The meaning of the term xieyi, which probably originated in the Northern Song period, coalesced around the expressive power of brushwork in the Yuan

dynasty, with a connotation of a stylistic quality repudiating the goal of formal likeness.[37] Xieyi remained constantly in use from the Yuan to the modern period, but its meaning also went through a transformation in early twentieth-century China. It could be extended to denote any expressive quality in painting, not necessarily related to brushwork or the painter's character, as long as it was opposed to realism.

While the traditional term xieshi did not connote any evaluative system or hierarchical order, xieshi in modern China constituted an ideological system. As already discussed, this ideological system took form in the late 1910s, and its dynamics hinged on the generally accepted meaning of high civilization. Meanwhile, the essays of the late 1910s, such as Chen Duxiu's call for an art revolution, also implied that xieshi could provide a vehicle for a social critique. This ideological dimension of xieshi was fully elaborated in Xu Beihong's writings around 1929, in which xieshi was considered capable of generating moral truths. These writings articulated the identification between xieshi, *xianshi* (the real world), and *zhenshi* (veracity), all with the key character *shi* (substance, reality, or truth).[38] In other words, a painting style that was defined as xieshi assumed a meaning larger than the combination of the techniques that it used and the effects that it produced. Instead, it was assigned a moral mission to represent the aspiration toward "the real," as David Der-wei Wang eloquently argued.[39] "The real" could mean both metaphysical truth and social reality, materialized through the depiction of the real world by means of xiesheng.

The association of realism with social realities and ultimate truth was not exclusively Chinese, and in fact it was the main ideological thrust of the nineteenth-century European movement of Realism.[40] But in China, xieshi and its ideological agenda of truth and reality persisted even after modernist painting became dominant in Europe and North America. Throughout most of the twentieth century, xieshi was the prevailing artistic trend and mode of thought in China mainly because of the ideological system of which it formed a central part.[41] In a sense, the system was institutionalized in education and enforced by governmental apparatuses, and, furthermore, was enacted and re-enacted by influential artists and art educators such as Xu Beihong. Also, painters aware of and interested in social issues could employ xieshi and xiesheng in their depiction of the real world. Even after Post-Impressionism and Futurism were well-known in China in the 1920s and 1930s, the concept of xieshi and its associated practices and ideological system did not lose its grip on art education, creation, and discourse.

When the polarity of xieshi and xieyi became the most fundamental binary model in modern China in understanding the general approach to painting, Song painting was rediscovered and recast as the highest representation of Chinese art. Ever since, no matter what direction the artistic mainstream leaned toward, the binary structure of xieshi versus xieyi, or its manifestation in the Song–Yuan dichotomy, was an inescapable parameter within which modern Chinese intellectuals reflected upon the past, present, and future of Chinese painting. In this

structure, Song painting was redefined by its realistic style, which also determined its position in the interpretation of Chinese painting history.

In terms of the diachronic development of Chinese painting, the Song–Yuan dichotomy implies that the relationship between Song and Yuan painting is more transformative, or even disruptive, than continuous. To regard the Yuan period as transformative suggests that the new tendency in Yuan painting – that is, its literati expressive quality – was a precursor to the development of Ming and Qing painting. As discussed above, the essays of the late 1910s initiated a historical perspective that considered the Yuan period the most important turning-point in the development of Chinese painting. A similar but more elaborated and reflective consideration of this transformation from realistic to expressive was crystallized in the studies of Teng Gu (1901–41), a German-trained art historian.

Teng's interpretation of the history of Chinese painting was encapsulated in the early 1930s in his identification of the two transitional periods in the development of painting: the high Tang era of the late seventh and early eighth centuries, and the late Yuan period of the early fourteenth century. He saw in the first transitional period the emergence of landscape painting as an independent genre, a development that was carried on and came to fruition in the Song dynasty. The second transition was the establishment of literati painting in the late Yuan and its continuing efflorescence in the Ming and Qing periods.[42] This periodization demonstrates that Teng tended to align the Tang and Song periods as one continuum in the development of Chinese landscape painting – i.e., what was sprouting in the high Tang was in full bloom in the Song. In contrast to the Tang–Song continuum, the Yuan dynasty was a watershed moment and witnessed a transformation that lasted until the coming of modern developments in Chinese painting.[43]

While a thorough investigation into the Song–Yuan transformation is beyond the scope of this essay, Teng Gu's interpretation of the history of Chinese painting recalls the Song–Yuan dichotomy in the texts of the late 1910s. This example once again demonstrates the importance of these texts in modern Chinese discourse on Chinese painting in particular and art in general. In other words, the late 1910s was the defining period in which artistic discourse began to be formulated, exemplified by the polarity of xieshi and xieyi and the Song–Yuan dichotomy.

Discursive Formation: Song Painting in the Public Space

Exhibitions, lectures, and publications all contributed to the formation of a discursive space for art in the late 1910s. Even though each of these three channels had been institutionalized with its own operational mechanism before the late 1910s, it was their conjunction in the heyday of the New Culture Movement that resulted in the rise of a public forum in the art world. In this public space, artistic issues were formulated, circulated, and reformulated by

different intellectuals, giving rise to a discursive power able to shape mainstream intellectual thought.

Xu Beihong's first lecture was given in a public museum, an indication that exhibition practice participated in the formation of the discursive space of art. The exhibition of the former imperial collection provided Xu with a vehicle for expressing his views on Chinese art, and in turn his views took concrete form in the exhibited paintings. The significance of the exhibition can be further understood by a discussion of the social visibility of "*Songhua*" (Song painting or Song paintings), referring to a group of concrete artworks and a conceptual category of art, in the late 1910s.

In terms of Songhua as concrete works, authentic Song paintings were difficult to find in the public arena of the late Qing and early Republican era, and their social visibility was thus very limited. As is widely known, many earlier paintings entered into the Qing court in the eighteenth century, especially under the auspices of Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736–95), which greatly decreased the number of Song paintings in private collections. Even after the establishment of Republican China in 1912, the majority of the Qing imperial collection was still in the hands of the abdicated emperor until the end of 1924 when the Palace Museum was established. From the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, even famous private collectors did not possess a considerable number of Song paintings. Moreover, these collections were hardly accessible to the literati or commoners with whom the collectors were not acquainted.

The new technologies of picture reproduction that helped to circulate images of precious collections barely enhanced the social visibility of Song painting. Starting in 1908, collotype journals and picture books of antiquities became a staple product of the book market and provided the public with an opportunity to view the precious paintings originally denied to them.[44] Since the culture of exhibition entailed viewing paintings not only in three-dimensional spaces but also in two-dimensional publications, collotype journals and books should have played a role in disseminating the images and in formulating the knowledge of specific Song paintings, perhaps taking an even more decisive role than exhibitions. However, the situation was not as ideal as expected. Most of the paintings reproduced in the first decade of collotype publications came from the Ming and the Qing dynasties, and very few of the so-called Song paintings that were reproduced had reliable dating.[45]

In this sense, Songhua as a category of art was constructed in a specific historical context through a limited visibility of authentic Song paintings and through a reformulation of the late Ming discourse on the Song–Yuan dichotomy. This category was made meaningful not because of the paintings' aesthetic achievement as recognized by traditional connoisseurship or their historical significance as produced by art historical scholarship, but because that style was considered the best representative of Chinese art.

The category of Songhua emerged in the writings on painting in the Yuan period, referring to a group of paintings done by painters whose lifespan fell

wholly or partly within the Song dynasty. In Yuan writings, this classification, which was originally based on a simple, synchronic correspondence between the lives of the painters and a particular dynastic period, also came to be applied to paintings of the Jin (265–420), Tang (618–907), and Five Dynasties (907–60).[46] Here, the principle of distinguishing the category of Tang painting from that of the Song is the diachronic agent of dynastic time, but this does not imply a coherent period style in the category of Songhua and its association with a zeitgeist. It was not until the modern period that Song painting formed a conceptual category of art with a general stylistic quality – realistic – in the framework of nationalism, especially when perceived in its role as the category of Chinese art that could determine China's national status.

Connoisseurship, which had developed a complicated aesthetic system of taste in traditional China, did not disappear with the establishment of the new Republican regime in 1912. However, it seems that the related aesthetic discussion did not occupy a comparable status in the formation of the discursive space of art in the late 1910s. The realm of artistic creation also witnessed no conspicuous examples of the recreation of Song styles in the late 1910s. In terms of art historical research, the study of Chinese painting did not take off until the late 1920s as scholars such as Teng Gu emerged on the academic scene.

No matter what occurred in the realms of art, the discourse on Song painting could leave aside the dimensions of aesthetic criteria, artistic creation, and historical research to fashion its own agenda. The uneven developments of the element of Song painting in discourse, connoisseurship, creation, and research in the late 1910s did not hinder the formation of the concept of Songhua and its ramifications in the public channels of exhibitions, lectures, and publications.

In terms of lectures and publications, Xu Beihong's two lectures of 1918 were addressed to an art association of Peking University, which counted more than 100 members at its inception, mostly students of the university and art lovers who had at least a middle-school education.[47] Shortly afterwards, both lectures were turned into essays by the *Daily Newspaper of Peking University* (*Beijing daxue rikan*) and later in 1920 by the university's art journal *Painting Miscellany* (*Huixue zazhi*).[48] Kang Youwei's catalog was published as a book and in an art newspaper in the same year of 1918.[49] Most of Cai Yuanpei's essays on art and aesthetics began as lectures he gave to different societies and associations: these were later published in venuses such as the *Daily Newspaper of Peking University* and *New Youth*. Chen Duxiu's short essay on art revolution was an editorial response to a letter that demanded a position for art in the New Culture Movement, both published by *New Youth* in 1918.

These lectures and texts grew out of the context in which art as a cultural category entered the public space for discursive formation made possible by the New Culture Movement. In this space, artistic discourses took shape in the constant exchanges and arguments over concepts and visions through such diverse channels as exhibitions, lectures, and publications. The art association that supported the tour of Xu Beihong's exhibition organized various activities to

foster art education, including holding regular lectures that were then published in the university's newspaper and art journal. There is no indication that attendance at these lectures was restricted to the members of the association. The affiliation of the association, Peking University, was the bastion of the New Culture Movement, one of whose aspirations was for a China enlightened by means of social education. The cultural climate of the university must have found its expression in the activities of the association, because the ideals of social education and public knowledge featured prominently in the association's agenda.[50] Moreover, university faculty members played decisive roles in the New Culture Movement. Without Cai Yuanpei and Chen Duxiu, the movement would have been greatly different. In fact, Xu Beihong's lectures were consonant with the basic principle of the movement: to reflect on China's past and future through a critical eye and in a global sense.

The *Daily Newspaper of Peking University*, even though it was a campus publication, did not limit its content to the administrative affairs of the university. There was no lack of a social dimension to the newspaper, as it engaged in the development of art and art historical studies in modern China. From 1918 to 1920, in addition to Xu's essays, included in its pages were the serial translations of Stephen Bushell's *Chinese Art* and Ernest Fenollosa's *The Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, as well as Cai Yuanpei's lecture on the origin of art. The university's art journal, *Painting Miscellany*, launched its first issue in 1920, probably with the aim to articulate a collective voice for art education and transformation.[51] The journal republished some essays from the university's newspaper, such as those by Xu Beihong and Cai Yuanpei, giving them a wider social impact. The potential readership of these two media comprised the most prestigious elites who created the discursive space essential for the New Culture Movement.

During the heyday of the New Culture Movement, journals devoted to advancing artistic development sprouted, while other types of journals also featured articles on art.[52] Thus, texts that might be considered "art criticism" emerged in sufficient numbers to engender a discursive space for artistic discussion. The power of these texts lies in their intellectual reasoning and their critical integration of contemporary artistic conditions and the author's vision for art. These texts no longer merely introduced foreign works and ideas or made historical explorations into China's past, as previous modern writings on art had done; instead, they tended to comment on the status quo of the art arena and to project a vision for the future of Chinese art from a comparative perspective. In other words, in these texts, art became contested: a fertile ground for intellectual discussion in regard to the fate of traditional Chinese culture in a modern world of national competition. Concrete issues of contention included the role of art in contemporary society, which aspects of Chinese artistic tradition should be appreciated, and which should be eliminated from the tradition.

Take the example of *New Youth*, the journal that was directed by the faculties of Peking University and formed the most important forum in the New Culture

Movement. *New Youth* seemed to have opened up a new venue for discussing art. In addition to the essays by Chen Duxiu and Cai Yuanpei, it published essays by well-known authors such as Lu Xun (1881–1936) and Hu Shi (1891–1962), who demonstrated intellectual reasoning on different topics related to art even in their seemingly casual notes.[53] These notes and essays brought the polemics of intellectual thinking into the arena of art with a dialogical power. In a sense, Xu Beihong's lectures were responses to the artistic discourses generated by *New Youth*. For example, both his protest against the decline of Chinese painting and his demand for the reform of Chinese painting recalled the art revolution espoused by Chen Duxiu earlier the same year.

Through influential media such as *New Youth* and the *Daily Newspaper of Peking University*, texts about art carved out a public space of artistic discourse in the late 1910s. In this space, Chinese and western art could be debated according to their comparative values, and the future of Chinese art became a contested ground for various arguments. The polemics revolving around Songhua and xieshi thus took shape in the burgeoning public forum of the New Culture Movement, and in turn the formation of the polemics helped create a public space for artistic discourse in the late 1910s. Later in the 1920s and 1930s, the public forum for art developed rapidly, and contending discourses vied for social visibility and hegemonic power. The period of the late 1910s is thus "the defining moment" in the formation of a public space for artistic discourse in modern China.

The emergence of the public channels of exhibitions, lectures, and publications in modern China and their conjunction pointed to the modern condition of "the public." Even though in the late 1910s a social space for artistic discourse was not a completely novel phenomenon – the best example being the late Ming forum that produced the Song–Yuan dichotomy – the rise of "the public" in modern China generated new meanings in the discursive formation of art. Compared to that of the late Ming, the modern space for discourse embraced many more participants across a broader range of society, whose sole required qualification was access to any relevant exhibition, lecture, or publication. The discursive practice of art in modern China thus had the potential to involve a wide range of the educated classes and to incorporate a broad scope of socio-cultural and political institutions. It is therefore not surprising that the discourse focused on Song painting had a close relationship to widespread intellectual aspirations for a highly civilized China that could compete with other advanced nations in the world. Also, the exchange of artistic views in the public space formed by modern media greatly accelerated the formation of an art forum in which artistic discourses wielded power in shaping the future trajectory of Chinese art and the consciousness of national spirit and national status.

In the name of the nation, the category of Songhua was rediscovered, and its canonical meaning was redefined. This ideological agenda of Song painting once again reveals to us how powerful and malleable a tradition is in the discursive practice of art.

Notes

1 For example, see Hong, "From Stockholm to Tokyo," 111–34; Andrews, "Exhibition to Exhibition," 21–38.
2 For example, see Lang, "Siwang zai Ershi shiji."
3 For example, see Lai, "Surreptitious Appropriation"; Wong, *Parting the Mist*; Andrews and Shen, "The Japanese Impact."
4 Regarding the exhibitions of the Institute, see Cheng-hua Wang, "The Qing Imperial Collection."
5 Xu Beihong, "Ping Wenhuadian"; *Huixue zazhi*, 1–6. The translation is mine.
6 Xu Beihong, "Zhongguohua"; *Huixue zazhi*, 12–14.
7 Xu Boyang and Jin Shan, *Xu Beihong nianpu*, 11–13.
8 Even though Xu Beihong did not offer clear evidence of his father's career in his autobiography, he still hinted at how his father earned a living. Xu Beihong, "Beihong zishu," 2–3.
9 Lawrence Wu also points out the influence of Kang Youwei on Xu Beihong. Wu, "Kang Youwei," 50.
10 Kang, "Wanmu caotang canghuamu," 93–131.
11 Regarding the cultural crisis of modern Chinese intellectuals, see Levenson, *Confucian China*, xiii–xix.
12 Chang, "New Confucianism," 277–8.
13 Cai, "Huagong xuexiao jiangyi," 53; Cai, "Zai Beida Huafa," 80.
14 Chen Duxiu, "Meishu geming."
15 Chen Duxiu, "Fubi yu zun Kong." Cai, "Yi meiyu dai zongjiao shuo."
16 Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, chapter 8.
17 Momigliano, "Ancient History and the Antiquarian"; Haskell, *History and Its Images*, 201–35.
18 Regarding the implications of the word and concept of "civilization," see Pagden, "The 'Defense of Civilization'," 33.
19 Beiser, "Hegel's Historicism"; Bunzl, "Franz Boas"; Smith, "*Volksgeist*."
20 Gombrich, "In Search of Cultural History."
21 Wicks, "Hegel's Aesthetics," 366–8; Moxey, "Art History's Hegelian Unconscious."
22 Yiengpruksawan, "Japanese Art History 2001," 111–17.
23 Conant, *Nihonga*, 12–14 and 25–35.
24 For more on Nakamura, see Wong, "Reforming Calligraphy in Modern Japan." See also Nakamura and Oga, *Shina kaigashi*, 5–6, 82, 96–107, 137–8, and 184–5. The former is the primary author. For a discussion of the book, see Andrews and Shen, "The Japanese Impact," 19–22.
25 Jiang, *Shifan xuexiao xinjiaokeshu meishushi*, 20–1; Nakamura and Oga, *Shina kaigashi*, 102–4.
26 The classic book by Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, also employed the same European classifying system of artworks. The German edition of this book, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, was first published in 1915.
27 Bonner, *Wang Kuo-wei*, 56–112; Ban Wang, *The Sublime Figure of History*, 1–16 and 55–100.

28 For Cai Yuanpei's life, thought, and influence, see Duiker, *Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei*. Regarding Cai's view on the importance of art in education, value system, and social solidarity, see note 13 above.
29 Regarding the crucial position of art in German philosophy and art historical studies, see Podro, *The Critical Historians*, 1–16; Wicks, "Hegel's Aesthetics," 301–73.
30 Podro, *The Critical Historians*, 17–22.
31 Chen Shizeng, *Zhongguo huihuashi*, 745.
32 Regarding late Ming discourse on the Song–Yuan dichotomy, see Cheng-hua Wang, "Cong Chen Hongshou."
33 For example, see Liu Xie, *Wenxin diaolong*, 19.
34 Regarding the use of these terms in Meiji Japan, see Satō, *Meiji kokka to kindai bijutsu*, 209–32.
35 Wu Fang-cheng, "Tuhua yu shougong," 1–46.
36 Regarding the terminology of *xiesheng* in the Song period, see Kono, "'Shasei' no gensen."
37 Regarding the usage of *xieyi* in the traditional literature on art, see Liu Daochun, "Songchao minghuaping," 469; Tang, "Hua jian," 432, 433, and 438.
38 Eugene Wang, "Sketch Conceptualism," 111–14.
39 Der-wei Wang, "In the Name of the Real," 29–38.
40 Nochlin, *Realism*, 13–56.
41 Clark, "Realism."
42 Teng, "Guanyu yuantihua."
43 Also see Teng, *Tang Song huihuashi*.
44 Wang, "New Printing Technology."
45 For example, the journals *Zhongguo minghua* and *Shenzhou guoguang ji* hardly contain any reliable Song painting.
46 For example, see the classification of paintings in Tang, "Huajian" and Xia, *Tuhui baojian*. For the latter, see *Huashi congshu*, vol. 2.
47 Regarding the history of the association, see Wang Yuli, "Beijing daxue."
48 See notes 5 and 6 above.
49 Regarding the published versions of Kang Youwei's catalog in the early twentieth century, see Xu Zhihao, *1911–1949 Zhongguo meishu*, 6–7.
50 *Beijing daxue shiliao*, vol. 2.3, 2613–24.
51 Wang Yuli, "Huixue zazhi yanjiu."
52 For an introduction to these journals, see Xu Zhihao, *1911–1949 Zhongguo meishu*, 6–16.
53 Hu, "Canghuishi zhaji," 1–2; Lu, "Suiganlu," 70–1.

References

Andrews, Julia F. "Exhibition to Exhibition: Painting Practice in the Early Twentieth Century as a Modern Response to 'Tradition'." In *Turmoil, Representation, and Trends: Modern Chinese Painting, 1796–1949*, 21–38. Kao-hsiung: Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts and Chang Foundation, 2007.

Andrews, Julia F., and Kuiyi Shen. *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China*. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1998.

Andrews, Julia F., and Kuiyi Shen. "The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World: The Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field." *Twentieth-Century China* 32 no. 1 (November 2006): 4–35.

Beijing daxue shiliao [*Historical Materials of Peking University*], vol. 2.3 (1912–37). Beijing: Beida chubanshe, 2000.

Beiser, Frederick C. "Hegel's Historicism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, edited by Frederick C. Beiser, 270–300. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Bonner, Joey. *Wang Kuo-wei: An Intellectual Biography*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Bunzl, Matti. "Franz Boas and the Humboldtian Tradition." In *Volksgeist as Method and Ethic: Essays on Boasian Ethnography and the German Anthropological Tradition*, edited by George W. Stocking Jr., 19–28. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.

Cai Yuanpei. "Huagong xuexiao jiangyi [Lecture Notes for the School of Chinese Workers]." In *Cai Yuanpei meixue wenxuan* [*An Anthology of Cai Yuanpei's Writings on Aesthetics*], 22–65. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1983.

Cai Yuanpei. "Yi meiyu dai zongjiao shuo [A Treatise on Replacing Religion with Art Education]." *Xin qingnian* [*New Youth*] 3 no. 6 (August 1917): 5–9.

Cai Yuanpei. "Zai Beida Huafa yanjiuhui zhi yanshuoci [Lectures for Peking University Research Association of Painting]." In *Cai Yuanpei meixue wenxuan*, 80–1. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1983.

Chang Hao. "New Confucianism and the Intellectual Crisis of Contemporary China." In *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China*, edited by Charlotte Furth, 276–302. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Chen Duxiu. "Fubi yu zun Kong [Restoring the Imperial System and Respecting Confucius]." *Xin qingnian* 3 no. 6 (August 1917): 1–4.

Chen Duxiu. "Meishu geming [The Art Revolution]." *Xin qingnian* 6 no. 1 (January 1918): 85–6.

Chen Shizeng. *Zhongguo huihuashi* [*History of Chinese Painting*]. In *Zhongguo xiandai xueshu jingdian: Lu Xun, Wu Mi, Wu Mei, Chen Shizeng juan* [*Classical Texts of Modern Chinese Scholarship: Lu Xun, Wu Mi, Wu Mei, and Chen Shizeng*], 745–818. Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996.

Clark, John. "Realism in Revolutionary Chinese Painting." *Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia* 22, 23 (1990–1): 1–30.

Conant, Ellen P. *Nihonga: Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting, 1868–1968*. St Louis, MO: Saint Louis Art Museum, 1995.

Duiker, William J. *Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei: Educator of Modern China*. State College, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977.

Gombrich, E. H. "In Search of Cultural History." In *Ideals and Idols: Essays on Values in History and in Art*, 28–47. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1979.

Greenhalgh, Paul. *Ephemeral Vistas: The* Expositions Universelles, *Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851–1939*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988.

Haskell, Francis. *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993.

Hong, Zaixin. "From Stockholm to Tokyo: E. A. Strehlneek's Two Shanghai Collections in a Global Market for Chinese Painting in the Early Twentieth Century." In *Moving Objects: Space, Time, and Context*, 111–34. Tokyo: Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Properties, 2004.

Hu Shi. "Canghuishi zhaji [Miscellaneous Records from the Study of Canghui]." *New Youth* 2 no. 4 (December 1916): 1–2.

Huixue zazhi [*Painting Miscellany*] no. 1 (June 1920).

Jiang Danshu. *Shifan xuexiao xinjiaokeshu meishushi* [*New Textbook of Art History for Normal Colleges*]. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1917.

Kang Youwei. "Wanmu caotang canghuamu [Catalog of the Painting Collection of the Thatched Hall of Ten Thousand Trees]." In *Kang Youwei xiansheng moji* [*The Calligraphic Works of Mr. Kang Youwei*], vol. 2, 93–131. Henan: Zhongzhou shuhuashe, 1983.

Kono Motoaki. "'Shasei' no gensen – Chūgoku [The Source of "Drawing from Life" – China]." In *Akiyama Terukazu hakase koki kinen bijutsushi ronbunshū* [*A Scholarly Volume of Art Historical Essays in Commemoration of the Seventieth Birthday of Dr. Akiyama Terukazu*], 481–514. Tokyo: Benridō, 1991.

Lai Yu-chih. "Surreptitious Appropriation: Ren Bonian's Frontier Paintings and Urban Life in 1880s Shanghai, 1842–1895." PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2005.

Lang Shaojun. "Siwang zai Ershi shiji [The Style of the Four Painters Named Wang in the Twentieth Century]." In *Qingchu Siwang huapai yanjiu lunwenji* [*A Collection of Essays on the Painting School of the Four Painters Named Wang in the Early Qing*], 835–68. Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua chubanshe, 1993.

Levenson, Joseph R. *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958.

Liu Daochun. "Songchao minghuaping [An Assessment of the Famous Paintings of the Song Dynasty]." In *Wenyuange sikuquanshu* [*The Comprehensive Library of Four Treasures from the Pavilion of Literary Profundity*], vol. 812, 445–76. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1983.

Liu Xie. *Wenxin diaolong* [*The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*]. In *Yingyin Wenyuange sikuquanshu* [*Complete Books of the Four Treasures, the Printed Edition of the Pavilion of Literary Profundity*], vol. 1478. Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1983.

Lu Xun. "Suiganlu (43) [Record of My Ruminations]." *New Youth* 6 no. 1 (January 1918): 70–1.

Momigliano, Arnaldo. "Ancient History and the Antiquarian." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950): 307–13.

Moxey, Keith. "Art History's Hegelian Unconscious: Naturalism as Nationalism in the Study of Early Netherlandish Painting." In *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly, Keith Moxey, 28–37. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Nakamura Fusetsu and Oga Seiun. *Shina kaigashi* [*History of Chinese Painting*]. Tokyo: Genkōsha, 1913.

Nochlin, Linda. *Realism: Style and Civilization*. New York: Penguin Books, 1971.

Pagden, Anthony. "The 'Defense of Civilization' in Eighteenth-Century Social Theory." *History of the Human Sciences* 1 no. 2 (May 1988): 33–46.

Podro, Michael. *The Critical Historians of Art*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982.

Satō Dōshin. *Meiji kokka to kindai bijutsu – bi no seijigaku* [*Meiji Japan as a Nation and Modern Art: The Politics of Beauty*]. Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1999.

Smith, Woodruff D. "*Volksgeist*." In *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, edited by Maryanne Cline Horowitz, 2441–3. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005.

Tang Hou. "Hua jian [Connoisseurship on Painting]." In *Wenyuange sikuquanshu*, vol. 814, 419–40. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1983.

Teng Gu. "Guanyu yuantihua he wenrenhua zhi shi de kaocha [On the History of Academic Painting and Literati Painting]." *Furen xuezhi* [*Furen University Journal*] 2, no. 2 (September 1931): 65–85.

Teng Gu. *Tang Song huihuashi* [*The History of Painting in the Tang and the Song Dynasties*]. First published 1933, now collected in Shen Ning, ed., *Teng Gu yishu wenji* [*A Collection of the Art Historical Writings of Teng Gu*], 113–81. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 2002.

Wang Ban. *The Sublime Figure of History: Aesthetics and Politics in Twentieth-Century China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997.

Wang Cheng-hua. "Cong Chen Hongshou de 'Hualun' kan Wanming Zhejiang huatan: jianlun Jiangnan huihua wangluo yu quyu jingzheng [Chen Hongshou's "On Painting" and the Late Ming Art Realm of Zhejiang: Also on the Artistic Networking and Regional Competition of the Jiangnan Area]." In *Quyu yu wanluo: jinqiannian lai Zhongguo meishushi yanjiu guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* [*Region and Network: A Scholarly Volume for the International Conference on Art of the Past Millennium*], 339–62. Taipei: Guoli Taiwan daxue yishushi yanjiusuo, 2001.

Wang Cheng-hua. "New Printing Technology and Heritage Preservation: Collotype Reproduction of Antiquities in Modern China, Circa. 1908–1917." In *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, edited by Joshua Fogel. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Wang Cheng-hua. "The Qing Imperial Collection, circa 1905–25: National Humiliation, Heritage Preservation, and Exhibition Culture." In *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture*, edited by Wu Hung and Katherine R. Tsiang, 320–41. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Wang, David Der-wei. "In the Name of the Real." In *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions*, edited by Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith, 28–59. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001.

Wang, Eugene Y. "Sketch Conceptualism as Modernist Contingency." In *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions*, edited by Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith, 102–61. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001.

Wang Yuli. "Beijing daxue huafa yanjiuhui shimo [On the Painting Association of Peking University]." *Xiandai meishu* [Modern Art] 79 (August 1998): 61–7.

Wang Yuli. "Huixue zazhi yanjiu [On *Painting Miscellany*]." *Xiandai meishu* 82 (1999): 48–61.

Wicks, Robert. "Hegel's Aesthetics: An Overview." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, edited by Frederick C. Beiser, 348–77. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Wolfflin, Heinrich. *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*. Translated by M. D. Hottinger. New York: Dover, 1950 [*c.* 1932].

Wong, Aida Yuen. *Parting the Mist: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Wong, Aida Yuen. "Reforming Calligraphy in Modern Japan: The Six Dynasties School and Nakamura Fusetsu's Chinese 'Stele' Style." In *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, edited by Joshua A. Fogel. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Wu Fang-cheng. "Tuhua yu shougong—Zhongguo jindai yishu jiaoyu de dansheng [Pictures and Handicrafts: The Birth of Modern Chinese Art Education]." In *Shanghai meishu fengyun* [*Art in Shanghai*], edited by Yen Chuan-ying. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 2006.

Wu, Lawrence. "Kang Youwei and the Westernization of Modern Chinese Art." *Orientations* 21 no. 3 (1990): 46–53.

Xia Wenyan. *Tuhui baojian* [*Precious Connoisseurship of Painting*], in *Huashi congshu* [*A Series of the History of Painting*], vol. 2. Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1983.

Xu Beihong. "Beihong zishu – daixu [Beihong's Personal Account – in Lieu of a Preface]." In Xu Beihong, *Xu Beihong yishu wenji* [*An Anthology of the Art Historical Writings of Xu Beihong*], 1–28. Taipei: Yishujia chubanshe, 1987.

Xu Beihong. "Ping Wenhuadian suocang shuhua [An Assessment of the Calligraphy and Painting Collections of the Hall of Literary Magnificance]." *Beijing daxue rikan* [*The Daily Newspaper of Peking University*], May 10, 1918: 2–3 and May 11, 1918: 2–3.

Xu Beihong. "Zhongguohua gailiang zhi fangfa [Methods to Reform Chinese Painting]." *Beijing daxue rikan*, May 23, 1918: 2–3; May 24, 1918: 2–3; May 25, 1918: 2–3.

Xu Boyang and Jin Shan, eds. *Xu Beihong nianpu* [*Chronological Biography of Xu Beihong*]. Taipei: Yishujia chubanshe, 1991.

Xu Zhihao, *1911–1949 Zhongguo meishu qikan guoyanlu* [*Record of Chinese Art Journals Passing before My Eyes*]. Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1992.

Yiengpruksawan, Mimi Hall. "Japanese Art History 2001: The State and Stakes of Research." *Art Bulletin* 83 no. 1 (March 2001): 105–22.

Further Reading

Bové, Paul A. "Discourse." In *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, edited by Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, 50–65. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Doleželová-Velingerová, Milena, and Oldřich, Král. *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China's May Fourth Project*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001.

Guillory, John. "Canon." In *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, edited by Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, 233–49. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Mitter, Rana. *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Schwarcz, Vera. *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

Zarrow, Peter. *China in War and Revolution, 1895–1949*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Part VIII

Elusive, Mobile Objects

23

Chinese Painting: Image-Text-Object

De-nin Deanna Lee

Chinese paintings are not just paintings. Although they appear to be fixed or frozen in the pages of our textbooks and in the display cases of museums, Chinese paintings functioned as physically manipulable objects: screens to frame and elevate the sitter, fans to embellish and cool the body, and albums and scrolls to be opened, put away, or transported by the hands. The very vulnerability of materials like silk and paper further encouraged regular manipulation in the form of repair and remounting. Thus, Chinese paintings should be conceived not as static images on the wall, but rather as objects in motion and undergoing change, whether the slight effects of insect appetites or the marked interventions of voracious collectors. Some of the latter group are responsible for a variety of texts – inscriptions, title frontispieces, appended colophons, and seals – that often frame and even intrude upon the painted image. These later additions pose an intriguing problem for art historians. One answer is to dismiss such texts and exclude them from interpretations of the artworks' original messages. This essay takes a different point of view. Using a poetic inscription by the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736–95) on a landscape by Guo Xi (*c.* 1001–*c.* 1090) as a springboard, this essay examines several paintings to reveal how cultural practices transform the physical appearances and meanings of Chinese paintings, and how transformed paintings, in turn, inform the creation of complex, self-referential images, or metapictures.

Somewhere in every Chinese art history textbook, as a crowning achievement of court-sponsored art or paradigmatic example of monumental landscape painting, Guo Xi's masterpiece *Early Spring* of 1072 makes a majestic appearance.[1] A central mountain, ancient and awesome, presides over a mist-filled landscape, while its eroded, twisting form sets our gaze into perpetual motion. Our eyes travel along the crooked lines of ancient pines, trace the billowing contours of massive

boulders, settle briefly on the fisherfolk and travelers who negotiate the fantastic terrain, and follow the flowing waters down to the foreground. Alternatively, we may go against the current to seek the river's source in the hazy distance on the left side, or rest vicariously at the temple at the right side to watch the waterfall. Guo's extraordinary ability to create a world so vast and compelling on a relatively large but still limited space has solicited the commendation of his peers and most succeeding generations. A painter working at the imperial court, Guo also expounded on his art in a treatise on landscape, "The Lofty Message of Forests and Streams (*Linquan gaozhi ji*)," as recorded by his son.[2] The topics of Guo's treatise are eclectic, ranging from biographical anecdotes related to his artistic training to advice for evaluating landscape paintings to topographical and meteorological observations. The function and meaning of landscapes are also on Guo's mind when he informs us that "[w]ithout leaving your room you may sit to your heart's content among streams and valleys," obtaining through painting the therapeutic benefits of rural retreats, and that the "ordered arrangement" of mountains and pines resembles social hierarchies that grant privilege to lords and princes.[3] Following Guo Xi's own writing and the concerns of the modern discipline of art history, research on *Early Spring* has focused on the painting's motifs and their multivalent meanings, the compositional structure and its impact, style and technique, the artist's rising social status as indicated by his signature at the painting's left edge, and imperial patronage and the painting's original social context.[4]

Against the chorus of adulation and scholarship, there is notable silence concerning one visible and prominent feature of *Early Spring*. At the top of the painting, an inscription, comprising poem, date, and signature, hovers above Guo's central peak. Slightly off-center, the inscription is balanced by a sizeable imperial seal belonging to the Qianlong emperor. The seal, a marker of ownership, boldly categorizes the scroll as "a treasure viewed by the Qianlong emperor." More particularity may be found in the emperor's poem:

> Trees just releasing green, streams begin to thaw;
> Towers and pavilions where immortals reside, in the highest register.
> No need for willow and peach trees to embellish the space;
> In spring mountains, morning sees *qi* rising like steam.

The quatrain describes the painting's subject, the very beginning of the spring season in the mountains. The first and third lines respectively describe the natural signs of seasonal change as represented in the painting and argue that the image prudently excludes unnecessary adornment. Alternate lines make references to Daoist immortals and to *qi*, the vaporous and generative stuff of which the entire cosmos is made, thus placing special emphasis on the landscape's numinous qualities. Qianlong's poem has yet to garner critical commentary, but Qianlong himself has been the subject of volumes.[5]

Reigning over an immense and growing empire for over 60 years, the Qianlong emperor inherited and expanded an encyclopedic art collection. Ritual jades and bronze vessels from the distant past, exquisite ivory carvings and porcelain vases

of the period, strange and bright coral trees from the deep seas, and ingenious clocks of European manufacture – all these things and more were gathered together with traditional Chinese calligraphies and paintings at the emperor's pleasure. As son of heaven, Qianlong acted as collector and custodian of everything in his realm, and there is ample written evidence on the myriad objects themselves testifying to his proprietary attitude. Some viewers take umbrage at the emperor's inscriptional habit, and the general silence toward his poem on *Early Spring* suggests a prevailing, if unspoken, opinion to treat it as an illegitimate intrusion upon Guo's ideal world. But there are impressions of other seals, not all of which belonged to the Qianlong emperor, which suggest that the emperor's act was not altogether offensive, or deviant, as it might be were the object in question an oil painting by Leonardo da Vinci or Georgia O'Keeffe. Before rushing to judgment, let us consider the general cultural circumstances that in the traditional Chinese context condoned written commentary literally on a painted image.

At the risk of overgeneralization, we could say that in traditional China as compared to the northern Atlantic, writing and painting are more closely related disciplines, sharing the same materials and discourse, which reinforces their relationship as "sister arts." The third sister is poetry, and if we scratched just a little more beneath the surface, we would quickly uncover a vast archive of materials relating to poetry and painting. Indeed, Qianlong's inscription to *Early Spring* brings all three sisters, or as the Chinese would say, the three "perfections," together – poetry, calligraphy, and painting.[6] Still, our modern, art historical sensibility bristles as we doubt that the later artist's addition conforms to the original artist's intention.

Our sense of the inviolability of the work of art is less bothered when image and text are conceived together. A landscape painting on a handscroll by the statesman and calligrapher Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322) opens from right to left, and of the artist's original work the first thing we see is two lines of calligraphy with his signature and a title, "Twin Pines, Level Distance" (fig. 23-1). To the left, the eponymous trees stand in a cluster of coarse boulders on a rather barren near shore. One tree rises nearly straight, while the other bends oddly, leading our eyes across the broad river to a horizontal line of distant shoals and low-lying hills. Compared to *Early Spring*, Zhao's landscape is strikingly desolate, almost inhospitable. Yet, a lone fisherman angles for a bite. The horizon stretches on with little variation, excitement, or incident until vertical columns of inky text

Publisher's Note:
Image not available
in the electronic edition

FIGURE 23-1 Zhao Mengfu, *Twin Pines, Level Distance*, *c.* 1300. Ink on paper. 26.8 × 107.5 cm. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

rather suddenly obstruct our view. The placement of this inscription seems equally if not more discourteous than that of Qianlong, but since the artist himself wrote it, we must consider the intrusion an intentional one.

To understand the content and placement of Zhao's inscription, we must look first at his painting. Compared to the work of Guo Xi, which Zhao knew first-hand, the representation of trees, rocks, and water in *Twin Pines, Level Distance* is highly abstracted.[7] In the water, no currents describe liquid movements; and in the air no moisture obscures or enhances our views. Quickly brushed loops signify and simplify the rough texture of tree bark; while dry, wavering lines of the brush describe the crumbly or craggy contours of earth and rock. Indeed, Zhao used the language of calligraphy to describe his painting process. For example, the term "flying white," which originally described the effect of writing so quickly that the fleeting contact between brush and paper did not allow for the complete absorption of ink, was adapted for painting rocks. In Zhao's art, illusionism is not a goal as painting becomes more abstract, or increasingly calligraphic, a point that perhaps motivates the overlapping of image and text at the composition's end. On that point, his inscription begins, "Besides studying calligraphy, I have since my youth dabbled in painting."[8] We are effectively encouraged to "read" his landscape in the same manner that we "read" his inscription: both are traces of the brush wielded by a unique individual.

If in his style and composition Zhao brings calligraphy and painting closer together, the format, too, contributes to a unified artistic expression. Compared to the hanging scroll, the format in which we currently see *Early Spring*, the handscroll more readily admits writing. It is the same form that has been used for copying sacred texts and more profane examples of excellent calligraphy. We may also be reminded of image–text precedents such as *Admonitions of the Court Instructress to Palace Ladies*, attributed to Gu Kaizhi (*c.* 345–*c.* 406), which alternates transcribed excerpts from Zhang Hua's poem written in 292 with Gu's paintings.[9] In the case of handscrolls, viewers' hands are in contact with the art object, unrolling it from right to left, and little more effort is required to lift the hand to follow the lines of calligraphy and painting, as viewers respond kinesthetically to visual cues. Zhao Mengfu's calligraphic painting encourages just this kind of kinesthetic response and, as ideal, imagined viewers use their hands to unroll the scroll, so could they lift a hand and, like a dance choreographed solely for the fingers, hand, wrist, arm and shoulder, retrace the imagined gestures of the artist.

In Zhao's *Twin Pines, Level Distance*, text and image are deliberately and self-consciously knit together. The colophon introduces his practice of calligraphy and painting as closely, naturally related, and then discusses earlier masters of painting, a topic that is mirrored in the painting, which is equally art historical in its visual references to style, motif, genre, and composition.[10] The handscroll is a welcome format allowing the two to be seamlessly merged, and the practiced, disciplined viewer responds in kind, moving fluidly from right to left, picking out the expressive qualities of brush movements, regardless of whether the outcomes of the movements are graphs of written language or motifs of painted image.

While the handscroll lends itself particularly well to the integration of image, text, and object, other formats combine these three elements in different ways that can be satisfying and ingenious. In the Cleveland Museum of Art, two small, round works on silk – the one bearing a poetic couplet written but not composed by the Southern Song emperor Lizong (r. 1224–64), the other an evocative landscape by the court painter Ma Lin (*c.* 1180–after 1256) – are mounted as album leaves (fig. 23-2). The album format, which mimics the physical structure of a book with leaves, or pages, organized in a right-to-left sequence, readily lends itself to a coherent intermingling of images and texts. The juxtaposition of Lizong's quoted lines with Ma's misty scene permits a close association without sacrificing the autonomy or integrity of either verbal or visual expression. Conceptually, the album format functions so well as to seem original and natural. Moreover, it has the advantage of protecting these fragile artworks. But physical evidence, such as the matching vertical abrasions bisecting both painting and calligraphy, suggests that the two were conceived together and originally mounted back-to-back as a hand-held fan.[11]

As two sides of a single fan, calligraphy and painting become equivalents, or surrogates for each other. The fan's user reads aloud or to herself the words written on one side, "I walk to the place where the water ends / And sit and watch at the time when clouds rise." The two lines are sufficient for the knowledgeable reader to recall their origin as a couplet from an eight-line poem composed by the Tang dynasty scholar-poet-painter Wang Wei (701–61). The poem, "Zhongnan Retreat," describes Wang's "middle years" living in seclusion and wandering about nature as forms of self-cultivation.[12] It is also a meditation on Chan Buddhist themes of emptiness and being.

The poem's author, subject, and context can provoke any number of thoughts and associations taking the viewer's mind to other spatio-temporal locations. But the reader may also return to the thing literally at hand, retracing the visible remains of Lizong's physical gestures that resulted in this symmetrical arrangement of two generously spaced, five-character lines of calligraphy. Lizong's running script combines gossamer thin ligatures that connect individual strokes with thicker, more substantial lines and insistent hooks, resulting in a complex, syncopated visual rhythm.

After imaginatively replaying the rhythm, the viewer may then, with a flick of the wrist, examine the fan's opposite side where a lone scholar-gentleman, perhaps Wang Wei himself, leisurely reclines on the near shore of a misty landscape. He has placed his walking staff on the ground beside him, and it neatly echoes the silhouette of the rocky outcropping, making visible the direction of his gaze. Our eyes follow these diagonal vectors across the gently lapping waves and the hazy void until they reach the distant slope partially obscured but unaffected by billowing clouds. Depicting the water's edge and the clouds rising, Ma Lin's imagery is, of course, a painterly response to the selected couplet from Wang's poem, which, with another flick of the wrist, may be read once more. Image and text oscillate before the viewer's eyes when the fan is put to use.

FIGURE 23-2 Emperor Lizong, *Couplet from a Poem by Wang Wei in Semi-Cursive Script* and Ma Lin, *Scholar Reclining and Watching Rising Clouds*, 1256. Ink and colors on silk. 25.1 × 24.9 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art.

The fan is an altogether efficient technology for ventilation and cooling, requiring a minimum of material and energy to produce an immediately favorable effect, which would have been much appreciated in the hot and humid summers in and around Hangzhou, capital of the Southern Song dynasty, where Lizong and Ma Lin collaborated to make this fine example. In addition to preserving signs of authorship – a square seal reading "Treasure of Imperial Calligraphy (*Yushu zhi bao*)" and Ma Lin's signature following words indicating his status as a "servant *chen*" – the fan also bears a short inscription, just three small characters located between the gourd-shaped seal (*bingchen*, cyclical characters that correspond to the year 1256) and the imperial one. The inscription indicates the object's secondary function as an imperial gift. The recipient has not been identified with certainty, but nevertheless we can appreciate the cultural context in which Wang's poetry, Lizong's calligraphy, and Ma's painting were combined in the form of a useful and beautiful gift from a magnanimous emperor to a loyal servant.[13] Perhaps the gift embodied a specific message about shared, noble ideals as expressed in Wang's words, but even in the absence of a specific message, the fan would have served as a vehicle for cementing a socio-political relationship. Distinct from fans used by actors on the dramatic stage, merchants as commercial advertising, or consumers for fashion accessories, imperially produced examples were "emblems of political prerogative."[14] In time, they acquired further value as family heirlooms, memorabilia of a fallen dynasty, and "art," as we are now accustomed to seeing them.

Another, later example from the University of Michigan Museum of Art has similarly made the transition from fan to "art," but unlike the Lizong–Ma Lin collaboration, this one incorporates social relationships into its very making. On a gold-flecked paper folding fan, the female artist Qian Juying (act. mid-nineteenth century) has painted branches of ink plum blossoms in the far left quadrant (fig. 23-3).[15] The remaining quadrants are filled with two calligraphic inscriptions by Wu Yun (1811–83) separated by an image of rocks and flowers by an artist who is as yet unidentified.[16] Before assuming its current, dismantled state, the fan's reverse side (not illustrated) bore yet another work of calligraphy by a fourth contributor, Zhao Zhiqian (1829–84), a notable scholar and artist. Both formats, the Chinese round fan and the folding fan of Japanese origin, allow the artist or a group of artists to take advantage of two surfaces. But the folding fan, which gained popularity in China in the Ming dynasty, has a set of radiating ribs that not only support the fan's expansion but also structure a geometrically divisible space, thus lending itself to increasing numbers of collaborators.

Alone, Qian's plum blossoms convey a sophisticated and multilayered message to the recipient, a certain gentleman who adopted a studio or polite name of "Sea Coral (*Haishan*)." As a sub-genre of painting, ink plum was at its inception imbued with the erudition of calligraphy with which it shared materials and techniques.[17] In addition, since the flower blooms even as late winter frosts threaten spring's arrival, the plum acquired in the eyes of its admirers certain human virtues such as integrity, fortitude, and vitality.[18] Poets sang the praises of the plum, and painters followed their lead. As a gift to Mr. Sea Coral, this fan with Qian's plum

FIGURE 23-3 Qian Juying and others, *Flowers and Plum Blossoms*, 1861. Ink and color on gold-flecked-paper. 22 × 56 cm. Museum purchase made possible by the Margaret Watson Parker Art Collection Fund. 1969/1.102. University of Michigan Museum of Art.

blossoms offered escape both virtual and real from the heat even as it stroked his ego. But the gift was not from Qian alone. The other contributors, the calligraphers Wu and Zhao along with the unidentified painter, further enhance the fan's visual and cultural riches as each demonstrates his or her talents for the recipient's benefit. The result is not a unified and exquisite expression like the earlier Southern Song example, but rather something more eclectic and improvised, both in composition and style.

With his new fan in hand, Mr. Sea Coral could reveal evidence of his impressive social connections, but the object is more than the sum of its parts, a collection or index of talented friends and acquaintances from the recipient's point of view. From a historical or sociological perspective, the fan is evidence of a more complicated web of relationships among the recipient and the makers themselves. How did the handiwork of Qian, Wu, Zhao, and the unknown painter come to coincide on a single object intended for Mr. Sea Coral? Who initiated the project? Who determined the overall composition? These kinds of questions point to the intersection of traditional Chinese social networks on the one hand and the practice of collaborative art-making on the other hand. Each can engender and lend support to the other. In the case of this particular fan, these specific questions remain unanswered. It and the social relationships embedded in it have received little scholarly attention, whether because the recipient remains unknown, or because relatively less value has been granted historically to women and unknown artists, or because the calligraphy portions are considered minor examples in the respective oeuvres of Wu and Zhao. All these reasons and others could be operating. Far better known are examples by, for example, Wen Zhengming (1470–1559),

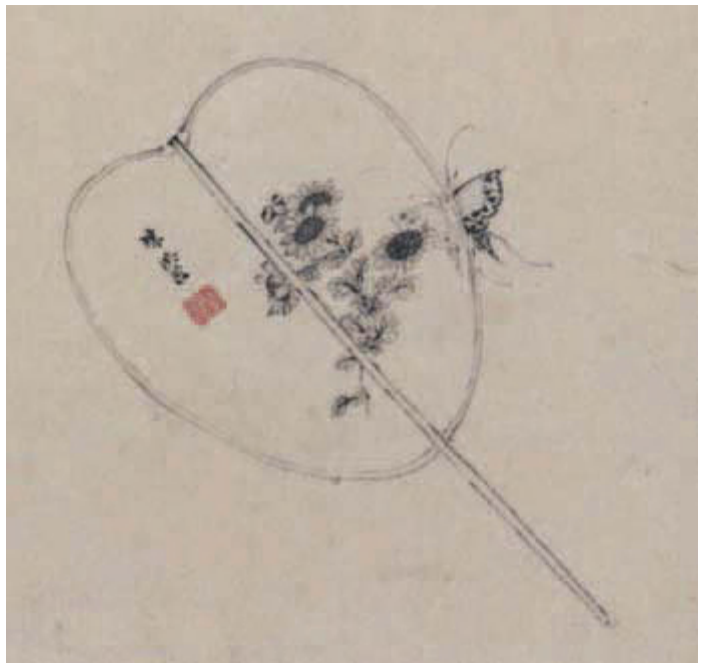

FIGURE 23-4 Chen Hongshou (1598–1652). *Miscellaneous Studies*; Fufu, 1619. Album of twelve paintings; ink on paper. Image (each leaf): 7 × 7 in. (17.8 × 17.8 cm). Leaf D. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wan-go H. C. Weng, 2005 (2005.112 a-l). Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA.

who executed many modest works in album leaf and fan formats in order to fulfill all manner of social obligations, or what he called "elegant debts."[19] Such elegant debts continue to have purchase in modern societies, Chinese and otherwise, and works of art remain a most appropriate way to fulfill them.

With some familiarity with the materiality and social meaning of fan paintings, we may now better appreciate the extraordinary *trompe l'oeil* image of a painted fan and butterfly by Chen Hongshou (1598–1652) (fig. 23-4).[20] Chen uses *baimiao*, or a method of ink outline painting, and a limited number of motifs to fashion a declaration of his skills of illusionism at once clever and concise. Like the wings of a butterfly, two halves of an ovoid fan extend outward from a central staff. Chen suspends his fan improbably, but his viewers are unlikely to ask questions, as both the blank background and the diagonal, asymmetrical composition have long been standard in Chinese painting. The dominant diagonal is reinforced by Chen's signature and seal, and by the position of the elegant, swallowtail butterfly, which approaches the rather prickly chrysanthemums adorning the fan. The butterfly resembles somewhat depictions of palace beauties in Chinese painting. The butterfly's antennae and extra filaments near its tail mimic the

trailing scarves and ribbons that augment women's dress. The creature is also, like coy beckoning beauties, partially concealed and partially revealed by an object in its material world. An air of feminine charms and their attractive quality is certainly intended. Just as the butterfly is lured to the chrysanthemums, so are we drawn assuredly into Chen's world of painted illusion.

It requires deliberate backtracking in order to recognize the artist's sleight of hand, to realize, for example, that the artist's signature fluctuates between two levels of reality. In semiotic terms, it is both an iconic representation of the signature of the artist who painted the fan and the indexical mark of the artist who painted the album leaf. Such illusionism adds a level of complexity and self-consciousness that was not present in earlier paintings such as Zhang Sengyou's (act. *c.* 500–50) reputed hawk and eagle intended to fool the eye, be it that of an unwanted pest or that of the art connoisseur.[21] One way of describing and analyzing Chen's painting-in-a-painting is to call it a "metapicture," that is, to understand this, the other eleven leaves that make up this album, and other paintings like it as not merely masterful, but self-referential or critical, which forces the viewer to become more consciously aware of the activity and limitations of seeing.[22] Let us take a slightly different tack, however, one that returns us to the materiality of Chinese painting, by focusing on the transparent quality of Chen's painted fan. The effect of seeing the butterfly's somewhat shielded wing suggests that Chen imagined a fan made of silk gauze. A material whose diaphanous, almost immaterial quality seems at variance with its impressive physical integrity, silk gauze seems the perfect match for Chen's artistry in making a picture that is at once so real and so illusory.

The play between reality and illusion quite possibly finds no better expression than in *One and/or Two?*, a screen painting with a double portrait of the Qianlong emperor (fig. 23-5).[23] The painting shows a bust-length portrait of the emperor mounted as a hanging scroll, which is displayed immediately against a landscape painting mounted as a screen, which in turn frames the emperor who is seated on a *kang*, or divan. An array of other furnishings and *objets d'art* surround Qianlong, suggesting not only the erudite luxury of the studio of the Chinese scholar par excellence but also this Manchu emperor's prodigious ambition to master all things Chinese. For example, the judiciously pruned pine and miniature rock of the *penzai*, or bonsai, in the foreground, representing in living miniature and as synecdoche the well-ordered and constantly changing cosmos, finds an alternate expression in the two-dimensional, orthodox-style landscape painting, which likewise draws upon and reinforces Chinese understandings of natural and cosmic order. These two artful representations are visually linked through the emperor himself, whose primary image occupies the painting's center.[24] He is the pivot, granting balance, order, and indeed, meaning to objects behind and before, round and square, Chinese and Buddhist, of stone and of metal, ancient and contemporary. The studied symmetry of the composition may, for viewers illiterate in Chinese, appear to be broken by the hanging portrait for which there is no visual partner. The central image of the seated

FIGURE 23-5 *One and/or Two?* Screen painting, ink and colors on paper. 90.3 × 119.8 cm. The Palace Museum, Beijing.

emperor cannot serve this function without surrendering its pivotal role. To locate the partner to the hanging scroll, an iconic representation of the seated emperor, we must follow the portrayed emperor's gaze to the composition's upper right corner where we find an imperial inscription, an indexical representation.

Qianlong's poetic inscription relates the painting's many visual pairings to an overarching theme that subsumes the productive tension between reality and illusion:

[It] is one [and/or it] is two –	*shi yi shi er*
Neither contingent nor separate	*bu ji bu li*
Confucian maybe, Mohist maybe	*ru ke mo ke*
Why get excited? Why think?[25]	*he cong he si*

Qianlong's four pithy lines make optimum use of parallel phrasing. Depending on which Boolean phrase we choose as a conjunction (the Chinese is ambiguous), the first line announces an apparent contradiction, or it offers a choice. "One and two," "one or two," which could also be translated as "the one and the other," "the one or the other." This is just the beginning of many ambiguities, as the line may also be read as either positive assertion or interrogative, "it is one and/or two," "is it the one or the other?" In merely four words, Qianlong announces and enacts the painting's theme. A variation of the first line, the second casts the idea in the negative. The third line reverses the grammatical structure by placing the nominal adjective in the first and third positions while also making explicit the philosophical conundrum with references to Confucian and Mohist

schools of thought.[26] Like the multiplication of images and objects in the painting, the poem's first three lines represent an accumulation of theme and variation. Invoking the rhetorical, the last phrase is yet a fourth iteration, but it also provokes self-conscious reflection. Momentarily, we will follow that directive, but before doing so, we should note one other feature of Qianlong's poem, which is his careful deployment of different calligraphic scripts. In each line, a verbal or stative word occurs twice. For example, in the opening line, the character *shi* occurs in the first and third positions. Note that Qianlong uses standard script, distinguished by discrete brushstrokes, in the first instance; and running, or semi-cursive script in the second. The pattern continues throughout the remainder of the poem. Using different forms to represent the same word, Qianlong again signals the artwork's theme of non-duality, a fundamental Buddhist tenet.[27]

We could follow Qianlong's predilection to a more religious or philosophical reflection, a direction with its own intellectual challenges and rewards, but instead we shall use his inscriptional provocation to return to our art historical concerns about images, texts, and material supports in Chinese painting. Like Chen's earlier image of a painted fan and butterfly, *One and/or Two?* conjures a material world of elite sensibilities. But the delicacy and subtlety of the former is eschewed in favor of a richer, more substantial effect. Some viewers, such as those with a modernist aesthetic bent, might find the painting overwrought and heavy-handed, the result, in part, of a certain lack of restraint as sundry objects clutter the surfaces of tables characterized by overly ornate brackets and panels. The rather literal, descriptive style of the painting is aide and abettor. Appropriated from European modes of drawing and painting, techniques of visual illusion, such as chiaroscuro and the application of principles of geometry, invest the objects in Qianlong's study with insistent volume and weight. The emperor's person, especially his face, remains a singular exception to the adapted rules of art-making. His visage appears without shadow, and thus is not subject to incidental vagaries of lighting. All other items, however, attest to the hybrid system of representation. Even the expressive qualities of the brush submit to discipline, though of course the orthodox brushstrokes of the landscape screen must be represented faithfully. With all objects so literally and convincingly represented, there appears no escape from Qianlong's scopic regime, what he sees and how he sees. Note that there is no artist or group of artists credited with *One and/or Two?*, rather the painting is the art academy's fulfillment of the emperor's vision. Quite unlike Chen's album leaf or entire categories of Chinese painting such as the misty landscapes of the Song dynasty, there is all too little empty space for the mind to rest and the imagination to wander.

In some cases, poetic inscriptions with their evocative and open-ended imagery permit the mind to take leave, but again, not so in *One and/or Two?* We have already discussed how Qianlong's poetic inscription operates in at least three ways to coproduce and amplify the artwork's theme. First, it functions in the image as yet another object, a representation of the emperor, balancing the hanging portrait. Second, as a textual inscription, it verbally announces the theme

through a series of poetic repetitions and variations. Finally, as artful writing, or calligraphy, it performs the theme through the interchange of standard and semi-cursive scripts, which points the viewer to the stable and unchanging signified regardless of whether the script is "the one" or "the other." If the image is a visual trap of fascinating repetitions, the inscription, too, encircles us with its mantra of non-choices. Nor does shuffling back and forth from image to text in an endless loop of mirrored signifiers offer escape. In *One and/or Two?* we encounter a unity of image and text that is quite unlike the collaborative product of Ma Lin and Emperor Lizong. Embodied in a hand-held fan, Wang Wei's poetic imagery both invited the viewer into the gentle landscape and permitted the user a degree of visual and physical control over the regulation of the object's position in space. How was *One and/or Two?* displayed and for whom?

Nearly a meter high, *One and/or Two?* originally functioned as a visual backdrop, either pasted to a wall or mounted on a portable, freestanding screen such as the one depicted within the painting.[28] One of a series that included at least two other paintings like it, *One and/or Two?* created a setting or possibly served as "a point of contemplation, for the emperor's ritualized and, it should be stressed, relatively private re-enactment of a profoundly puzzling philosophical question, a re-enactment in which he was both performer and audience."[29] In his absence, visual and verbal signifiers generate a continuous circuit around and through the painted figure seated on the divan. This circularity also operates when Qianlong acts as audience-viewer. As outsiders from a much later time-place, we can only imagine the emperor seated in front of the painting in a real, physical room containing real, material objects. But once Qianlong assumes the role of performer by occupying a place before the screen, his flesh-and-blood presence takes precedence as the unique signified. Still, subject and object exist in a relationship of mutual dependence. The image and its claim to a paradoxical truth rely on the emperor as commissioner and guarantor, while the latter derives power and demonstrates authority from the former. It is only when we fully realize the implicit function of this painting's format and bring that to bear on the imagery and the inscription do we begin to appreciate the complexity of this artwork, this image-text-object.

The foregoing analysis of *One and/or Two?* as the intricate realization of the emperor's adroit mastery of all manner of Chinese representation and related intertextuality should also generate in us, if not deep respect for, then at least a modicum of understanding of, Qianlong's aesthetic endeavors. With that in mind, let us return to the question that prompted our inquiry, the Qianlong emperor's relatively bold and ostentatious inscription on Guo Xi's *Early Spring*. In its current form, *Early Spring* is mounted as a hanging scroll, and as an object in the collection of a modern museum, it is displayed behind glass in galleries with appropriate lighting and climate control. This method of display, driven by the dual concerns for conservation and education, was not something that Guo anticipated. More likely, his charge was to produce an image that would contribute to a suitable material environment for the emperor and the enactment

of his agenda. The seasonal renewal announced by the subject of *Early Spring* resonates strikingly with policy reforms supported by Emperor Shenzong (r. 1068–85), whose favorite painter, incidentally, was Guo Xi.[30] Moreover, Guo's illusionistic style along with the hierarchically ordered and symbolically charged motifs of mountains and pines would have readily functioned as a painted screen to frame and enhance the emperor's very person. Thus, in terms of original purpose, *Early Spring* is remarkably like *One and/or Two?*, despite the intervening gap of about seven centuries.

But that is not to say that nothing had changed. In the eighteenth century, Qianlong still had need of painted screens, but *Early Spring* would not suffice. In all likelihood *Early Spring* was, by Qianlong's time, already mounted as a hanging scroll. As a hanging scroll, Guo's painting is more easily stored, more portable, and more probably the object of occasional display as one sees in late imperial paintings of gentlemen enjoying antiquities in their gardens. It is also easier to affix seals and to write inscriptions in this format. In general, it is more easily subject to all manner of handling, which appears to be a rather prominent feature of Chinese painting when we see it more consciously as an image-text-object.

In adding seals and an inscription to *Early Spring*, Qianlong acted well within an established Chinese tradition. Although his calligraphy may not be distinguished and his poetry more competent than inspired, Qianlong's social position as emperor of China dictated a prominent location for his textual complements to paintings.[31] A northern Atlantic bias may still see Qianlong's inscription as graffiti compromising Guo Xi's painting, but this essay argues that it testifies to vital cultural practices as well as to complex expressions of the interrelationships among images, texts, and objects present in Chinese paintings. For Zhao Mengfu, the perceived common origin of writing and painting lends credence to the conventional practice of "reading" both his inscription and his landscape. When the combination of text and image involves also the art of poetry, aural dimensions of tone and rhythm then play against the kinetic and visual. When such variety of aesthetic pleasure is gathered together and assembled onto a fan painting, the play turns social as the image-text-object comes to represent the personal relationships and refined tastes of artist-collaborators and recipients. In Chen Hongshou's clever hands, the multilayered representations are themselves represented, and we see in his album leaf how painting is at once stripped to its minimum as nothing more than an ink gesture and yet made to signify all the pre-existing possibilities as image, text, and object. Chen's delicate picture about picture-making in the Chinese tradition finds its hyperbole in Qianlong's screen, an elaborate, even excessive concoction of signification. Yet despite the overdetermined quality of *One and/or Two?*, there is nevertheless a lesson about questioning predetermined, mutually exclusive categories. The assumed and outdated paradigm of framed oil paintings, mostly pictorial, then finished, affixed to a wall, and fixed in our mind's eye does not do justice to oil paintings, let alone Chinese paintings. When it comes to thinking about Chinese paintings as images and/or texts and/or objects, they are all *and* none of the above.

Notes

1 Such textbooks include Clunas, *Art in China*; S. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*; Sullivan, *Arts of China*; and Thorp and Vinograd, *Chinese Art and Culture*.

2 For a complete translation of Guo Xi's text, see Guo, *An Essay on Landscape Painting*. More recent translations, but as excerpts, may be found in Bush and Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*.

3 Bush and Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 151, 153.

4 Many scholars have written on Guo Xi and *Early Spring*. Two studies that use contrasting methods are Murashige ("Rhythm, Order, Change"), who focuses on style and composition; and Jang ("Realm of the Immortals"), who reconstructs the Northern Song Jade Hall and raises the possibility that *Early Spring* or a painting like it functioned as a screen surrounding the emperor's throne. Most recently, a workshop, "*Early Spring* (1072): Multiple Views," invited over a dozen scholars to present papers and discuss this painting from a variety of viewpoints: East Asia Art History Program, Harvard University, November 7, 2009.

5 For Qianlong and art, see Berger, *Empire of Emptiness*, and Rawski and Rawson, *China*.

6 The literature on this subject is substantial. One place to begin is Sullivan, *The Three Perfections*.

7 A colophon by Zhao Mengfu follows Guo Xi's *Old Trees, Level Distance*. See Hearn, *How to Read Chinese Paintings*, 28–33, and 78–83.

8 The rest of the inscription reads, "Landscape I have always found difficult. This is because ancient [landscape] masterpieces of the Tang, such as the works of Wang Wei, the great and small Li [Sixun and Zhaodao], and Zheng Qian, no longer survive. As for the Five Dynasties masters, Jing Hao, Guan Tong, Dong Yuan, and Fan Kuan, all of whom succeeded one another, their brushwork is totally different from that of the more recent painters. What I paint may not rank with the work of ancient masters, but compared with recent paintings, I daresay mine are quite different." Translated in Hearn, *How to Read Chinese Paintings*, 79.

9 Like Guo Xi's *Early Spring*, *Admonitions* is generally reproduced in one or more details in most textbooks on Chinese art history.

10 As Hearn has noted, Zhao's *Twin Pines, Level Distance* resonates intriguingly with Guo Xi's *Old Trees, Level Distance*. See Hearn, *How to Read Chinese Paintings*, 28–33 and 78–83.

11 Harrist, "'Watching Clouds Rise'," 302–3.

12 *Ibid.*, 305.

13 The recipient is identified in the inscription as Zhonggui, which Harrist suggests may be the polite name of Ye Cai (act. *c.* 1217–56), an official of the Southern Song period. *Ibid.*, 303.

14 Ankeney Weitz has generously shared her research on fan paintings, which was presented in an unpublished conference paper, "The Frozen Image."

15 Not unlike other female Chinese painters, Qian was born into a talented artist family and later married an educated, artistic, and supportive husband, Qi Shiyuan. For more, see Laing's catalogue entry in Weidner *et al.*, *Views from Jade Terrace*, 145–7; and Weidner, "Women."

16 The signature reads, "Baihuazi," and the accompanying seal, "Qingshanshi." Weidner *et al.*, *Views from Jade Terrace*, 147.

17 For more on the development and history of ink plum, see Bickford, *Ink Plum*.
18 Ink plum could take any number of overlapping and/or unrelated meanings, depending on the social context. See Cahill, *The Painter's Practice*, 23–4.
19 Clunas, *Elegant Debts*.
20 Hearn, *How to Read Chinese Paintings*, 150–5.
21 *Ibid*., 155.
22 Wu, *The Double Screen*, 237–59.
23 For more on this painting, see Barlow and Zito, *Body, Subject and Power*, Berger, *Empire of Emptiness*, 51–4; Lachman, "Blindness and Oversight"; Wu, *The Double Screen*, 231–6; and Wu, "Emperor's Masquerade."
24 We might also add that the landscape screen functions as a "mind-landscape," emanating from and manifesting the emperor's inner being. See Fong *et al*., *Images of the Mind*.
25 Translated based on Berger, *Empire of Emptiness*, 51.
26 For an introduction to Chinese philosophy, see Ivanhoe and van Norden, *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*.
27 Berger explains non-duality briefly in her treatment of this painting as "the mutual dependence of all phenomena, the core concept of Madhyamika Buddhist thought that intrigued Qianlong throughout his adult life" (*Empire of Emptiness*, 52). Berger's book examines the complex intersection of art, politics, and religion in the life and activities of the Qianlong emperor.
28 Berger citing Wu, *Empire of Emptiness*, 52.
29 Berger, *Empire of Emptiness*, 52. For reproductions of other versions of the composition, see Wu, *The Double Screen*, figs. 98 and 167.
30 Murck, *Poetry and Painting*, 36–7. For more on the relationship between painting and imperial politics in the Northern Song dynasty, see also Liu, "*The Water Mill*."
31 For an earlier, Ming-dynasty precedent for the placement of imperial seals, see Wang, "Material Culture and Emperorship." For studies concerned with the circulation of Chinese paintings and the cultural practices of affixing seals and inscribing texts, see Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, and D. Lee, *The Night Banquet*.

References

Barlow, T., and A. Zito, eds. *Body, Subject, and Power in China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Berger, P. *Empire of Emptiness*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003.

Bickford, M. *Ink Plum: The Making of a Chinese Scholar-Painting Genre*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Bush, S., and H. Shih. *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985.

Cahill. J. *The Painter's Practice: How Artists Lived and Worked in Traditional China*. New York: Columbia University, 1994.

Clunas, C. *Art in China*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Clunas, C. *Elegant Debts: The Social Art of Wen Zhengming*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004.

Clunas, C. *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Fong, W. *Images of the Mind: Selections from the Edward L. Elliott Family and John B. Elliott Collections of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting at the Art Museum, Princeton University*. Princeton, NJ: The Art Museum, Princeton University, 1984.

Guo Xi. *An Essay on Landscape Painting*. Translated by S. Sakanishi. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1936.

Hearn, M. K. *How to Read Chinese Paintings*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008.

Harrist, R. E., Jr. "'Watching Clouds Rise': A Tang Dynasty Couplet and Its Illustration in Song Painting." *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 78 no. 7 (November 1991): 301–23.

Ivanhoe, P. J., and B. W. Van Norden. *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*. New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2001.

Jang, S. "Realm of the Immortals: Paintings Decorating the Jade Hall of the Northern Song." *Ars Orientalis* 22 (1992): 81–96.

Lachman, C. "Blindness and Oversight: Some Comments on a Double Portrait of Qianlong and the New Sinology." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116 (October–December 1996): 736–44.

Lee, D. *The Night Banquet: A Chinese Scroll through Time*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010.

Lee, S. *A History of Far Eastern Art*. 5th edn. London: Thames and Hudson, 1997.

Liu, H. "*The Water Mill* and Northern Song imperial patronage of art, commerce, and science." *Art Bulletin* 84 no. 4 (December 2002): 566–85.

Murashige, S. "Rhythm, Order, Change, and Nature in Guo Xi's *Early Spring*." *Monumenta Serica* 43 (1995): 337–64.

Murck, A. *Poetry and Painting in Song China: The Subtle Art of Dissent*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000.

Rawski, E., and J. Rawson, eds. *China: The Three Emperors, 1662–1795*. London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005.

Sullivan, M. *Arts of China*. 4th edn. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Sullivan, M. *The Three Perfections: Chinese Painting, Poetry and Calligraphy*. New York: George Braziller, 1974.

Thorp, R., and R. Vinograd. *Chinese Art and Culture*. New York: Abrams, 2001.

Wang, C. "Material Culture and Emperorship: The Shaping of Imperial Roles at the Court of Xuanzong (r. 1426–35)." PhD diss., Yale University, 1998.

Weidner, M. "Women in the History of Chinese Painting." In *Views from Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists 1300–1912*, edited by M. Weidner and the Indianapolis Museum of Art, 13–29. Indianapolis, IN: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1988.

Weidner, M., Ellen Johnston Laing, Irving Yucheng Lo, Christina Chu, and James Robinson, eds. *Views from Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists 1300–1912*. Indianapolis, IN: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1988.

Weitz, A. "The Frozen Image: The Collecting History of Chinese Painted Fans." Unpublished conference paper, "Art History and Art in China" conference, Bonn, Germany, November, 2003.

Wu, H. *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Wu, H. "Emperor's Masquerade – Costume Portraits of Yongzheng and Qianlong." *Orientations* 26 no. 7 (July–August 1995): 25–41.

24

Locating Tomyoji and Its "Six" Kannon Sculptures in Japan

Sherry Fowler

In the rural region of Kamo, in southwestern Kyoto Prefecture, five images of Kannon, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, made in the fourteenth century, can be found arranged inside a storehouse on the site of the former main hall of Tomyoji (fig. 24-1).[1] Once surrounded by farmland and untended fields, new houses and other buildings now encroach upon the area surrounding the site, which is at the base of the northwestern slope of Mount Tomyoji in the Unami area, east of the Kizu river, about a 15-minute walk from the small Kamo train station. On route from the station a few small, infrequently placed signs point the way to the stone steps leading to Goryo jinja. While this shrine that shares the grounds with the Tomyoji site is still active, Tomyoji no longer functions as a temple. Because the majority of Tomyoji's main buildings have been torn down or moved elsewhere, a storehouse built in 1985 serves as an archive and offers a glimpse into the former life and worship of the temple (fig. 24-2). Inside the storehouse five Kannon sculptures are prominently lined up across an altar-like stage. Vitrines displaying photographs, models, and items originally belonging to the temple also inhabit the building, which is opened once a year to the public or by special permission.

This chapter focuses on the history of the Kannon images located at the former site of Tomyoji. One oft-employed mode of art historical inquiry is to focus on the recreation of the relationship between objects and their original contexts. While the beginning of this temple and sculpture grouping is certainly of interest, the following pages will devote more attention to the later history of the images through an investigation of documents and recovered architecture, and an examination of the sculptures themselves in order to trace a path back

FIGURE 24-1 The Five Kannon inside the storehouse at the former location of Tomyoji. Kamo, Kyoto Prefecture. From left to right: Bato Kannon (111 cm), "Nyoirin" Kannon (180 cm), Thousand-armed Kannon (172 cm), Eleven-headed Kannon (182 cm), Sho Kannon (109 cm). All images are wood and made in the fourteenth century. Kawai Yoshijiro Kinen Kyoto Bukkyo Bijutsu Hozon Zaidan. Photograph taken in 2005 by the author.

through the disappearance of their temple. In contrast to investigations of objects that are relocated to museums, the Tomyoji sculptures show us how we can learn from objects that have remained in place while the majority of the material culture that defined their site moved away.

The Tomyoji Kannon images correspond to five of those that make up a grouping of Six Kannon that were the focus of a cult. Pilgrimage records claim that the temple's main image belonged to a group of Six Kannon at Tomyoji in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, since other records from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries claim that there were five, there is a discrepancy as to when or if they were ever a fully realized group of Six Kannon. A key question of this investigation is how we can conceive of these images as a group of six with one missing. I will argue that in spite of the fact that the Tomyoji Kannon have experienced reconfigurations, changes in identity, and the removal of almost every piece of surrounding material culture, there is enough evidence to determine that the images maintained a reference to the Six Kannon cult in Japan.

FIGURE 24-2 Storehouse built in 1985 at the site of the main hall at the former site of Tomyoji. Kamo, Kyoto Prefecture. Photograph taken in 2005 by the author.

The Cult of the Six Kannon

Images of the Six Kannon as a group were the focus of a cult in Japan from the tenth through the eighteenth centuries, and while numerous iconographical manuals discuss images and rituals of the Six Kannon, relatively few sets still exist. The most significant surviving set is a group of life-size sculptures made by the sculptor Higo Jokei in 1224, housed at Daihoonji, also known as Senbon Shakado, in Kyoto. This group is rare in that all six are still together.[2] Usually the Six Kannon are Sho (Noble), Senju (Thousand-armed), Bato (Horse-headed), Juichimen (Eleven-headed), Juntei (Buddha Mother), and Nyoirin (Jewel-holding). Like the Tomyoji group, many of the sets of Six Kannon have been broken up or dispersed, which makes a once active phenomenon difficult to trace. In painting, the Hosomi Museum in Kyoto owns five out of an original set of six made in the fourteenth century.[3] As with the Daihoonji images, the paintings have individualized features, but share a uniformity of size and style. Fifteenth-century records describe how six individual Kannon paintings, similar to those in the Hosomi Museum, were used in rituals dedicated to Six Kannon worship.[4]

Table 24-1

	Six Kannon	*Role in Six Paths*
1	Sho (Noble) Kannon (Skt. Arya Avalokiteshvara)	Saves those in hell
2	Senju (Thousand-armed) (Skt. Sahasrabhuja)	Saves hungry ghosts
3	Bato (Horse-headed) (Skt. Hayagriva)	Saves animals
4	Juichimen (Eleven-headed) (Skt. Ekadashamukha)	Saves asuras
5	Juntei (Buddha Mother) (Skt. Chundi) in the Shingon tradition or Fukukenjaku (Rope-snaring) (Skt. Amoghapasha) in the Tendai tradition	Saves humans
6	Nyoirin (Jewel-holding) (Skt. Chintamanichakra)	Saves heavenly beings

Images of Kannon (Ch. Guanyin, Skt. Avalokiteshvara) first appeared in India, but to find the source for the Six Kannon cult, we must look to China. The first reference to the Six Kannon as a group is found in the sixth-century Chinese text *Mohe zhiguan* (The Great Calming and Contemplation) (J. *Makashikan*) attributed to Zhiyi (538–97).[5] In the particular section dedicated to the Six Guanyin in *Mohe zhiguan*, focus is on the power to eliminate hindrances to good karma.[6] The text explains that each of the Six Guanyin helps to save beings in one of the six paths of existence: hell, hungry ghosts, animals, *asuras* (demigods), humans, and heavenly beings. Beginning in the eleventh century, Japanese authors, led by esteemed Japanese Shingon prelate Ono Ningai (951–1046), explained the relationships between the Six Kannon concept in China and Japan. They laid out the equivalencies between the Chinese list from *Mohe zhiguan* and the images found in Japan as well as elucidated which specific Kannon helps which path, as shown in table 24-1.[7]

While the Six Kannon cult flourished in Japan until around the fifteenth century, its popularity did not continue in China after the eleventh century.[8] In Japan, in addition to the popularity of the Six Kannon cult, from the ninth century on, these Kannon images were also individually worshipped at countless temples.

The Five Kannon Images of Tomyoji

Returning to the five Kannon images at Tomyoji, three pieces of paper dated to 1308 (Tokuji 3) were discovered during a modern repair inside the so-called

FIGURE 24-3a "Nyoirin" Kannon (Fukukenjaku Kannon). 180 cm, wood, 1308. Former Tomyoji, Kamo in Kyoto Prefecture. Kawai Yoshijiro Kinen Kyoto Bukkyo Bijutsu Hozon Zaidan. Photograph taken in 2005 by the author.

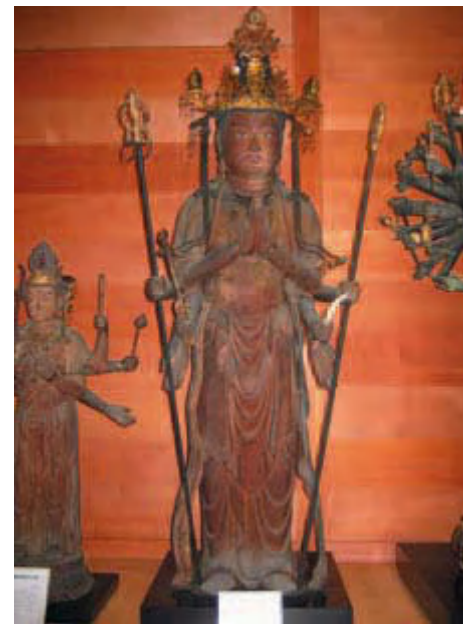

FIGURE 24-3b Eleven-headed Kannon. 182 cm, wood, fourteenth century. Former Tomyoji, Kamo in Kyoto Prefecture. Kawai Yoshijiro Kinen Kyoto Bukkyo Bijutsu Hozon Zaidan. Photograph taken in 2005 by the author.

"Nyoirin" Kannon statue (fig. 24-3a).[9] The cover page is labeled "Bechie goshi," which refers to a group of five masters for special ceremonies dedicated to the Kasuga deity. The officials in this elite group were high-ranking prelates from the temple Kofukuji in Nara whose main duty was to organize the large On Matsuri festival for the Wakamiya shrine at Kasuga.[10] In addition to the five masters, we read that 72 patrons are named as establishing a bond with Kannon. Although the papers are damaged, it is clear from the names listed that many of the supporters were monks and a significant number of others were nuns and lay women. As this was a fairly complex effort involving so many people, it is possible that the group sponsored more than one Kannon image. The first line of one page reads: "The names were inserted in the body of Kannon on the first day of the third year [of Tokuji] (1308)]."[11] The inscription does not indicate which type of Kannon the patrons considered this image to be. Their patronage and relationship may have extended beyond this image to Six Kannon or at least to the Eleven-headed Kannon image that so closely resembles the "Nyoirin."[12]

The Tomyoji "Nyoirin" image was left mostly unpainted with chisel marks visible on the surface. Some color on the hair, eyes, and lips was applied early on and recent repainting of the color is apparent. The sculpture has a tall

topknot, fairly full face, short neck, and broad body with sloping shoulders. The drapery is relatively three-dimensional and the end of the skirt falls down in between the legs and covers the tops of the feet. These style features of the body and drapery are consistent with the date of the early fourteenth-century inscription.[13] As the name is in question I will refer to this image as "Nyoirin" and return to the topic of its identification later in this chapter. This image is quite close in style, construction, and size to the Tomyoji Eleven-headed Kannon image (fig. 24-3b), so it is likely that they were constructed to match at the same time. Two other images in the group, Bato and Sho, seem to form a second pair as they resemble each other in style and in size, both approximately 110 cm in height in comparison to the approximately 180 cm of the first two. All four images appear to have been made at about the same time and have a general family likeness, but the smaller Bato and Sho (figs. 24-4a and b) are slightly more delicately carved than the two larger images. In regard to style, the figures' tall topknots and relatively slender frames and the three-dimensional carving of the drapery reference imagery from Song dynasty China (960–1279), yet they are more modestly carved than images made by the well-known Kei school of sculptors who championed this style in the thirteenth century. Although the sculptors of

Figure 24-4a Sho Kannon. 109 cm, wood, fourteenth century. Former Tomyoji, Kamo in Kyoto Prefecture. Kawai Yoshijiro Kinen Kyoto Bukkyo Bijutsu Hozon Zaidan. Photograph taken in 2005 by the author.

Figure 24-4b Bato Kannon. 111 cm, wood, fourteenth century. Former Tomyoji, Kamo in Kyoto Prefecture. Kawai Yoshijiro Kinen Kyoto Bukkyo Bijutsu Hozon Zaidan. Photograph taken in 2005 by the author.

the Tomyoji images worked in the fourteenth century, the slightly rough carving of their unpainted surfaces resembles the work made by the later group of Nara sculptors called *shukuin busshi*, who did not start working until the fifteenth century.[14] Indeed, before the inscription was discovered, the images were thought to have been made in the Muromachi period (1333–1573).[15]

The most detailed information on Tomyoji history is found in *Tomyoji engi* (Origin of Tomyoji) written in 1696 (Genroku 9) by the monk Nissetsu.[16] At the end of the document is the following passage:

> Five Kannon images
>
> The central image of Thousand-armed Kannon was made by Saint Shingyo. One figure each of Juichimen, Bato, Nyoirin, and Sho were said to be made by the Kasuga [sculptor/s].[17]

The four images in the *Tomyoji engi* must refer to the four Kannon images just mentioned. In addition to these four, center stage in the Tomyoji storehouse today is a Thousand-armed Kannon that looks quite different from the others. Since neither five nor four is a usual grouping for Kannon images, and other records refer to them as a set of six, we must consider that even though they are not a perfectly matched group like that of Daihoonji, they likely made up, or were intended to make up, part of a set of Six Kannon at one time.

A challenge to the consideration of these images as a unit is that a group of Six Kannon images at the same temple made in different sizes is not documented elsewhere.[18] Since Tomyoji had more limited means than a place like Daihoonji, with its support by a Fujiwara patron, a possible explanation is that economicn factors may have forced a delay in construction and the subsequent images were made on a smaller scale. Another possibility is that the remaining two, including the present Thousand-armed Kannon, may have been brought in from elsewhere to assemble the group. Perhaps a different Nyoirin Kannon image than the one so called in the current group formed a third stylistic pair with the Thousand-armed Kannon.

The Thousand-armed Kannon image is close to the same size (172 cm) as the images of "Nyoirin" (180 cm) and Juichimen Kannon (182 cm); however, it differs greatly from the unpainted images since the surface was covered by a layer of lacquer that was in turn covered in a layer of gold leaf, now wearing thin. The head is relatively small and has crystal eyes.[19] The lower half of the body seems to swell out in comparison to the upper body, which was made narrower to compensate for the span of the 42 arms. Even though the image itself is shorter in comparison to the two larger Kannon images, with its attached lotus-petal base, this one looks the most substantial. Its style features are in keeping with the fourteenth century, placing its date of production around the same general timeframe as the 1308 inscription. There is no way to know when the Thousand-armed Kannon arrived at the temple, but it came to be known as the main image at the temple by the seventeenth century. *Tomyoji engi* from 1696

lists the Thousand-armed Kannon as the central image of the temple.[20] *Tomyoji jumotsucho* (Treasures of Tomyoji) from 1779 (An'ei 8) also describes this image as the main image (J. *honzon*) at the temple.[21] The status of the image is also given in a temple record called *Engi kazaritsuke furetsu hei kaicho chu shoki* (Records on the history of the adornment and display) from 1810 (Bunka 7), which states that the main image of Thousand-armed Kannon was to be displayed once in 33 years along with temple treasures.[22]

Tomyoji on a 33 Kannon Pilgrimage Route

Tomyoji is the third stop on the route of the 33 sites of the Kannon pilgrimage of the Minamiyamashiro area in southern Kyoto Prefecture.[23] In the Jokyo era (1684–88), the monk Johan, who resided at Kaijusenji, organized his temple, Tomyoji, and neighboring temples into a pilgrimage route with 33 stops based on the famous Kannon pilgrimage routes of Saikoku, Bando, and Chichibu. The number 33 has a special significance to Kannon as it is the number of guises that Kannon can take as described in the *Lotus Sutra*.[24]

The earliest known record of this pilgrimage is *Minamiyamashiro sanjusansho junrei* (Minamiyamashiro Thirty-Three Kannon Pilgrimage Route) written by Johan in 1713 (Shotoku 3) in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the death of the renowned monk Jokei (1155–1213), a devout follower of Kannon who lived at Kaijusenji.[25] Johan began each entry for all 33 temples with the number, temple name, location, sectarian affiliation, and the name and size of its main image and finished the entry with a poem. For the Tomyoji heading Johan wrote, "Number 3, Kamo, Nichiren school, Tomyoji, Thousand-armed, or perhaps Six Kannon, six *shaku*."[26]

After a period of decline in interest, in 1835 (Tenpo 6) a local religious association made efforts to revive the pilgrimage set up by Johan. The group called Ide Tamamizu no Tachibana ko (Tachibana association from the Ide and Tamamizu areas), slightly revised Johan's short passage and accompanying poem about each temple to create a new record of *Minamiyamashiro sanjusansho junrei*. The following year the group made a wooden plaque for each temple along the route with the corresponding passage and poem.[27] The passage and poem for Tomyoji are as follows:

> Kamo, Number 3, Tomyoji.
> The main image of the Six Kannon measures six *shaku*.
> From here it is eight *cho* to Jonenji.[28]
>
> In the garden of the temple
> shinning in the east [Tomyoji],
> dewdrops on leaves of grass
> have been scattered like jewels
> by gusts of autumn wind.[29]

Akikaze ni
higashi no akuru
tera no niwa
kusaba no tsuyu wa
wakeshi tama kamo

These pilgrimage records claim that the main image belongs to the "*Six* Kannon" at the temple. In 1713 Johan acknowledged that the Thousand-armed Kannon was part of a Six Kannon group. Then his entire text was copied in a Kaijusenji record in 1756 (Horeki 6) and after that a later statement about the Six Kannon appears in the revised 1835 pilgrimage record, which was then copied onto the plaque in 1836. Since the earlier *Tomyoji engi* from 1696 and *Tomyoji jumotsucho* from 1779 only describe five Kannon, an additional Kannon might have been in the building for a time and then later been removed from the site. Did Johan actually see an additional Kannon image in the early eighteenth century? Even if there had only been five in 1713, Johan, seemingly untroubled by a mismatched group of Kannon images, may have thought that there should be six because he was aware of the significance of the Six Kannon as a cult. At the very least his statement, and those that followed, demonstrate that the cult was well enough known at the time for the authors to acknowledge these images as a group of Six Kannon.

History of Tomyoji

With scant remaining historical records available, we must turn to a wide variety of corroborating materials. While some history of the Tomyoji Kannon can be found in the storehouse, such as three-dimensional scale models of the temple buildings and grounds made in commemoration of the former temple, most must be ascertained through broad-ranging archival work. Archeological evidence unearthed at the site indicates settlements were there from the fourth through eighth centuries.[30] Temple records and other published sources offer a general idea, with many gaps, about the dramatic shifts in sectarian allegiance during its history.[31] *Tomyoji engi*, which is the most extensive source, states that the semi-legendary figure Gyoki founded the temple under the name Kannonji ("Temple of Kannon") in 784 (Enryaku 3), indicating a long association with Kannon. Then in 863 (Jogan 5) Shingyo, who was a disciple of the Shingon master Kukai (774–835), revived the temple. The oldest known reference to use the name Tomyoji is a *sutra* dedication from 1225 (Karoku 1), proving that the temple was in existence in the mid-thirteenth century.[32] Although the 1308 inscription found inside the "Nyoirin" Kannon statue does not give the location of that image, it is likely that it remained at Tomyoji along with the three similar Kannon images. A stone pagoda, lantern, and roof tiles also provide evidence of fourteenth-century activity at the temple.[33]

Tomyoji is listed as a Kofukuji subtemple with five halls in the record *Kofukuji Kanmuchoso* (Kofukuji official comments) from 1441 (Kakitsu 1).[34] According to *Tomyoji engi*, the Enryakuji monk Ninzen re-established Tomyoji as a Tendai school temple in 1457 (Kosho 3).[35] The pagoda and main hall (*hondo*) were built during this period. Many clay roof tiles from this period stamped with the characters "Tomyoji" (Eastern-light-temple) were discovered at the site. Then in 1663 (Kanbun 3), when the monk Nichiben from Honkokuji in Yamashiro took over as head, Tomyoji became a Nichiren school temple.[36] Nichiben's gravestone stands in a small cemetery located on a ridge north of the temple in an area called Ishibayama. The graveyard has stone markers memorializing the chief priests (*jushoku*) of the temple as well as one for the Daimyo Todo Takatora (1556–1630), which also serves as a reminder that the Todo clan controlled the area in the seventeenth century.[37] In 1688 (Jokyo 5), under the guidance of the third head Nisshin, supporters of Tomyoji financed the casting of a large bronze bell (137.5 cm in height).[38]

Nissetsu, who wrote *Tomyoji engi*, took over the temple in 1695 (Genroku 8) as the fourth in a continuous lineage of 20 Nichiren school monks. Nichiben, who became head in 1663, was the first and Nikkan (or Nichikan), who passed away in 1889, was the last.[39] In the eighteenth century documents appear using alternate characters with the same pronunciation for the name Tomyoji, from "Eastern-light-temple" to "Lantern-light-temple," perhaps in an effort to dissolve the former association to the Shingon temple Saimyoji ("Western-light-temple"), which is not far to the west of Tomyoji at the foot of Mount Ono.[40] In *Tomyoji engi*, Nissetsu accentuated the temple's history of shifting sectarian identities, from Shingon to Tendai and then to Nichiren school. Shingyo (Kukai's disciple) is given as the reviver of the temple and also as the maker of the Thousand-armed Kannon. Since Shingyo lived in the ninth century and the Thousand-armed Kannon was made in the fourteenth century, this is another case of overly enthusiastic attribution that serves to link an icon with the early history of a temple. Interestingly, Nissetsu did not claim that the renowned master Kukai was the reviver of the temple, as many temples often assert, but instead he promoted Kukai's disciple Shingyo, whose role in restoring the temple may have seemed more plausible.[41] As a change in affiliation, Nissetsu recorded that Ninzen re-established Tomyoji as a Tendai school temple in 1457.

The main hall was repaired in 1751 (Kan'en 4) and at some point during the Kyoho through Horeki eras (1716–64) Tomyoji sold its fourteenth-century lantern (*ishidoro*) to the Mitsui family in order to subsidize needed repairs for the main hall.[42] The members of the Shinmachi branch of the Mitsui family took the original lantern to Kyoto and placed it in their estate's garden and then had a copy of it made, which they sent to Tomyoji.[43] In 1955 the original lantern was moved to the Tokyo home of Mitsui Takanaru (1896–1986) who, on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday in 1985, decided to donate it to Shinnyodo, a Tendai temple in Kyoto patronized by the Mitsui family.[44] While the original lantern may now be seen in the Shinnyodo garden, the eighteenth-century copy is in front of the

storehouse on the old Tomyoji grounds (fig. 24-2). As another indication of the significance of Kannon at Tomyoji, the original lantern includes an image of Eleven-headed Kannon on one of its six sides. Stone-lantern specialist Kawakatsu Masataro revealed that when the lantern was copied, a design of a dragon in clouds was substituted for the Kannon.[45] In contrast to the Kannon image on the lantern that disappeared in the copy, Tomyoji's five Kannon sculptures remained on site while the temple's sectarian, political, and financial affiliations shifted over the centuries.

Moving Buildings and Financial Difficulties for Tomyoji

The landscape of Tomyoji has been vastly altered over the centuries, but to consider where the Kannon sculptures had been located we can examine some of the actual structures, as well as illustrations, to gain a sense of the temple's layout at different times. The main building for Goryo shrine served as the protecting shrine for the area and Tomyoji; the shrine building was built in the fifteenth century and continues to function on the site. Also remaining on the site is the priest's living quarters (*kuri*), which were built in 1672 (Kanbun 12) but have been modified over the centuries.[46]

Evidence for the former layout of the temple can be found in a printed book illustration that dates from 1787 (Tenmei 7).[47] The fact that a picture of the temple was included in this gazetteer titled *Shui miyako meishozue* (Gleanings of pictures of famous places in the capital) shows that the place was given relatively high status, since most of the sites included in the volumes only rated a simple description of a few lines. The printed image of Tomyoji includes four main structures, the main hall, pagoda, priest's quarters (*hojo*), and the shrine building labeled Goryo. In the picture even a tiny image of the copy of the original lantern can be seen in front of the main hall. The Kannon images must have been installed inside the main hall as *Tomyoji engi* from 1696 and several later sources refer to the building as a Kannon hall (Kannondo).[48]

What happens to buildings when a temple becomes defunct? After the Nichiren school abbot Nikkan passed away in 1899, no one immediately succeeded him. As with many Buddhist temples at the end of the nineteenth century, Tomyoji had a difficult time financially. In 1901 Kawai Yoshijiro (1855–1937), a Yokohama industrialist who belonged to the Nichiren school, rescued Tomyoji by assuming its considerable debt of 16,000 yen.[49] Under the monk name Nichien, Kawai had previously established the temple Sengoji in Yokohama.[50] Tomyoji then became a subtemple of Sengoji and, taking the characters from the name of its patron, was known for a time as "Nichirenshu Nichiensan Tomyoji." In 1914, perhaps to raise needed funds, Kawai sold the fifteenth-century pagoda to the silk industrialist Hara Tomitaro, also known as Hara Sankei (1868–1939), who had the pagoda reconstructed on the hill of his property in Yokohama. In 1906 Hara opened this garden, later named Sankeien, to the public. After surviving the 1923 earthquake and bombing during the Pacific War, the pagoda still stands

as one of the oldest structures in the Kanto region. Although he let go of the pagoda, in 1919, Kawai established a foundation, now known as Kawai Yoshijiro Kinen Kyoto Bukkyo Bijutsu Hozon Zaidan (Kawai Yoshijiro memorial Buddhist art preservation foundation), which protects the objects from Tomyoji including the Kannon sculptures, under whose custodianship they still remain.[51]

After Kawai Genmyo passed away in 1934, Tomyoji was left without a head for many years. While the main hall remained in place, it badly needed repair in the 1930s and then in 1948 the hall was severely damaged by a typhoon.[52] In the aftermath of the Pacific War, restoration had to be postponed. Internal temple disputes about how to repair the building continued for decades. In 1981 Ozawa Genzui, who was the head of the temple at the time, proposed to donate the building to Sankeien Garden. The disputes were resolved when the pieces of the building were moved to join the pagoda in Yokohama in 1982.[53] Its rebuilding there was finally completed in 1987. Tomyoji must have been declared officially defunct around this time.

While the storehouse now stands on the site of the former main hall with the Kannon sculptures and other temple items, the main hall (fig. 24-5), which no longer functions as a religious structure, stands at Sankeien with over 17 other relocated historic buildings.[54] Since these structures are individually rented out

Figure 24-5 Former Tomyoji Main Hall, fifteenth century. Relocated to Sankeien Garden in Yokohama in 1987. Photograph taken in 2005 by the author.

for various occasions, such as weddings, performance art pieces, and concerts, the main hall has acquired a new secular life.

The original construction of the main hall in the fifteenth century postdates the inscription found in the "Nyoirin" Kannon by about 150 years, but the building was likely built with the accommodation of the Kannon sculptures in mind.[55] As mentioned previously, the main hall was often referred to as a Kannon hall throughout its history, which tells us that Kannon images were housed in this building. Even now the hall at Sankeien Garden maintains a relationship to Kannon since it houses a replica of the Tomyoji Eleven-headed Kannon inside its reconstructed tabernacle.[56] The replica, which was made in 1988 by a company that specializes in making human anatomical parts for medical simulators, is so convincing that we have to wonder which image, the original or the replica, functions more like a Buddhist icon. Is it the original, which is locked away in the Tomyoji storehouse and rarely seen, or the replica, made of resin, that has more exposure to people in a public park?

The *zushi* (or tabernacle) made to house images was originally constructed as a three-bay structure, but in the Kan'en era (1748–50) it was remodeled and one of the three bays was removed.[57] This structure was also badly damaged during the period of the main hall's neglect. When the main hall was moved in the 1980s, the zushi was also taken to Sankeien to be placed inside the hall. There it was carefully restored back to its three-bay state to reflect its earlier size and style. The zushi may have been original to the hall, but even though the report on the reconstruction and relocation of the zushi to Yokohama is extremely detailed, the author only intimates that the zushi was made in the fifteenth century.[58] An inventory of Tomyoji property from 1883 has one entry for five Kannon images, with heights approximate enough to correspond to the images that are the subject of this investigation: three measuring five shaku (151.5 cm) and two measuring three shaku (90.9 cm), all inside a single zushi.[59] While this reference shows that the images had all fit together inside the zushi, this situation cannot reflect their original presentation since they predate the zushi. Nevertheless, the replica of the Eleven-headed Kannon standing inside the zushi now functions as a link between the building and its former existence at Tomyoji.

A Case of Mistaken Identity

To return to a consideration of how the Six Kannon might have functioned in Tomyoji's main hall at its original site, we should revisit the question of the identity of the "Nyoirin" Kannon image with the 1308 inscription. While four out of the five images listed in *Tomyoji engi* are easily identifiable, we find that the identity of this sculpture is problematic. It has eight arms, two of which have hands placed together in front of the chest. Between the brows is a third eye placed vertically. In contrast, images of Nyoirin Kannon are usually seated with six arms and two eyes, as the one in the Daihoonji set. Therefore, rather than

an odd standing Nyoirin with three eyes and eight arms, it is more likely that temple patrons had, or intended to have, a distinct seated image of Nyoirin made to complete the set of Six Kannon that was later lost or never made. Although a few images of standing Nyoirin Kannon exist, examples of the deity with eight arms appear only as drawings in iconographic manuals, so it is unlikely that this was originally a Nyoirin Kannon image.[60]

The statue in question was more likely made to be an image of Fukukenjaku Kannon, or Amoghapasha. Literally, the name Fukukenjaku means "Kannon whose lasso is never empty" because of his vow to rescue all beings with his rope. Among the many images of this deity in East Asia, the eighth-century Japanese Fukukenjaku in the Todaiji Sangatsudo from 740 (Tenpyo 11) is the earliest extant image.[61] As the typical form for this deity in Japan, the Todaiji figure also has three eyes, eight arms, and one set of hands pressed together in front of the chest forming the *mudra* of prayer or adoration (J. *gasshoin*, Skt. *anjali mudra*). While the Todaiji example was not part of a set of Six Kannon, numerous twelfth- and thirteenth-century iconographic texts explain that in groups of Six Kannon supported by the Tendai school, Fukukenjaku replaces the Shingon school preference for Juntei Kannon, who usually has eighteen arms and only two eyes.[62]

The handheld attributes, as well as Fukukenjaku's distinctive rope, were replaced long ago in the Tomyoji image, so they cannot be used for identification. Yet, as another particular indication of Fukukenjaku, the Tomyoji sculpture also deliberately lacks the sash (*johaku*) that crosses in front of the chest that most images of Kannon wear. Indeed, all the other Tomyoji Kannon images have the sash. While the present Kofukuji Nan'endo Fukukenjaku image from 1189 (Bunji 5) lacks the sash, evidence indicates that its eighth-century predecessor had one. Accordingly, Asai Kazuharu suggests that the Tomyoji sculpture was made to match the form of the present Nan'endo image without a sash.[63] Furthermore, like the Todaiji and Nan'endo images, another special feature of Fukukenjaku is a deerskin worn over the shoulder. The earliest preserved description of Fukukenjaku wearing a deerskin over one shoulder may be found in the text *Bukong juansuo zhou jing* (J. *Fukukenjaku jukyo*) translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in the Sui dynasty (581–618).[64] The later text *Foshuo chimingzang yujia dajiao zunna pusa daming chenjiu yiqui jing* (J. *Bussetsu jimyozo yugadaikyo sonna bosatsu daimyojoju gikikyo*) translated into Chinese before 1000, describes Fukukenjaku's deerskin as a scarf.[65] The deerskin as an attribute of Fukukenjaku has a long history, so Kofukuji may have promoted this association because the deer was a symbol of the Fujiwara clan who supported the temple and its partner shrine of Kasuga.[66] Consequently, the wide, cape-like part of the scarf (*tenne*) covering the shoulders of the Tomyoji image may have been made to resemble a deerskin.

I propose that the image in question was originally Fukukenjaku and its identity was reassigned as Nyoirin by the time the 1696 *Tomyoji engi* was written. Although Nissetsu, the author of the *engi*, was a Nichiren school monk, he was promoting a Shingon history for the temple by claiming Kukai's disciple

Shingyo as the reviver of the temple. Perhaps Nissetsu considered Nyoirin to be a more suitable identity for the image because sets of Six Kannon made for Shingon affiliations did not include Fukukenjaku. It is also possible that Nissetsu simply took the Nyoirin attribution from an earlier source or that he did not know that Fukukenjaku could be part of a set of Six Kannon in the Tendai tradition and assigned the name of Nyoirin to the image in error. In this situation if he had changed the image's name to Juntei Kannon, it would have been less questionable since Juntei is the usual alternate for Fukukenjaku in the Shingon configuration of Six Kannon. In defense of Nissetsu, although we can find many descriptions in texts, extant examples of Fukukenjaku images that are part of a Six Kannon set are rare.[67] The temple's documented Tendai connections do not appear until 150 years after the images were made when the Enryakuji monk Ninzen resurrected the temple in 1457, but there may have been earlier connections to Tendai. Moreover, even though the previously mentioned temple record *Tomyoji jumotsucho*, from 1779, describes this image as Fukukenjaku, the identity of Nyoirin as written in the *engi* has taken precedence and has been preserved at the storehouse and in Tomyoji literature.[68]

Another connection between Tomyoji and Fukukenjaku may be found in its relationship to Kofukuji. Tomyoji was a subtemple of Kofukuji in 1441.[69] Moreover, since the five masters of Kofukuji (Bechie goshi) sponsored the image, as indicated in the 1308 inscription, there was a connection to Kofukuji at the time it was made. As early as the eighth century, Kofukuji made special efforts to revere Fukukenjaku as the history of the extremely important worship site at the Kofukuji Nan'endo shows.[70] Therefore, a Kofukuji stake in the image bolsters the evidence that it was a Fukukenjaku.

As mentioned earlier, another feature of this image that points to an identification of Fukukenjaku is the fact that it lacks a sash, unlike most other images of Kannon. The maker of this sculpture made a deliberate choice not to include a sash, perhaps in order to match the iconography of the present Nan'endo Fukukenjaku from 1189. The Tomyoji image created initially as a Fukukenjaku Kannon was likely made with the intention of joining five other Kannon images to form the concept of the Six Kannon that reflected Tendai, as well as Kofukuji, interests at the temple. Whether the concept was ever fully realized or not remains a question.

If a seated Nyoirin Kannon image had been made, such a loss might have occurred in the late fourteenth century before the temple was re-established in the fifteenth century. Had the images been relocated in a hurry in the case of fire or some other disaster, later it might have been difficult to recognize that a seated figure should be reunited with a group of standing images. In the eighteenth century did Johan, author of the Minamiyamashiro pilgrimage record, see a sixth Kannon, or was he only acknowledging the *concept* of the Six Kannon when he wrote that the main image was part of a group of six? Without more clues we can never know, but his statement as well as the 1835 pilgrimage record and 1836 commemorative plaque proclaim that there were Six Kannon at Tomyoji.

Conclusion

What makes the story of the Tomyoji "Six" Kannon so compelling is how disparate the fragments of their past have become. With the five sculptures now in a storage facility on the original site in Kamo and their former building moved to an architectural park in Yokohama, the reconstruction of these images back into a group of Six Kannon is a challenge. In considering the case of the Tomyoji images, except perhaps for one, they have not moved away from their home. Instead parts of the temple have moved away from the images. Unlike Johan, the author of the eighteenth-century pilgrimage record, we cannot have the experience of actually seeing the images in the main hall. However, because we have the aid of archival and physical evidence available from afar we can imagine the group of Six Kannon together again at Tomyoji.

Notes

1 I would like to thank Nedachi Kensuke, Chari Pradel, Dale Slusser, Mai Sarai, and other staff members of National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo, for their help with this paper, which originated as a presentation for the symposium "Capturing the 'Original,'" organized by Tobunken and held at Tokyo National Museum, on December 7, 2008. I would also like to acknowledge the generous assistance from the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Fellowship and the Hall Center for the Humanities of the University of Kansas.

2 See Fowler, "Travels of the Daihoonji Kannon," 178–214.

3 Maizawa, "Hosomi Bijutsukan," 324–39.

4 Example texts include *Roku Kannon gogyoki* from Kyoto University Library (dated Bunmei 6 [1474], 11th month, 26th day) and *Roku Kannon gogyoki* in *Monyoki* (dated Bunmei 6 [1474] ninth month, 21st day) in *Taisho*, vol. 12, no. 169, 551–2. An earlier record from 1252 called *Roku Kannon gogyo* is in *Asabasho*, *Taisho*, vol. 9, 223c–227a. *Dai Nihon Bukkyo zensho*, vol. 38, 149–57, describes the varied arrangements of the Six Kannon sculptures and paintings in different places.

5 *Mohe zhiguan* in *Taisho*, vol. 46, no. 1911, 15ab. About a possible source for the Six Guanyin see Swanson, *The Great Cessation*, 195. Swanson cites a list of five similar Guanyin found in a *dharani* text, Ch. *Qifo bapusa suo shuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing*, J. *Shichibutsu hachibosatsu shosetsu dai darani jinjukyo*, translated into Chinese in the Eastern Jin period (317–420) that he believes may have been the source for the *Mohe zhiguan* group. See also Hayami, *Kannon shinko jiten*, 284. For original text of the dharani see *Taisho*, vol. 21, no. 1332, 541b. Out of the standard Six Guanyin, only Great Compassion (Dabei) is missing in this dharani.

6 Swanson, *The Great Cessation*, 196. I quote Swanson's translation, but an equally good one, also with excellent annotation, may be found in Donner and Stevenson, *The Great Calming and Contemplation*, 283–5.

7 See Hayami, *Kannon shinko*, 189 and *Kannon shinko jiten*, 296. Although the original source for the text called *Ningai chushinmon* (*Notes by Ningai*) is unknown, it was subsequently quoted in numerous later Buddhist texts. The earliest is

Sanmairyu kudenshu (*Collection of the Oral Transmissions of Sanmai Ajari's Group*), compiled in 1069–72. Sanmai Ajari is another name for the Tendai monk Ryoyu, who compiled this text in 1069–72. See *Taisho*, vol. 77, no. 2411, 28ab. Other early texts include *Hisho mondo* (*Selections of Secret Questions and Answers*) by the monk Raiyu (1226–1304), in *Taisho*, vol. 79, no. 2536, 424bc; and the Tendai ritual manual *Asabasho* (*Notes on the Buddha [a], Lotus [sa], and Diamond [ba] Sections [of the Womb World]*), compiled in 1252 (Kencho 4) in *Taisho*, vol. 9, 223c–227a and in *Dai Nihon Bukkyo zensho*, vol. 38, 149–57.

8 See Fowler, "Travels of the Daihoonji Kannon," 193–8.

9 Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 9. The document is titled "Hokakechien kyomyo" (*Offering of Names to Establish a Connection*).

10 For Bechie goshi and the On matsuri see Grapard, *The Protocol of the Gods*, 109, 143, 157. This festival is still held annually from December 15 to 18.

11 In this inscription the word "Tokuji" is left out, but the full date of Tokuji 3 [1403], 1st month, 11th day, appears at the end of the other page so we should assume that this page was written in the same year.

12 In the case of the Daihoonji Six Kannon, there are two dedicatory inscriptions for the entire group. See Mizuno, *Nihon chokokushi kiso shiryo shusei*, 191–2.

13 According to Nedachi Kensuke, who was consulted about the sculptures for the catalogue, the construction and rough finish of the sculpture are standard for the time period of the inscription. Personal communication, June 15, 2009. See also Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 8.

14 Suzuki, "Shukuin busshi," and Nara National Museum, *Shukuin busshi*. The sculptors worked as lay people without following the practice of assuming monk status as sculptors in many of the older schools did. The name Shukuin comes from the location in Nara of Shukuin cho where the sculptors worked.

15 See Kyodoshi, *Sorakugun no jiin*, 42.

16 There are earlier but more abbreviated sources for temple history. See Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai*, 4–8.

17 See *Kamo choshi*, vol. 4, 168–9 for *Tomyoji engi*. Kasuga refers to a group of sculptors who worked in the area of Nara. *Sanshu meisekishi* from 1711 (Shotoku 1) in *Shinshu Kyoto sosho*, vol. 15, 34 states that the Seven Kannon from the Shichi Kannon'in in Kyoto were also made by the Kasuga sculptors.

18 There are established groups of images of six and seven Kannon that do not look alike that are associated with pilgrimage routes in the Edo period (1615–1868). For an example of six, see Kyushu, *Tsushima Katsune Hoseiji Kannondo*, 2 and for seven see Oya, *Tono Shichi Kannon*, 14. In addition, according to *Sanshu meisekishi* from 1711 a group of seven Kannon images from Shichi Kannon'in in Kyoto were not of uniform size as the main image was a seated Nyoirin of two *shaku* (30.3 cm) and the other Kannon figures were smaller standing images that measured one *shaku* two or three *sun* (approx. 36.5 cm). See *Shinshu Kyoto sosho*, vol. 15, 34.

19 Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 7.

20 Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 23.

21 See Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 21.

22 See Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 23 and *Kamo choshi*, vol. 2, 351. In regard to the possibility of how the Tomyoji images had been arranged in the past, the anonymous author of "Tomyoji no honzon" claimed to have seen an "old record,"

presumably from the Edo period, which belonged to the Umoto family in nearby Funaya that had a diagram with the images arranged in a square in the following way: Thousand-armed Kannon in the center and clockwise from top right: Eleven-headed (NE), Bato (SE), Sho (SW), and Nyoirin (NW) ["Tomyoji no honzon," 3]. If this is accurate, it shows that in this square configuration, the two larger Kannon would have been in the back and the two smaller images were in front. The Umoto family loaned several documents to the exhibition at Kyoto Furitsu Yamashiro Kyodo Shiryokan in 1986, but it is not clear from the catalogue if this document was included.

23 In 1996 Kyoto Furitsu Yamashiro Kyodo Shiryokan (Kyoto Prefecture Yamashiro Local History Museum) held the exhibition "Minamiyamashiro sanjusansho junrei" (Minamiyamashiro 33 Kannon Pilgrimage Route) that featured the history of the pilgrimage and material culture from temples along the route. See Kyoto Furitsu, *Minamiyamashiro sanjusansho junrei.*

24 Watson, *Lotus Sutra*, 301–2. The Chichibu pilgrimage added on an additional temple, so it has 34 stops.

25 About Jokei at Kaijusenji see Ford, *Jokei*, 25–7, 152–3.

26 The record was rewritten in 1756 in *Kaifuihen*, which is within a larger miscellany of Kaijusenji records called *Kaijusenji zakkiroku*. Kyoto Furitsu, *Minamiyamashiro*, 5 and *Kamo choshi*, vol. 2, 354. The actual measurement is of this image is 172 cm., but Johan may have mentally taken the base into account to arrive at six *shaku*, which totals 182 cm.

27 Kyoto Furitsu, *Minamiyamashiro*, 4, 15. Nine of the original wooden plaques still exist. Tomyoji's plaque measures 44 × 56 cm. Yamashiro, *Edo jidai no Minamiyamashiro sanjusansho o tazunete*, 14.

28 Eight cho is approximately 872 meters. Jonenji still exists as a neighboring temple that belongs to the Tendai Shinzei school.

29 The verse is written in the Japanese *kana* syllabary so the name of the temple Tomyoji "eastern-light-temple" also means "temple shining in the east." I would like to thank John Carpenter for his help translating this poem. He posits that *kusaba no tsuyu* (dew on the leaves of grasses) is a common metaphor for the evanescence of life and *wakeshi tama* means both "scattered jewels" and "departed souls" and thus imbues a poetic image with religious sentiment.

30 Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 4–5. *Kamo choshi*, vol. 1, 52–3.

31 Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji*, 4.

32 A copy of *Daihannyagyo* (Skt. *Mahaprajna-paramita-sutra*) donated by Gencho of Tomyoji and copied by Shoen in 1225 is the earliest source for the name Tomyoji. Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 6. This *sutra* has been studied specifically as a precious example of early *kunten*, the marks for rendering in Chinese into Japanese. See Utsunomiya, "Tomyoji zo *Daihannya haramittakyo*," 99–122.

33 Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 11.

34 *Kofukuji Kanmuchoso* in *Dai Nihon bukkyo zensho*, vol. 119, 118. It also records that Shingyo founded Tomyoji, which had five halls at the time.

35 There is a theory that the temple was re-established in 1403 (Oei 10) after it had fallen into ruin in the late fourteenth century. Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji*, 4, 134–5. *Tomyoji engi* reports an imperial decree (*inzen*) in the same year. Another source for Tomyoji history is an inscription found on the back of a parinirvana painting (painting of the Buddha's final extinguishment) that was offered to Kohoin, a

subtemple of Tomyoji in 1463 (Kansho 3); its inscription states that when Yamana Ujikiyo, Lord (*shugo*) of Yamashiro, was fighting in 1385 (Shitoku 2), Kohoin fell into ruin, indicating that Tomyoji may also have had problems. Kohoin later merged with Jonenji, founded in the Entoku era (1489–92), which neighbors Tomyoji. See Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 15 and *Kamo choshi*, vol. 1, 289.

36 Tomyoji, the subject of this paper, should not be confused with a temple of the same name located in the Satake cho area of Kamigyoku, Kyoto. This Tomyoji was a Nichiren school temple founded by Nichizo. See *Yoshufushi* from 1684, in *Shinshu Kyoto sosho*, vol. 22, 298.

37 "Todo Takatorako no ohaka ga aru," 3–4. Takatora had five other memorial markers besides this one. Supposedly he stayed at neighboring temple Jonenji in 1621 (Genna 7).

38 For photographs of the bell see Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 22 and Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji*, 7, fig. 11.

39 For a complete lineage chart see Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 17. The lineage was not continuous after 1889 as there were intermittent heads of the temple.

40 See Kyodoshi, *Sorakugun*, 42. See Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 21. Both Tomyoji and Saimyoji have legends that Gyoki founded their temples in the eighth century and both were subtemples of Joruriji in 1632 (Kan'ei 9). See *Kamo choshi*, vol. 1, 216–17 and vol. 2, 372.

41 For an example of how the history of Muroji was revised by the inclusion of Kukai's disciples, see Fowler, *Muroji*, 43–4, 78–9, 82–3.

42 Kawakatsu, "Kyu Yamashiro," 252–3. Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji*, 4–6. As confirmation, fig. 5 on p. 6 shows a photograph of the stone marker dated to 1751 (Kan'en 4) that commemorates the repairs to the main hall. Plate 29 is a photograph of the Edo period copy of the stone lantern. When Amanuma Shunichi saw the lantern in 1931 without knowing about the copy, he wrote that the Tomyoji lantern was an excellent example from the Muromachi period (1392–1568). See Amanuma, *Keicho izen no ishidoro*, 29, fig. 84 and Amanuma, *Ishidoro*, figs. 127–8. Kawakatsu, "Kyu Yamashiro," 249–50, disputes Amanuma and says the original was made in late Kamakura (before 1333). See also Onizawa, *Mitsui*, 164–77, who asserts that it was made in the Kamakura period.

43 See Matsumoto, "Tomyoji ishidoro," 4. Kawakatsu, "Kyu Yamashiro," 253.

44 Onizawa, *Mitsui*, 164–5. I am grateful to Higuchi Kazutaka, curator of the Mitsui Memorial Museum, for sharing this source with me. I was able to view the lantern in the Shinnyodo garden on the south side of the guest hall (*kyakuden*) on May 15, 2009.

45 Kawakatsu, "Kyu Yamashiro," 251, 253. According to Kawakatsu, replacing the Kannon was the most significant change in the design. See also Onizawa, *Mitsui*, 164. The Mitsui family was, and still is, very successful in business and has great interest in the arts. About the Mitsui family see Guth, *Art, Tea, and Industry*, 26–9. A photograph of the lantern is in Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 11.

46 Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 17 and *Kamo choshi*, vol. 2, 377. About the stone lanterns (dated to 1893) in front of Goryo shrine, see Amanuma, *Ishidoro*, fig. 201.

47 Rito Akisato, *Shui miyako meisho zue*. For reprint see Ikeda *et al.*, *Nihon meisho fuzoku zue*, vol. 8, 382.

48 A 1904 map shows about the same layout of buildings, but the main building is called main hall (*hondo*). Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 23. See also: http://www.d1.dion.ne.jp/~s_minaga/n_16_tomyoji.htm (accessed October 15, 2006). Early twentieth-century photos of the pagoda and main hall have been published in Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji*.

49 Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji*, 8 n. 7. A very rough estimate of the value today can be calculated as ¥24,300,000 from the Bank of Japan website: http://www.boj.or.jp/oshiete/history/11100021.htm (accessed April 12, 2009).

50 Note that the names Sengo and Kawai use the same characters, but are pronounced differently. The characters for the temple name must have been selected from the patron's name.

51 See Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji*, 8. The organization was previously referred to as Nichirenshu Shoho goji zaidan. Details about Kawai's life can be found on a memorial stone located at Sengoji. I am grateful to Kawai Ryoichi for supplying information about his great-grandfather. About the attempted sale of Kofukuji's pagodas in the nineteenth century, see Rinne, "Avery Brundage's Other Olympic Prize," 17–18.

52 For a post-typhoon photograph see Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji*, plate 36. See also p. 8 for text.

53 Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji*, 8.

54 Guth, "A Tale of Two Collectors," 24–49. See also http://www.sankeien.or.jp/history/index.html (accessed September 20, 2006).

55 For photographs see Inoue Yasushi, *Nihon no teienbi*. See also Sankeien Hoshokai, *Sankeien hyakushunen Hara Sankei no egaita fukei*, 34, 83, 177.

56 Kyoto Kagaku in Fushimi ku, Kyoto http://www.kyotokagaku.com/jp/ (accessed 20 June 2010) made the replica. The Art and Crafts Department uses epoxy-acrylic resin to make medical simulators and replicas for museums. I would like to thank Mai Sarai for this information. According to Sankeien Hoshokai, *Sankeien hyakushunen Hara Sankei no egaita fukei*, 83, the replica was installed in the zushi in July 1988, a year after the restoration of the main hall was completed.

57 Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji*, 68, 97–108, and plates 3, 18, 22, 23, 28, 68, 69, 132, 133. A pre-restoration photograph in fig. 28 shows that the zushi previously housed the Thousand-armed Kannon along with some smaller images.

58 Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji*, 5–6. Fig. 5 on p. 6 shows a photograph of the stone marker dated to 1751 (Kan'en 4) with an inscription that commemorates the repairs to the main hall as well as the zushi. There is a long description and discussion of the zushi and its modifications (97–108) in which the author compares it to other Kasuga-style zushi from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries but never proposes a date.

59 "Tomyoji" in Kyoto, Sorakugun section of *Jiin juki meisai cho*. Handwritten records of temple property compiled by the government. This is in vol. 1 compiled in 1888 (Meiji 21), but the entry was written in 1883 (Meiji 16). Kept at special collections at Kyoto Furitsu Sogo Shiryokan (Kyoto Prefectural Library and Archives).

60 Inoue Kazutoshi, "Nyoirin Kannon, zo to Bato Kannon zo," 21–2. The eight-armed type appears in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century iconographic manuals *Zuzosho* in *Taisho*, vol. 3, fig. 62, *Asabasho* in vol. 9, fig. 31, and *Sho Kannon zuzo* in vol. 12. See the twelfth-century copy in Nara National Museum, *Nara Kokuritsu*

Hakubutsukan zohin zuhan mokuroku, 90. The two hands placed together are held over the head. According to Inoue, other than iconographic drawings there are no actual images. For a standing six-armed Nyoirin image from Nyoirinji see Inoue, "Nyoirin Kannon, zo to Bato Kannon zo," figs. 53, 40.

61 Wong, "The Case," 151 and Wong, "Divergent Paths." See also Forte, "Brief Notes," 24.

62 See Hayami, *Kannon shinko jiten*, 281–312. The fourteenth-century Tendai text *Keiran shuyoshu* in *Taisho*, vol. 76, no. 2410, 584c, notes Tendai does not include Juntei in the group of Six Kannon because there is no Buddha in Juntei's crown and Fukukenjaku, who has a Buddha in the crown, should be included.

63 Asai, "Fukukenjaku," 61–2. See Ito, "Fukukenjaku," 25–37.

64 See *Taisho*, vol. 20, no. 1093, 402a. The earlier text from which this was translated does not survive.

65 *Taisho*, vol. 20, no. 1092, 685a. See Asai, "Okayama," 80–1. Also Wong, "The Case," 152, mentions a seventh-century Chinese description of the deity with a deerskin. See *Zan Guanshiyin pusa song* (J. *San Kanzeon bosatsu ju*) in *Taisho*, vol. 20, no. 1052, 67b. Asai, "Okayama," 80–1, as well as Ito, "Fukukenjaku," 25, list other later Buddhist texts that mention Fukukenjaku's deerskin. For a more detailed list of early Buddhist texts about Fukukenjaku, see Wong, "The Case," 151. See also the chart in Wong, "Divergent Paths."

66 The *kami* named Takemikazuchi, resident of the first shrine at Kasuga in Nara, is said to have traveled there on a deer. Kasuga and Kofukuji are part of the same religious complex. See Bowring, *Religious Traditions*, 180–2, 275.

67 The earliest dated example of the Six Kannon, dated to 1141 (Hoen 7), from Choanji includes an image of Fukukenjaku Kannon. See Kyushu, *Bungo Kunisaki Choanji*, 11–16, figs. 28–39 and Taguchi, "Doban *Hokkekyo*," 44–52.

68 See Kyoto Furitsu, *Tomyoji no bunkazai*, 21.

69 Kofukuji was a center for Hosso school teachings, but it had broad sectarian affiliations. As a later connection, a stone lantern from neighboring Goryo jinja provides an inscription by Kofukuji dated to 1806 (Bunka 3). See Bunkazai, *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji*, 7, fig. 10.

70 The sculpture by Kokei replaced an earlier one which was burned in a fire in 1180. See Tyler, *The Cult of Kasuga*, 138. About the deerskin, see 91. According to temple records the main image of Fukukenjaku was made in 746 (Tenpyo 8) and moved from the Kodo at Kofukuji to the earlier Nan'endo that was constructed in 813 (Ko'nin 4). See Nara Rokudaji Taikan Kankokai, *Nara rokudaiji taikan, Kofukuji*, vol. 8, 30–3.

References

Amanuma Shunichi. *Ishidoro* [*Stone Lanterns*]. Reprint. Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1973.

Amanuma Shunichi. *Keicho izen no ishidoro* [*Stone Lanterns Before the Keicho Era*]. Reprint. Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1977.

Asai Kazuharu. "Fukukenjaku, Juntei Kannon zo [Images of Fukukenjaku and Juntei Kannon]." *Nihon no bijutsu* 382 (March 1998).

Asai Kazuharu. "Okayama Otsuji no Fukukenjaku Bosatsu zazo [The Seated Image of Fukukenjaku. Bosatsu from Otsuji in Okayama]." *Bukkyo geijutsu* 246 (1999): 69–85.

Bowring, Richard. *The Religious Traditions of Japan, 500–1600*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Bunkazai Hozon Gijutsu Kyokai. *Juyo bunkazai Tomyoji hondo shuri koji hokokusho* [*Report on the Reconstruction of the Important Cultural Property Tomyoji Main Hall*]. Tokyo: Sankeien Hoshokai, 1987.

Dai Nihon Bukkyo zensho [*Collected Works of Japanese Buddhism*], vol. 38. Tokyo: Meicho Fukyukai, 1978.

Donner, Neal, and Daniel B. Stevenson. *The Great Calming and Contemplation*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993.

Ford, James L. *Jokei and Buddhist Devotion in Early Medieval Japan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Forte, Antonino. "Brief Notes on the Kashmiri Text of the *Dharani Sutra of Avalokitesvara of the Unfailing Rope* Introduced to China by Manicitana (d. 721)." In *Tang dai fo jiao yu fo jiao yi shu* [*Buddhism and Buddhist Art of the Tang*], edited by Ku Cheng Mei, 13–28. Xinzhu Shi: Jue feng fo jiao yi shu wen hua ji jin hui, 2006.

Fowler, Sherry. *Muroji: Rearranging Art and History at a Japanese Buddhist Temple*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005.

Fowler, Sherry. "Travels of the Daihoonji Kannon." *Ars Orientalis* 36 (2006): 178–214.

Grapard, Allan. *The Protocol of the Gods*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992.

Guth, Christine. *Art, Tea, and Industry: Masuda Takashi and the Mitsui Circle*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Guth, Christine. "A Tale of Two Collectors: Hara Tomitaro and Charles Lang Freer." *Asian Art* (Fall 1991): 24–49.

Hayami Tasuku. *Kannon shinko* [*Kannon Worship*]. Tokyo: Yuzankaku, 1982.

Hayami Tasuku. *Kannon shinko jiten* [*Dictionary of Kannon Worship*]. Tokyo: Eibisu Kosho Shuppan Kabushikigaisha, 2000.

Ikeda Yasaburo, Noma Koshin, and Minakami Tsutomu. *Nihon meisho fuzoku zue* [*Illustrated Guides to Famous Places and Customs in Japan*], vol. 8. Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1979.

Inoue Kazutoshi. "Nyoirin Kannon, zo to Bato Kannon zo [Nyoirin Kannon Images and Bato Kannon Images]." *Nihon no bijutsu* 312 (May 1992).

Inoue Yasushi. *Nihon no teienbi, Sankeien* [*The Beauty of Japanese Gardens, Sankeien*], vol. 7. Tokyo: Shueisha, 1989.

Ito Shiro. "Fukukenjaku Kannon zo no rokuhie [The Deerskin Scarf of Fukukenjaku Kannon]." *Bigaku bijutsushi kenkyu ronshu* 1 (December 1996): 25–37.

Kamo choshi [*History of Kamo Town*], vol. 4. Kamo cho: Kamo Choshi Hensan to Iinkai, 1988.

Kawakatsu Masataro. "Kyu Yamashiro Tomyoji no ishidoro [The Stone Lantern formerly of Tomyoji in Yamashiro]." *Shiseki to bijutsu* 247 (September 1954): 249–53.

Kyodoshi Kenkyu Kurabu. *Sorakugun no jiin* [*Temples of Soraku County*]. Kyoto: Kyoto Furitsu Kizu Kotogakko, 1982.

Kyoto Furitsu Yamashiro Kyodo Shiryokan. *Minamiyamashiro sanjusansho junrei* [*Minamiyamashiro Thirty-Three Kannon Pilgrimage Route*]. Yamashiro cho: Kyoto Furitsu Yamashiro Kyodo Shiryokan, 1996.

Kyoto Furitsu Yamashiro Kyodo Shiryokan. *Tomyoji no bunkazai* [*Cultural Property of Tomyoji*]. Yamashiro cho: Kyoto Furitsu Yamashiro Kyodo Shiryokan, 1986.

Kyushu Rekishi Shiryokan. *Bungo Kunisaki Choanji, Kyushu no jisha shirizu* [*Choanji in Bungo Kunisaki, Kyushu Temple and Shrine Series*], vol. 9. Fukuoka ken Dazaifu shi: Kyushu Rekishi Shiryokan, 1988.

Kyushu Rekishi Shiryokan. *Tsushima Katsune Hoseiji Kannondo: tsuke Tsushima roku Kannon* [*The Hoseiji Kannon Hall in Katsune and the Six Kannon of Tsushima*]. Fukuoka ken Dazaifu shi: Kyushu Rekishi Shiryokan, 1992.

Maizawa Rei. "Hosomi Bijutsukan zo Roku Kannon zo ko – zuzo no tokushitsu to seisaku haikei [A Consideration of the paintings of the Six Kannon in Hosomi Museum]." *Bijutsushi* 166, vol. 58, no. 2 (2009): 324–39.

Matsumoto Ikuko. "Tomyoji ishidoro [The Tomyoji Lantern]." *Kamo bunka* 11 (September 1981): 4.

Mizuno Keizaburo, ed. *Nihon chokokushi kiso shiryo shusei: Kamakura jidai: zozo meiki hen* [*Compilation of Fundamental Data on Japanese Sculpture: Kamakura Period Records of Images with Inscriptions*], vol. 3. Tokyo: Chuo Koron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2005.

Nara National Museum. *Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan zohin zuhan mokuroku: Bukkyo kaiga hen* [*Catalogue of the Collections of the Nara National Museum: Buddhist Painting Volume*]. Nara: Nara National Museum, 2002.

Nara National Museum. *Shukuin busshi: sengoku jidai no Nara busshi* [*The Buddhist Sculptors of Shukuin (Shukuin Busshi): Nara Buddhist Sculptors of the Warring-States Period*]. Nara: Nara National Museum, 2005.

Nara Rokudaiji Taikan Kankokai. *Nara rokudaiji taikan, Kofukuji* [*General View of the Six Great Temples of Nara, Kofukuji*], vol. 8. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970.

Onizawa Naoshi. *Mitsui no enko shaji* [*Shrines and Temples Related to the Mitsui Family*]. Tokyo: Sanyu Shinbunsha, 1995.

Oya Kuninori, ed. *Tono Shichi Kannon* [*The Seven Kannon of Tono*]. Tono: Tono Shiritsu Hakubutsukan, 1988.

Rinne, Melissa. "Avery Brundage's Other Olympic Prize: The Asian Art Museum's Dry Lacquer Sculptures Bonten and Taishakuten." *Lotus Leaves* 11, no. 1 (Fall 2008): 15–26.

Rito Akisato. *Shui miyako meisho zue* [*Gleanings of Pictures of Famous Places in the Capital*]. Kyoto: Yoshinoya Tamehachi, 1787.

Roku Kannon gogyoki [*Combined Ritual for Six Kannon*] (1474). Manuscript held by Kyoto University Library.

Sankeien Hoshokai. *Sankeien hyakushunen Hara Sankei no egaita fukei* [*Sankeien Garden, 100th Anniversary, the Atmosphere Hara Sankei Painted*]. Yokohama: Kanagawa Shinbunsha, 2006.

Shinshu Kyoto sosho [*New Edition of the Kyoto Library*]. Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1976.

Suzuki Yoshihiro. "Shukuin busshi [Shukuin Buddhist sculptors]." *Nihon no bijutsu* 487 (Dec. 2006).

Swanson, Paul L., trans. *The Great Cessation and Contemplation* (*Mo-ho chih-kuan*). Compact disc. Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co., provisional edition, 2004.

Taguchi Eiichi. "Doban *Hokkekyo*, tsuke do hakoita [A Copperplate Lotus Sutra and Its Copperplate Box Panels]." *Kokka* 957 (May 1973): 44–52.

Taisho shinshu daizokyo zuzo [*The Tripitaka, New Compilation of the Taisho Era, Iconography*]. Tokyo: Taisho Issaikyo Kankokai, 1922–32.

"Tomyoji no honzon [The Main Images of Tomyoji]." *Kamo bunka* 2 (April 1971): 3.

Tyler, Susan. *The Cult of Kasuga Seen through Its Art*. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1992.

Utsunomiya Keigo. "Tomyoji zo *Daihannya haramittakyo* no kunten in tsuite [*Kunten in the* Mahaprajna-paramita-sutra *of Tomyoji*]." In *Kokugo mojishi no kenkyu* [*Research on the History of Japanese Characters*], vol. 7, edited by Maeda Tomiyoshi, 99–123. Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 2003.

Watson, Burton, trans. *The Lotus Sutra*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

Wong, Dorothy C. "The Case of Amoghapasa." *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* 2 (2007): 151–8.

Wong, Dorothy C. "Divergent Paths: Representations of Amoghapasa in East, South and Southeast Asia." In *Esoteric Buddhist Tradition in East Asia: Text, Ritual and Image; Occasional Papers of the Council on East Asian Studies at Yale University*, vol. 2, edited by Youngsook Pak and Roderick Whitfield. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, forthcoming.

Yamashiro cho Komonjo Saakuru Kisaragikai. *Edo jidai no Minamiyamashiro sanjusansho o tazunete* [*Visting the Minamiyamashi Pilgrimage Route in the Edo Period*]. Yamashiro cho: Yamashiro cho Komonjo Saakuru Kisaragikai, 1996.

25

The Unfired Clay Sculpture of Bengal in the Artscape of Modern South Asia

Susan S. Bean

This essay aims to doubly enrich the account of South Asia's visual culture first by retrieving Bengal's unfired clay sculpture from the margins of art historical discourse, and second by exploring its complex place in the competition for power and precedence from the colonial period onwards. To accomplish this task established canonical constructs must be set aside. The privileging of objects of durable and precious materials as (fine) art made for the elite is bypassed to engage consideration of ephemeral works of ubiquitous materials created for commoners as well as kings. The entrenched dichotomy between art and craft is also bypassed, recognizing that it was transported from Britain. There it was devised to combat the decline of design and craftsmanship in mechanized production, but in India, a region almost totally lacking in industrial manufactures, the distinction served a different function effectively separating all family- and workshop-trained artists from those with art-school training. When this imposed distinction between artist and artisan is collapsed a more fluid organization of production can be seen accommodating a range of practitioners, from masters to menials. These moves enable the practice of unfired clay sculpture to emerge as a dynamic art and a source of powerful visual objects, so potent that kings deployed them to affirm and advance their position, the colonial regime used them to promote their view of Indian society, and common people pooled resources to commission works that assert their standing and critique their social milieu.

Today, in South Asia, and around the world in the Indian diaspora, elaborate unfired clay images of the Hindu goddess Durga in the company of her four

FIGURE 25-1 Unconventional image of the goddess Durga in triumph over the buffalo demon, accompanied by her children, the deities Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesha, and Kartikeya. Hatibagan Durga Puja, Kolkata, 1998. Photograph by the author.

children, triumphant over the demon Mahisha, are emblematic of Bengal and its most important annual festival, Durga Puja (fig. 25-1). Expertly modeled, of imposing dimensions, and exuberantly decorated in inventive variations, this genre of sculpture came to prominence in the middle of the eighteenth century under the patronage of Maharaja Krishnachandra Roy of Nadia (now in West Bengal, India) and has maintained a dynamic presence ever since.

Sculptors, most from families that have specialized in the genre for generations, vie for commissions and awards, producing figures for Hindu religious festivals, both images for worship and secular sculptures to entertain. In 2007, one pavilion (*pandal*) and the clay sculpture inside made international news, for in addition to an imposing image of the victorious ten-armed Durga, the festival committee of FD Block in Kolkata's Salt Lake neighborhood had commissioned characters from the Harry Potter books to be sculpted in clay. The committee erected a 90-foot high replica of Hogwarts School to enclose the image of the goddess and the Potter figures. Their pandal was wildly popular, even attracting attention from author J. K. Rowling and her publishers who sued – unsuccessfully – for copyright infringement.[1]

Over more than 250 years, Bengal's sculptors have created work in unfired clay responding to and articulating the changing social, political, and cultural

landscape. Foregrounding this vigorous practice presents an opportunity to explore the evolving contours of India's artscape particularly its dramatic cosmopolitan expansion. In the eighteenth century, Calcutta (now Kolkata) became the center of Britain's power in Asia, and the hinterland of Bengal produced commodities, including cotton goods, indigo, and saltpeter, for a far-reaching trading network. As colonial cities and towns grew, artists, including clay sculptors, catered to an increasingly diverse clientele – old and new Bengali elites, a colonial ruling class, settlers from other regions, and visitors from elsewhere in India and abroad. Artists embraced new media, from oil paint to printing and photography, new techniques, including linear perspective and chiaroscuro, and new styles, especially naturalistic realism.[2] The colonial order set in motion a complex circulation of style, taste, and expertise. Sculptors specializing in modeling unfired clay found a niche in the growing demand for religious images and statuary for festivals, and in the post-1850 vogue for ethnographic models exhibited at world's fairs in Europe and America.

Until recently, unfired clay sculpture, despite the robustness of this practice, was outside the scope of South Asian art history. From its beginnings around the turn of the twentieth century, the study of Indian art has concentrated on forms that are considered distinctively Indian. Because sculptors in unfired clay had incorporated European naturalistic realism in the early nineteenth century, their work was regarded as too hybrid to be authentically Indian. Furthermore, art historical studies privilege forms made of valuable materials, important enough to be preserved. Most unfired clay sculpture is ephemeral: works are fragile; images of deities are ceremonially immersed when rituals are complete; and few examples survive. Also at issue is a problem of taste: the study of art has favored refined forms made for the elite; the modern practice of unfired clay sculpture specializes in mixed-media installations in which figures are brightly painted, colorfully clothed, and adorned with eye-dazzling ornaments. For the art world, figures like these hover perilously close to the realm of kitsch.

Acknowledging these issues and moving beyond them opens the way to explore a dynamic art form whose continuing importance is a challenge and an invitation. The benefit is to succeed in building an understanding of how an artistic practice, which has flourished in the visual culture of modern India and is linked to a 2,000-year history, has evolved, patronized by ordinary people as well as elites, developing expressions both deeply local and broadly cosmopolitan. To succeed, approaches to Indian visual culture must be expanded and reworked to embrace forms that have been left at the margin.

Clay in India

Clay has a special place in the artscape of India. In other parts of Asia and Europe durable high-fired porcelains and stonewares, produced with rare ingredients and refined glazes and fired in complex kilns, are highly esteemed. In South Asia, ceramics are almost all vessels of low-fired earthenware (terracotta), occasionally

glazed or painted, and sculptural forms fired or simply air- and sun-dried. Suitable clays, readily available across the subcontinent, enabled virtually every village and town to have its own potters to fulfill local requirements and to supply stock for teashops, replacements for broken cooking pots, and images to offer at local shrines. In Hindu practice, porous earthenwares, once eaten from, are defiled and must be discarded. But earthenware's porosity is also valued: terracotta vessels keep drinking water cool even in summer and contribute to the special flavor and texture of delicacies like Bengal's famous sweet yogurt, *mishti dai*. Even in the twenty-first century, with the prevalence of plastic, stainless steel, and aluminum substitutes, India is home to more working potters than any nation on earth.[3]

Clay, both terracruda and terracotta, has been the principal material across the subcontinent for votive images. Small female figures and animals, especially cattle and horses, are common survivors from the third millennium BCE onwards, and from the Shunga period (third to first centuries BCE), plaques are found with one or more figures, some intended as votive offerings, others for use as architectural ornaments.[4] In the modern era, potters in many locales model anthropomorphic and animal figures for offerings. Some potters also serve as priests at local shrines, carrying out rituals to restore health, guard villages, or bring good harvests. In many places women make unfired clay images of deities as offerings, especially to protect their homes and families.

The subject of this essay, the unfired clay sculpture made for Durga Puja and other festivals of the annual cycle, is a genre whose modern heartland is Bengal (now the country of Bangladesh and the Indian state of West Bengal). The region encompasses a vast river delta where stone and wood are scarce and clay is abundant. Bengal is renowned for two other genres in clay: the molded and carved bricks that ornament temples built between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, and the terracotta votive animals and shrines for which Bankura district is famous.[5] Potters in Bengal also produce utilitarian vessels for storage, cooking and eating, and ceremonial ones including painted terracotta covered-jars for weddings, decorated vessels that serve as images of deities (including the snake goddess Manasa, Ganesha, and Lakshmi), and storage-jar lids (*saras*) usually painted with the image of Lakshmi holding ripe ears of paddy in each hand.[6] Women of many other communities also make unfired clay images for their own families, especially of the goddesses Shashthi and Shitala.[7]

Unfired Clay Sculpture

Unfired clay is at once the most humble of materials and the most exalted: it is readily available almost everywhere yet it is prized as a material for ritual images. Unfired clay contains life; images made from it are supremely suited as vessels to contain divine power. South Indian Agama texts more than a thousand years old direct the use of unfired clay for the principal images of deities in temples. The *Vimanarchanakalpa* (*c.* eighth century CE), the *Kashyapashilpa* "treatise of

arts" (*c.* twelfth century CE), the *Kashyapajnankanda* (sixteenth century CE), and the *Samurtarchanadhikarana* (sixteenth to seventeenth century CE) designate unfired clay, bronze, wood, and stone as proper materials for these images. The *Vimanarchanakalpa*, although not a technical manual, also distinguishes between fired earthenware (*pakvamrinmayapratima*), unfired clay (*apakvamrinmayapratima*), and stucco (*sudha*) – materials that are often lumped together in modern literature.[8] Stucco, a kind of plaster using lime as a principal ingredient, is mixed with water and modeled, like clay. However, of these materials, only unfired clay, fundamentally just earth and water, contains life, making it supremely suited for the construction of images for worship.[9]

Because the goddess is intrinsically connected to vegetation, cultivation, fertility, and the earth, unfired clay – earth itself with its capacity to sustain life intact – is the most fitting material for her image.[10] According to the *Krityatatvarnava*, an image of Durga should never be made of terracotta. One who worships a terracotta image of the goddess risks being burnt to ash by her wrath. The *Hayasirshapancharatra* states that an image of god may be made of earth, wood, iron, crystals, stones, fragrant substances, and flowers, but places unfired clay above all the other materials for worship of the goddess: a wooden figure will fulfill the worshipper's wishes, a gold form will bring salvation, silver promises heavenly bliss, copper longevity, bell-metal peace, sand victory, marble enjoyment, and crystal beatitude. An image in clay brings all these together.[11] In late twentieth-century Dhaka, Haripada Pal, a potter-sculptor explained that although some potters may believe that firing purifies the clay, it is actually the opposite: firing kills it. According to Haripada, the moisture in the clay contains sacred power; it can be used to make contact with god. Therefore, "there is among us no *puja* to burned *murtis*. You can preserve a burned murti in your showcase, but you cannot use it for puja."[12] All the images Haripada makes for permanent worship in temples are unfired.

The distinction between unfired clay and terracotta, both technical and conceptual, is fundamental. Terracotta, vitrified by fire, can be used to make containers that hold solids and liquids; unfired clay is extremely friable and disintegrates rapidly on contact with moisture. But the sculptors' art produces unfired clay images durable enough for temporary festivals and even, if well protected, for long-term installation in a temple. Sculptors make images inexpensively for those of modest means. For wealthy patrons, they create elaborate, finely modeled, richly ornamented ones. In the past, the most accomplished sculptors worked for kings, wealthy landowners, and merchants; today ambitious neighborhood puja committees commission the most splendid images. The annual round of religious festivals, centered on the worship of unfired clay images and the display of entertaining figures from history and popular culture, has had a wide-ranging clientele with a steady demand providing modest livelihoods for most makers and the opportunity for some to develop virtuosity and achieve acclaim. As an aesthetic practice, unfired clay sculpture spans the traditional division in art-world discourse between elite and vernacular art forms.

Sculpting in Unfired Clay

Unfired clay has been of ritual importance in the Indian subcontinent for millennia. Even before the earliest textual reference in the eighth century CE, archeological finds attest to a range of ritual objects produced in unfired clay, from principal images in temples to devotees' votive plaques. In the northwestern regions of the subcontinent at Gandharan, Indo-Afghan, and Kashmiri sites there is evidence of unfired clay sculpture between the first and the eighth centuries CE.[13] Many small molded tablets (*sacha*) have survived from the Pala period in eighth- to twelfth-century eastern India. Either very low-fired or unfired, these tablets were probably offerings from Buddhist devotees.[14] Though remains are fragmentary and reports lacking in key observations, K. M. Varma concludes in his pioneering study that archeological finds of unfired clay religious images appear to have been made in a technique closely related to that described in the texts.[15] This practice of unfired clay sculpture spread with Buddhism across Asia. Examples of extant unfired clay images in this lineage date from the eighth century CE at Todaiji in Nara, Japan, and the eighth- to ninth-century eastern cave of Jintasi in China.[16] Although there are no premodern examples of unfired clay sculpture surviving in Hindu temples in India, Varma demonstrates in a meticulous comparative study that construction techniques used in modern Bengal closely resemble methods described in classical texts.[17] On a ritual plane, these procedures create structures of a living being with life-containing clay.[18] According to Bangladeshi sculptor Haripada Pal,

> The body is constructed of clay, and within it, the bamboo, the twine, and the straw are set systematically [as an armature]. And these can be compared with the human body. As, for example, the bamboo is bone, the twine is sinew, the straw is veins.[19]

The sculptor completes the image applying paint, clothing it with textiles, and adorning it with metallic ornaments, all of which contribute to its beauty and awesome presence.

Pragmatically, the method of constructing large unfired clay sculpture is devised to meet the daunting technical challenges of creating durable figures. Whereas fired-clay sculpture (terracotta, for example) relies on vitrification for strength, unfired clay sculpture must use other means to harden the surface and support the figure from within. To make a large image a sculptor begins with a wooden platform and vertical wooden or bamboo supports.[20] This framework (*kathama*) is the structural underpinning for the image and, if the image is intended for worship (a *pratima* or murti), the kathama is its ritual foundation. Vertical poles rise from the platform and hold pegs on which to attach the sculpture. The platform, typically made by a professional carpenter, is the only component that can be reclaimed and reused after the ritual of immersion. The base of the platform provides the altar for puja offerings. The success of the image as a whole depends

upon the strength, stability, and proportions of the framework. Before the maker proceeds to work on ritual images, he should be in a state of spiritual readiness and perform a ritual to the foundation (*pata puja*).

In Bengal, most sculptors in unfired clay are born into the potter (*kumar*) caste, traditionally specialists in clay, but they may also belong to other artisan castes, especially those with some established role in the making of devotional images, or a heritage of working in architectural clay. Carpenter/builders (*sutradar*) whose forebears are credited with the building of the magnificent carved brick temples at Bishnupur, and who are typically responsible for fabricating the wooden frameworks of images, sometimes take up unfired clay sculpture as a profession. Painters (*patua* or *chitrakar*), best known for the narrative scrolls they create and perform, also provide decorated arches (*chalchitra*) as backdrop for Durga images and are called on to color and decorate images. Makers from such backgrounds readily take over all aspects of fabrication.[21]

Sculptors and their families congregate in neighborhoods with ready access to clay and room for storing supplies, as well as studio space and local tolerance for work spilling out into the streets during the festival season. Sculptors build their skills from childhood by preparing materials, assisting with the application of clay and pigments, and more broadly by practice and observation. They also learn by observing work in nearby studios. This underlying residential cohesion has fostered an artistic community in which sculptors who fulfill magnificent commissions for the elite live side by side with those who produce images for clients of limited means. This clustering of makers facilitates the transfer of skills and innovations as well as competitiveness. Proximity allows forms and styles to move between makers, and through them, between social strata. Work commissioned by the elite is adapted for common people, and conversely, popular preferences can readily be taken up by the elite.

The sculptor begins the figure by forming its straw core (*mer*). The figure's torso and limbs are shaped with bundles of rice straw or *ulu* grass to the appropriate bulk, molded into shape and bound tightly with jute string. First the legs are positioned and attached to the supports; then the torso is put in place and the arms attached. Sculptors are mindful of the correct proportions of an image though their individual procedures vary. The bottom of the torso is the central point on a figure, the head and neck are one quarter of the upper part of the body, and the legs are made slightly longer from knee to heel than from knee to hip. The straw forms comprise the essential structure of the image and, masterfully executed, appear complete in themselves, often possessing a formal elegance that belies the crude material of which they are made.

The sculptor prepares two kinds of clay to apply over the straw core. The first clay, known as *entel mati* (sticky clay) or *kala mati* (black clay), is very plastic. It is blended with water and rice chaff to a very soft consistency, spread over the forms, and worked into the straw to further compact the cores. The chaff in the clay allows air to circulate for even drying, reducing cracking and crumbling.

After the clay has dried and cracks are filled, a second firmer mixture, made with less water, is applied in patties worked by the sculptor to form the outer contours of the bodies. When this preliminary surface is complete, the maker goes over it with a serrated wooden stick, readying it for the addition of another layer of clay.

After the application of the first clay, the sculptor attaches the head to the vertical bamboo support, which has been prepared with clay shaped into an elongated cone. The head is formed either by pressing clay into a mold the sculptor has made for repeated use, or modeled by hand to suit particular dimensions and character of an image (fig. 25-2). Heads are sculpted with fine, sandy clay, *bele mati*, which holds crisp detail, and reinforced with sticky clay and chaff. Once

FIGURE 25-2 Unidentified sculptor working in Kumartuli, Kolkata, 2008. Photograph by the author.

the head is attached, the maker applies the second layer of clay, also using bele mati. He adds thick patties which he works together, forming surface details. When the clay becomes firm but not hard he refines the surface by smoothing it with a wooden tool dipped in water. Such deceptively simple tools are often so prized that they are passed from one generation to the next. Cracks that appear during drying are filled with a mixture of bele mati and cow dung.

At this stage the fingers and toes are formed and attached. The maker, or his assistant, prepares a mixture of sticky clay, entel mati, mixed with chopped jute fiber for added strength and plasticity. Each finger and toe is prepared individually from sets of clay balls sized appropriately. Each ball is elongated into the form of a finger or toe, pressed into its correct shape, and smoothed with a stick. The same stick is pushed into the soft clay to form the toenail and knuckle. When the toes for a foot are completed, the maker brushes slip (watered-down clay) where they join together and works thin oblongs of clay above and below each set of toes to make the top and ball of the foot. He blunts and straightens the end with a knife and slits it so that it can be joined to the back part of the foot on the figure. Hands are made and attached in the same way, then lightly bandaged with strips of cotton cloth to keep them in place until firm and dry.

After the figure has dried completely, it is sanded smooth. Next the maker, or his assistant, prepares liquid clay and tears pieces of fine white cotton cloth (often from women's old saris or men's dhotis). The cloth strips are dipped in the clay slip and smoothed onto the surface working in the frayed edges so no line is visible. The cloth secures the figures firmly, preventing the dried clay from crumbling. Ornaments made from clay pressed into molds are also applied at this stage. Finally, a special white clay (*khari mati*) from Suri in Birbhum district is mixed with water into a fine slip; and two coats are applied to the figure, forming a base for the colors.

Today makers purchase factory-produced pigments from the market. Shops in Kumartuli in Kolkata and in Krishnanagar in Nadia district have the best selections. Most pigments are mixed with white clay slip and tamarind-glue binder. Each figure is painted its proper color. The bodies are given two coats; a third is applied to the faces. Powdered pigment is applied with a brush or cloth-covered finger to shade and volumize creases, joints, and muscles. The colors are sealed first with a coating of arrowroot cooked in water, to prevent bleeding, and then glistening copal (resin) varnish. White figures – for example, Saraswati, Durga's lion, and Ganesh's face – are dusted with mica powder mixed in water and glazed with tamarind glue to augment the sparkle and shine.

When the clay sculptures of deities are complete, the sculptor erects a cloth barrier and, in privacy, paints the pupils of the eyes, signaling that the image is ready to receive the presence of god.[22] After this ceremony, the figures are dressed using specially prepared cloth that is draped, glued, and tacked into place. The maker finishes the images, adorning them with an abundance of pith (*shola*) and shiny metallic paper (*daker kaj*) ornaments purchased in the bazaar.

The Bengali Renaissance of Unfired Clay Sculpture

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Maharaja Krishnachandra Roy of Nadia (r. 1728–83) in Bengal newly invigorated the worship of *shakti* (the cosmic force manifested in forms of the goddess) centered on unfired clay images that are immersed at the close of the puja. In the competition for precedence in the rapidly changing political and religious landscape of Bengal, Maharaja Krishnachandra sought to enlist the tremendous powers (shakti) of the goddess to increase his power and position. Having supported the British in a successful campaign against the provincial Mughal Nawab of Murshidabad, Krishnachandra gained favor and standing with the increasingly powerful East India Company. He asserted his new status and increased autonomy in the face of the Mughal Nawab's declining authority by sponsoring grand pujas for the goddess. While this style of puja with unfired clay images may have been instituted by Krishnachandra's seventeenth-century ancestor Maharaja Rudra Ray, who constructed the palace's pavilion (*thakur dalan*) for the celebration of Durga Puja, Krishnachandra gave the worship of Durga and other festivals for the goddess new prominence in the region.[23]

Maharaja Krishnachandra commissioned images of imposing stature in unfired clay to accommodate gatherings of worshippers. An avid patron of the arts, Krishnachandra orchestrated the pujas as arenas for cultural and artistic productions, providing grand settings for recitations of poetry and performances of devotional music and dance. He mobilized the skills of outstanding sculptors from Natore and other towns beyond his capital at Krishnanagar to create the magnificent images for worship that were the focus of these events. Sculptors were drawn to Krishnanagar, settling there and in surrounding towns, where they could fulfill either court requirements or the growing needs of the maharaja's subjects for ritual images.

Maharaja Krishnachandra also initiated new occasions for goddess worship. He promoted Kali Puja among his subjects, insisting that they install images of the goddess for her periodic festival and imposing penalties if they failed to do so. Other rulers in the region also became strong supporters of shakti puja. Maharaja Karmkrishna Ray of Natore, for example, expended 100,000 rupees on an image of Kali for the puja.[24] Maharaja Krishnachandra even revealed new forms of shakti to be worshiped. In the 1740s, when Krishnachandra was held captive by the Marathas and missed the celebration of Durga Puja, the goddess came to him in a dream and ordered that she be worshipped in the form of yellow-skinned Jagaddhatri triumphant over a world-threatening elephant demon. Jagaddhatri Puja, instituted by Krishnachandra, became an annual festival.[25]

In all of these pujas, devotees worship the goddess in unfired clay images. They install the images (pratima or murti) on dedicated platforms (thakur dalan) adjacent to the courtyard of a house, in dedicated pavilions of palaces and mansions, and in specially delineated public places where pavilions (pandal) have been erected to protect the images. Such images, no matter how gorgeous, are temporary

FIGURE 25-3 Durga immersion at Babu Ghat, Kolkata, 1998. Photograph by the author.

vessels for the goddess. When the divine presence departs, devotees carry the empty images in procession to a nearby river or pond where they are ceremonially immersed (fig. 25-3). The images disintegrate, returning to the earth and water of which they are composed. The temporary existence of these images requires devotees to commission or purchase images anew for each festival. As the popularity of worshipping ephemeral unfired clay images of deities increased in the nineteenth century, a perennial demand was created for sculptors' ritual images. This ongoing requirement for images provided not only livelihoods but opportunities for some sculptors to explore the aesthetics of the genre.[26]

When Governor General Lord Charles Cornwallis' land reforms of the 1790s weakened the position of maharajas and other landed elite, the practice of organizing community-sponsored worship (*barowari puja*) increased and spread throughout Bengal, into Bihar and Orissa and wherever Bengalis settled.[27] Devotees further extended periodic festivals centering on the worship of deities present in unfired clay images to include other deities such as Vishvakarma (god of skilled craftsmanship), Krishna (the favorite deity of Vaishnavite devotionalism in Bengal), and Saraswati (the goddess of learning and culture).

Secular Sculpture and the New Wave, Naturalistic Realism

While Maharaja Krishnachandra's patronage of unfired clay sculpture arose from his fervent and strategic devotion to the goddess, his advocacy of the arts and his appreciation of sculptors' capabilities generated a growing demand for other kinds of work such as secular clay statuary to embellish festival spaces. When modeling images of deities, sculptors were, and continue to be, obliged to hew closely to traditional iconographic forms passed down from forebears, conveyed by patrons, and directed by the deity. A sculptor's artistic challenge is to create an image equal to serving as a vessel for divine power and grace. Sculpture commissioned for entertaining presents other opportunities. Patrons can indulge their imaginations, and sculptors, unconstrained by sacred iconography or the obligation to maintain their own ritual state, can experiment with form and style, exhibiting their virtuosity and originality.

Sculptors who excelled at such commissions were celebrated. One instance, passed down in the Pal lineage of clay sculptors, relates that Kalachand Pal in the mid-nineteenth century achieved renown for creating a composite horse made up of 32 other animals and a composite elephant made up of five women.[28] This story, apart from substantiating the acclaim an artist could garner for his work, suggests that sculptors and patrons esteemed secular works of cosmopolitan origin. Kalachand Pal's composite-animal sculptures have sources in Mughal, Deccani, and, ultimately, Persian painting, linking them to the art and culture of great empire, positioned within a vast political domain.[29] Secular sculpture in subjects and styles with fashionable associations to Euro-American art and culture enjoyed a parallel vogue with sculptors and their clients. Religious

imagery, by contrast, seemed to sustain strong local roots, a practice that continues today. Jagaddhatri, for example, a manifestation of the goddess that appeared to Maharaja Krishnanagar in a dream, is unique to the region, and only in Bengal are the goddesses Lakshmi and Saraswati depicted as the daughters of Durga in the image of her triumph over Mahisha, the buffalo demon.

As Calcutta expanded, becoming Britain's center for the extension of its power into the subcontinent, as well as its Asian center for global trade, the increasing British presence opened new arenas for artistic practice. Sculptors, as well as painters, jewelers and carpenters, gained access to European forms and materials. They experimented with newly introduced media and techniques, including oil pigments and European watercolor, and newly introduced styles, especially naturalistic realism. Some were drawn directly into this transforming artscape by European artists and patrons, who enlisted their collaboration in producing works in the European manner. Others recreated newly fashionable forms for Bengali and European clienteles. Sculptors in unfired clay were among the first local artists to respond to this new milieu, adapting their practice to the growing fashion for naturalistic realism.

Some Indian painters had opportunities to learn European techniques with guidance from European patrons and artists. They undertook commissions from members of the colonial establishment, for example, executing natural history drawings in a style that blended European and Mughal naturalism for Elijah Impey, Chief Justice of Bengal from 1773 to 1787, or assisting European amateur and professional artists, including Charles D'Oyly, Balthazard Solvyns, and Thomas and William Daniel, in producing printed versions of their original drawings.[30] Because European sculptors in Bengal were a rarity, those who worked in unfired clay had little opportunity for such direct exposure. However, European sculptures and prints depicting statuary, for sale in the bazaar and installed in British buildings and in the homes of the Bengali elite, provided accessible models. Clay sculptors, especially those from painter (patua or chitrakar) or carpenter/builder (sutradar) backgrounds, whose practices already combined drawing, bas-relief, and sculpture, were adept at working from two-dimensional models.

The earliest known surviving examples of realistic unfired clay sculpture are startlingly life-like, and indicate a style already successfully adopted. In 1823 an American sea captain, James B. Briggs, presented six life-size figures to the museum of the East India Marine Society (now the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts). These are described in the museum's catalogue as depictions of a juggler, two coolies or palanquin bearers, a scrivener or clerk, and a religious devotee (fig. 25-4).[31] The figures, which remain in the museum's collection, are constructed in the same manner as ritual images, with straw cores covered in layers of clay. Only the subjects and the style of modeling are new. Depictions of "natives" by caste, sect, and occupation, usually produced in sets of paintings on paper or mica sheets, had become popular with British and other foreigners in the eighteenth century. Such portrayals comprise the core of what has become known as Company School painting, a style derived from court painting and

FIGURE 25-4 Life-size portrait, originally catalogued as a coolie or palanquin bearer, executed "by a distinguished native artist of Calcutta." The figure probably depicts a devotee reciting the names of god with hands positioned for a rosary. The head, chest, and upper arms bear the inscriptions "Sri Krishna" and "RadhaKrishna." Attributed to Kashinath Pal, Krishnanagar, *c.* 1823. Clay over straw, pigments, and cloth, height 71 cm. Peabody Essex Museum E9924, gift of Captain James B. Briggs 1823.

incorporating elements of perspective and chiaroscuro to accommodate European taste for naturalistic realism.[32]

The six unfired clay figures of native types exemplify a popular subject produced for foreign clients and manifest the increasingly cosmopolitan practice of unfired clay sculpture. The demand for ethnographic depictions arose from British interest in the subjects of their expanding empire. However, sculptors took up realistic figuration not only to fulfill such commissions for Europeans, but in response to the Bengali elite's embrace of European-style naturalism. There is ample evidence that a taste for realism was already firmly in place among the Bengali elite by the end of the eighteenth century. In 1802, for example, satisfied American clients presented Ramdulal Dey, the pioneer of the American

market and among Calcutta's most successful commercial agents, with a life-size portrait in oils of President George Washington. The portrait would have hung in the huge Dey mansion in north Calcutta to be seen by all who visited the residence of this prominent leader of Bengali society.[33] Ramdulal also had his own likeness painted by the foremost British portraitist in India, George Chinnery.[34] Several of Ramdulal's relations, who followed him as commercial agents for the American market, commissioned Indian artists to paint their portraits for presentation to their American clients in a style and format based on European models.[35] In the nineteenth century other Bengali families engaged unfired clay sculptors to model likenesses of ancestors in the new realistic style.[36]

This fashion for naturalistic realism involved more than a shift in style; it entailed an alteration of practice. The Peabody Essex Museum's published catalogue notes that the figures donated by Captain Briggs were "copied from nature," indicating that the sculptor worked with live models, an innovation perhaps originally advocated by British patrons to encourage convincingly realistic depictions.[37] The result was portraiture in the European manner, portrayals that replicated the sitter's appearance. These changes in style and technique attracted commissions from colonial elites and foreigners, some intended for distant destinations precipitating a transformational shift in the circulation of unfired clay sculpture.

Sculptors also adapted the new realistic style of modeling to create entertaining works for festival displays, in the spirit of the composite animals made by Kalachand Pal. Although the first evidence of these commissions is from mid-century, it is likely that such works were created decades earlier. In 1852, the American Charles Eliot Norton, supercargo of a trading voyage and later founder of art history at Harvard University, visited the home of the Rajinder Dutt in north Calcutta during Durga Puja (fig. 25-5). Norton described the sight in his travel journal:

> At each end of the narrow street on which the house stood, arches had been erected, and at night these were lighted with myriads of lamps. The lane through all its length was illuminated and along each side were arranged gaudily painted clay figures as large as life, representing characters distinguished in romance or history, modeled by native artists from pictures or engravings. There was the Duke of Wellington for instance, painted bright blue, there was a red Hamlet after the well-known picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence. There was Cordelia and King Lear, Anne of Geierstein and the Lady of the Lake, and many others, often represented with much spirit and much fidelity to the original pattern, but colored most abominably. The way was thronged with a crowd of dark spectators, curiously examining and doubtless curiously speculating upon the figures.[38]

The selection of characters commissioned by the Dutt family reflects the growing interest among Bengalis in European literature and visual aesthetics.

Other contemporary accounts describe sculptural tableaus for puja displays evidently in naturalistic style. Kaliprasanna Sinha (1840–70) in a memoir of the period, describes one of these:

Publisher's Note:
Image not available
in the electronic edition

FIGURE 25-5 Portrait of Rajinder Dutt (1818–89), attributed to Sri Ram Pal, Krishnanagar, *c.* 1848. Clay over straw, pigments and cloth, height 122 cm. Peabody Essex Museum E9936, gift of T. A. Neal 1848.

> On either side of the image [of the goddess] there were *sawngs* [tableaux in clay] – first, the "religious hypocrite" and second, the "pigmy nawab" – both exquisitely done. The religious hypocrite [wore] a garland and a few golden amulets like tiny drums hanging around his neck – amulets tied around his arms; [he stood there] giving sidelong glances at the housewives and whirling round his fingers the pouch of his rosary beads.[39]

The sawngs differ from the literary figures commissioned by Rajinder Dutt in their biting satirical intent, which they share with Kalighat painting of the period, a genre that similarly depicted gods and goddesses for devotees while also producing images that lampooned the foibles of Bengali society.

Late in the century, sculptors' and patrons' taste for realism extended to depictions of the gods. Kartik, for example, whose image is part of the Durga Puja clay tableau, came to be shown as "quite a handsome young man, with long and curled hair hanging down to his neck, a thin trace of moustache, dressed in superfine dhoti, a light plaited scarf thrown around his neck and wearing a pair of gold-embroidered shoes."[40] From the mid-nineteenth century onwards sculptors modeled figures in realistic modes as well as traditional idealized styles, devising images conservative or trendy, as their clientele desired.

T. N. Mukharji, writing in 1888, emphasized the paradoxical dynamic of this art, which produces religious images central to the expression of devotion to god and, at the same time, creates work expressing sharp social commentary. His remarks also highlight a long-standing controversy which continues to stimulate public debate over suitable decorum for festivals fundamentally concerned with worshipping god:

> Gradually the gods and goddesses came to be furnished with attendants, and in public worships got up by subscription, more for amusement than for a religious obligation, life-size mythological scenes, scenes from daily life, portrait figures of athletes and other celebrities, caricatures, comical subjects and figures representing any scandal current at the time, were gradually introduced.[41]

A Distinguished Native Artist

A seventh figure in the group of unfired clay sculpture given by Captain Briggs to the East India Marine Society (now the Peabody Essex Museum) in 1823 is listed in the museum's 1831 catalogue, but does not survive. The same sculptor who modeled the six figures "from nature" also created a replica of the Spinario, the "Greek antique statue of the Boy extracting a thorn."[42] Both the Capitoline Museums in Rome and the Uffizi Museum in Florence display Roman versions of the Greek Spinario. The Bengali sculptor who made the Spinario replica must have worked from a print or European-made replica. At the time, the Spinario was much admired, and the version in Rome was a regular stop on Grand Tours of Europe taken by young English gentry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Europe since the Renaissance, copies of the Spinario had been made by artists as students and as masters, in tribute to an icon of classical art and as testimonies to their individual virtuosity. Royal collections, of the Medici, Philip II of Spain, François I and Charles I of France, included copies of the Spinario by famous artists of the time.[43] In the early nineteenth century, a finely executed copy, like a musical performance, was admired as an interpretation of the original. Replication was a highly regarded practice as well as an important learning technique. Only later in the century, with the proliferation of reproduction techniques, especially photography and printing, and the availability of inexpensive handmade copies from China and India, did replication become degraded to

the status of mere copying. In the emergent Modernist movement in Europe, originality, authenticity, and uniqueness, became *sine qua non* of art.[44]

Captain Briggs, the Spinario's donor, also noted in the museum's catalogue that the maker of the Peabody Essex Museum's Spinario, and the six figures "copied from nature" was a "distinguished native artist of Calcutta." Such high praise for a "native artist" was rare.[45] For Briggs and his compatriots the sculptor's achievement in producing life-like portraits and recreating a classical masterwork merited the designation "artist." Briggs' assessment is also likely to be a reflection of the sculptor's reputation. Briggs was probably introduced to the sculptor by his Bengali commercial agents. Although Briggs made several trips to Calcutta, his familiarity with the city was limited, geared toward gathering and dispersing cargo and preparing his vessel for the return voyage.[46] Like other American merchants in Calcutta, Briggs preferred working with Bengali agents to avoid the higher fees of the British commercial houses. The commercial agents Ramtonoo Ghose, Madden Mohun Bose and Co., who had satisfactorily handled the purchase of most of his cargo, are likely to have arranged the acquisition of the clay figures from a sculptor whose outstanding reputation they knew.[47]

Briggs' banians and the sculptor were certainly aware of the figures' destination; they would have facilitated packing the works for shipment to America. They probably understood that the figures would be part of a display of objects from around the world at a museum where people would soon be able to see these portrayals of Bengalis and the Spinario replica by an accomplished Bengali artist. Such commissions, bringing together foreign clients, Bengali commercial agents, and local artists, marked a dramatic expansion in the circulation of styles and patronage involving Bengali artists in an increasingly cosmopolitan artscape.

Models for World's Fairs

In the mid-nineteenth century unfired clay sculptors' facility with naturalistic realism, replication, and portraiture attracted a new enthusiastic clientele. The colonial agents who arranged displays showcasing Britain's Indian colony for world's fairs found the sculptors' capabilities ideally suited for these popular extravaganzas that became a fixture of European and American life in the last half of the century. From the beginning, British organizers, seeking to present ethnographic representations of their subjects, prized the work of Bengal's clay sculptors whose portrayals in clay, fitted out with real clothing and "hair" were so life-like. For the first of these exhibitions, the 1851 Great Exhibition in London's wondrous Crystal Palace, many ethnographic "models" were commissioned. Sculptors in Krishnanagar, who had become specialists in modeling figurines depicting native sects and occupations, produced a large group including a postman, water carrier, shepherd, table servant, sweeper, and maid servant, as well as several clay tableaux including a native court and an indigo factory.[48]

The new demand for these figures intensified their international circulation. To fulfill these commissions sculptors found it necessary to alter their practice. Previously, small figures were modeled on wooden supports and unfired. To enable their work to survive the journey to world's fairs at sites from Paris and Amsterdam to Chicago and Melbourne, sculptors devised techniques to produce more durable work by firing the figures before applying paint, cloth, and "hair" (usually jute fibers). These works were very well received, much admired as ethnographic models, and became a regular feature of British displays from their Indian colony. Krishnanagar sculptors garnered awards at fairs, including Paris 1855 and 1867, Melbourne 1881, Amsterdam 1883, Boston 1883, London 1886, and Glasgow 1888.[49]

The awards bestowed on these sculptors were not, however, for art works shown in the fine arts section of exhibitions, but for "models" displayed with the industrial productions of participating nations. In the opinion of J. Forbes Royle, one of the organizers of the 1851 exhibition in London, Indian sculpture was not worthy of being included in the art section of the exhibition:

> Though India might contribute something . . . as for instance, sculpture, as practiced in the rude representations of the Hindoo pantheon . . . it is only under the head of Raw Materials and Manufactured Articles that the products of India will hold a conspicuous place.[50]

Throughout these decades differing opinions on the artistic value of clay sculptors' work coexisted, and conflicted. Henry Locke, superintendent of the Calcutta School of Art in the 1880s, found the "unhappy predilection for introducing pieces of real fabrics in the clothing; actual hair and wool in the figures, and in the accessories, straw and grass . . . lowered their work to the level of ingenious toy making."[51] T. N. Mukharji, an administrator who supervised the collection of exhibits for international expositions, in turn resisted Locke's view, praising the sculptors for creating a life-like appearance and for the delicacy and fineness in their work.[52]

This division between fine art and industrial art was expressed in the organization of international exhibitions and instituted in the art schools established by the colonial regime in India. But the division was always an unstable one. In the 1820s, the maker of the Peabody Essex Museum figures that were "copied from nature" was recognized as a "distinguished native artist." Other unfired clay sculptors similarly won recognition for portraiture. For example, in 1848 Nabakumar Pal created a clay portrait of the missionary William Carey to serve as the model for a marble version to be carved in England. The Society of Arts in London awarded Nabakumar a silver medal for his sculpture.[53] In the 1870s, Jadunath Pal, a sculptor from Krishnanagar, attended the Government School of Art in Calcutta and over the next several decades served at various times as an instructor. In 1896 he resigned in a conflict with the principal, E. B. Havell, over what may have been competitive jealousy. In one account Havell had sculpted

a portrait of Debendranath Tagore. The family was dissatisfied with the result and commissioned Jadunath to do the portrait instead. The *Statesman* newspaper published a letter from a member of the Tagore family praising Jadunath which so upset Havell that Jadunath could no longer work under him.[54] Although the clay models won acclaim, sculptors in unfired clay remained at the margin. They worked in materials outside the evolving fine-arts canon for India, and they were considered artisans, trained in family workshops rather than art schools.

Colonial Myopia and the Expanding Cosmopolitan Artscape

The figures acquired by Captain Briggs in 1823 destined for a museum in America and the literary characters made for the Akrur Dutt family puja in 1853 embody the cosmopolitan expansion of unfired clay sculpture. By mid-century sculptors had not only embraced the new style of naturalistic realism, they had also taken up the practice of modeling from life and altered their technology to produce low-fired figurines for an increasing extensive clientele including the commissions for works to be displayed in world's fairs and museums in Europe and America. Ironically, at the same time that the practice of clay sculpture leapt into a globalized circulation of practice and patronage, an art discourse for India was taking shape that excluded unfired clay sculpture from serious consideration.

In the late nineteenth century, scholars and arts administrators debated whether any sculpture produced in India merited the designation "art." George Birdwood, a major figure in the colonial art establishment, writing on work in clay, expressed his opinion on Indian sculpture generally: "nowhere does their figure sculpture shew the inspiration of true art."[55] At the same time, Birdwood and others closely connected to the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain found much to admire in the applied or industrial arts in India and made efforts to support artisanry. In this dialogue, a distinction was articulated between industrial art (applied art, artisanry, or craft) and fine art. All contemporary practitioners of visual arts from families of professional specialists, whether painters, jewelers, embroiderers, or sculptors, were grouped together as artisans.[56] The designation "artist" was temporarily vacated, though it would soon be applied to a new group of painters and sculptors from elite and middle-class backgrounds who studied European art practices in colonial art schools and produced work that drew on both Indian and European sources.[57]

This new classification system marginalized sculptors in unfired clay as it did all living practitioners of sculpture and painting, genres customarily designated as fine arts in Europe and North America. Over the next several decades, however, Indian stone and metal sculpture from earlier times was integrated into the art historical canon. Birdwood's view, shared by many others, was superseded around the turn of the century. Ananda Coomaraswamy and other pioneering historians of Indian art achieved this move largely by articulating a distinctive

character for Indian art. Coomaraswamy, in a comment revealing the increasingly problematic position of unfired clay sculpture as not authentically Indian, wrote: "Oriental art as a whole does not aim at the reproduction of the facts of nature, objectively considered . . . but of subjective fact."[58]

Taken together these developments sidelined unfired clay sculpture, excluding it from the developing discourse on Indian art. By instituting distinctions between Indian and European art, between art and craft, between artist and artisan, and between elite and vernacular, transformations then under way in India's art practices, including unfired clay sculpture, were obscured from view.[59] In the case of unfired clay sculpture, the material itself was outside a canon that privileged durable materials, especially stone and metal. The prominence of naturalistic realism in the work relegated it to an impure hybrid form, too realistic and westernized to be counted as truly Indian. And the makers, practitioners of a lineage-based practice, trained in family workshops, were classified as artisans or craftsmen.

Only by setting aside these lingering constructs, as this essay proposes, does the enthusiastically patronized, energetic trajectory of unfired clay sculpture come into focus, situated in a millennia old practice and reinvigorated in eighteenth-century Bengal to become a force in the increasingly cosmopolitan art world of nineteenth- and twentieth-century India. Attention to this complex web of interconnections entails transcending received categories of art discourse, but it generates a far more revealing picture of the course of Indian art and culture in the modern era. Kings and sculptors embodied the goddess, creating new material representations as the focus of new kinds of rituals, and even conceiving new forms of the goddess (e.g. Jagaddhatri). Both the rulers and the artists gained standing in the process. The British regime enlisted the capabilities of clay sculptors for naturalistic modeling to project an image of colonial India and its people as cogs in a colonial hierarchy harnessed to their regime and reflecting its values. At the same time, an emerging Bengali elite asserted their ascendancy and countered colonial domination in festival installations and portraiture sent abroad. Ordinary people, too, pooled their resources to deploy clay sculpture to enhance their spiritual standing and at the same time comment on their world, expressing their values, appropriating popular culture as their own, critiquing social mores, and valorizing traditions. In the colonial period and after, unfired clay sculpture in Bengal became an art form central to both evolving regimes of taste and aesthetics and to the contest for advancing social agendas.

Notes

1 *Times of India*, "Potter Pandal."
2 See J. Jain, *Kalighat Painting*; Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New "Indian" Art*, ch. 1; Mitter, *Art and Nationalism*, ch. 2.
3 Perryman, *Traditional Pottery of India*, 9.

4 See Banerji, *Early Indian Terracotta Art*; Pal, *Indian Terracotta Sculpture*; Poster, *From Indian Earth*.
5 Perryman, *Traditional Pottery of India*, 171–86; Ghosh, *Temple to Love*; Michell, *Brick Temples of Bengal*.
6 Dutt, *Folk Arts and Crafts of Bengal*, 85, 102.
7 Ibid., 88.
8 Varma, *Indian Technique of Clay Modelling*, 227; Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, 13.
9 Ghosha, *Durga Puja*, appendix vii.
10 Chaudhuri, *Goddess Durga*, 14.
11 Ghosha, *Durga Puja*, appendix vii.
12 Glassie, *Art and Life in Bangladesh*, 345–6.
13 Varma, *Indian Technique of Clay Modelling*, 188–91.
14 Huntington, *Leaves from the Bodhi Tree*, 180.
15 Varma, *Indian Technique of Clay Modelling*, 191.
16 Howard *et al.*, *Chinese Sculpture*, 214; Munsterberg, *Arts of Japan*, 46.
17 Varma, *Indian Technique of Clay Modelling*.
18 Varma, *Indian Technique of Clay Modelling*, 7–9; Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, 13–15.
19 Glassie, *Art and Life in Bangladesh*, 332.
20 The summary of construction technique is based on the author's 1996 interview with Nemai Chandra Paul, an accomplished senior artist based in Shashthitala, Krishnanagar, and the procedure followed by the sculptor Syamapada Hajra as reported in Varma, *Indian Technique of Clay Modelling*.
21 Chakravarti, *Krishnagarer Mrtshilpa*, 4–6.
22 A ceremony to complete the eye of an image is common practice in Hindu India. That it can be carried out by a sculptor as well as a priest indicates the special ritual status of artists who create images of gods for worship.
23 McDermott, *Mother of My Heart*, 32–3, 174, 329 n. 87.
24 Ibid., 173–4; Ward, *View of the History*, vol. 3, 154–7; see also Lyons, "Terra Ephemera."
25 Bean interview with sculptor Nemai Chandra Paul, Krishnanagar, 1996.
26 These days, the ceremonial immersion of hundreds of these images creates an environmental downside. Besides clay, which returns to the earth, the images leave behind jute and straw supports, floral and metallic ornaments, chemical pigments and textiles, clogging rivers and ponds and leaching toxic residues. Many cities have instituted regulations and struggle to safely manage the proper disposition of images.
27 McDermott, *Mother of My Heart*, 175.
28 Chakravarti, *Krishnagarer Mrtshilpa*, appendix 1, 78–9.
29 Del Bonta, "Indian Composite Paintings."
30 Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 40–1; Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 17.
31 *The East India Marine Society of Salem*, 126.
32 Archer, *Company Paintings*; Welch, *Room for Wonder*.
33 The painting, by an unidentified painter, one of many copies of the "Lansdowne" portrait by Gilbert Stuart (at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC), is now in the collection of Washington and Lee University, Lexington, VA.
34 Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 75.

35 Nine portraits of Bengali agents for the American trade, including Rajinder Dutt, Radha Kissen Mitter and his relations, are in the collection of the Peabody Essex Museum. See Bean, *Yankee India*.
36 Chakravarti, *Krishnagarer Mrtshilpa*, 16–17.
37 *The East India Marine Society of Salem*, 126.
38 Norton, *Life in India*.
39 Banerjee, *The Parlour and the Streets*, 130.
40 Ibid., 129.
41 Mukharji, *Art Manufactures of India*, 62.
42 *The East India Marine Society of Salem*, 126.
43 Boucher, *The Sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*, 375 no. 127; Bober, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, 235, no. 203; Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, 308; Leithe-Jasper and Wengraf, *European Bronzes from the Quentin Collection*, 333 no. 6.
44 See Mainardi, "The 19th-Century Art Trade."
45 *The East Indian Marine Society of Salem*, 126.
46 See Bean, *Yankee India*, ch. 12.
47 Ghose to Allen, letter, July 7, 1833.
48 Dowleans, *Catalogue of the East Indian Productions*, Section VI, 79.
49 Award certificates viewed by the author in Krishnanagar workshops, 1988.
50 Royle, *Papers Referring to the Proposed Contributions from India*.
51 Quoted in Mukharji, *Art Manufactures of India*, 59.
52 Chakravarti, *Krishnagarer Mrtshilpa*, 14; Mukharji, *Art Manufactures of India*.
53 Personal communication, Arun Ghosh, head of conservation, Victoria Memorial, January 18, 1996.
54 Chakravarti, *Krishnagarer Mrtshilpa*, 55–6.
55 Birdwood, *The Arts of India*, 222.
56 After independence in 1947, this approach was carried forward by government-sponsored support for handicrafts and handlooms.
57 Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New "Indian" Art*, especially 11 ff.; Dutta, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty*; Mathur, *India by Design*; Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*.
58 Coomaraswamy, *Art and Swadeshi*, 54.
59 See K. Jain, *Gods in the Bazaar*; Lyons, *The Artists of Nathadwara*.

References

Archer, Mildred. *Company Paintings: Indian Painting for the British*. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1992.

Banerjee, Sumanta. *The Parlour and the Streets: Elite and Popular Culture in Nineteenth-Century Bengal*. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1989.

Banerji, A. *Early Indian Terracotta Art*. Delhi: Harman Publishing House 1994.

Bean, Susan S. *Yankee India: American Commercial and Cultural Encounters with India in the Age of Sail, 1784–1860*. Salem, MA, and Ahmedabad: Peabody Essex Museum and Mapin Publications, 2001.

Birdwood, George. *The Arts of India*. Delhi: Rupa, 1988 [1880].

Bober, Patricia P. *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Boucher, Bruce. *The Sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991.

Chakravarti, Sudhir. *Krishnagarer Mrtshilpa o Mrtshilpi Samaj* [*Clay Sculpture of Krishnagar and the Sculptors' Society*]. Calcutta: P. Bagchi, 1985.

Chaudhuri, Dulal. *Goddess Durga: The Great Mother*. Calcutta: Mrimol, 1984.

Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. *Art and Swadeshi*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1994.

Del Bonta, Robert J. "Indian Composite Paintings: a Playful Art." *Orientations* 27 no. 1 (1996): 31–8.

Dowleans, M. *Catalogue of the East Indian Productions Collected in the Presidency of Bengal*. London: W. Thacker and Co., 1851.

Dutt, Gurusaday. *Folk Arts and Crafts of Bengal: The Collected Papers*. Calcutta: Seagull, 1990.

Dutta, Arindam. *The Bureaucracy of Beauty: Design in the Age of Its Global Reproducibility*. London: Routledge, 2007.

The East India Marine Society of Salem. Salem, MA: Salem Press, 1831.

Ghose, Sri Goundhun to W. H. Allen, 7 July 7, 1833, Papers of the East India Marine Society, Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum.

Ghosh, Pika. *Temple to Love: Architecture and Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Bengal*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.

Ghosha, Pratap Chandra. *Durga Puja*. Delhi: Books for All, 1997 [1871].

Glassie, Henry. *Art and Life in Bangladesh*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

Guha-Thakurta, Tapati. *The Making of a New "Indian" Art: Artists, Aesthetics and Nationalism in Bengal, 1850–1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Haskell, F., and N. Penny. *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500–1900*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1981.

Howard, Angela Falco, Li Son, Wu Hung, and Yang Hong. *Chinese Sculpture*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006.

Huntington, Susan L. *Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pala India, 8th–12th Centuries and Its International Legacy*. Dayton, OH: Dayton Art Institute, 1990.

Jain, Jyotindra. *Kalighat Painting: Images from a Changing World*. Ahmedabad: Mapin, 1999.

Jain, Kajri, *Gods in the Bazaar: The Economies of Indian Calendar Art*. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2007.

Leithe-Jasper, M., and Patricia Wengraf. *European Bronzes from the Quentin Collection*. New York: Frick Collection, 2004.

Luczanits, Christian. *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay: Early Western Himalayan Art, Late 10th to Early 13th Centuries*. Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2004.

Lyons, Tryna. *The Artists of Nathadwara: The Practice of Painting in Rajasthan*. Ahmedabad: Mapin Publications, 2004.

Lyons, Tryna, "Terra Ephemera: The Case of a New Goddess in Bengal." *Artibus Asiae* 69 no. 2 (2009): 259–94.

Mainardi, Patricia. "The 19th-Century Art Trade: Copies, Variations, Replicas." *The Van Gogh Museum Journal* 2000: 63–73.

Mathur, Saloni. *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

McDermott, Rachel Fell. *Mother of My Heart, Daughter of My Dreams: Kālī and Umā in the Devotional Poetry of Bengal*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Michell, George, ed. *Brick Temples of Bengal: From the Archives of David McCutchion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Mitter, Partha. *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850–1922: Occidental Orientations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Mukharji, T. N. *Art Manufactures of India*. New Delhi: Navrang 1974 [1888].

Munsterberg, Hugo. *The Arts of Japan: An Illustrated History*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1957.

Norton, Charles Eliot. *Life in India: Sketches of Calcutta, April 1852*. Charles Eliot Norton Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Pal, Pratapaditya, ed. *Indian Terracotta Sculpture: The Early Period*. Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2002.

Perryman, Jane. *Traditional Pottery of India*, London: A. & C. Black, 2000.

Poster, Amy G., ed. *From Indian Earth: 4,000 Years of Terracotta Art*. Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1986.

Royle, J. Forbes. Papers referring to the proposed contributions from India for the Industrial Exhibition of 1851. National Art Library, London.

Times of India, "Potter Pandal." Accessed August 8, 2009. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Potter_pandal_a_hit_with_Kolkata_kids/articleshow/2454350.cms

Varma, K. M. *The Indian Technique of Clay Modelling*. Santiniketan: Proddu, 1970.

Ward, William. *A View of the History, Literature and Mythology of the Hindoos*, 3rd edn., 4 vols. 1817. Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1990.

Welch, Stuart Cary. *Room for Wonder: Indian Painting During the British Period, 1760–1880*. New York: American Federation Arts, 1978.

Further Reading

Bean, Susan S. "Calcutta Banians for the American Trade: Portraits of Early 19th-Century Bengali Merchants." In *Changing Visions, Lasting Images: Calcutta Through 300 Years*, edited by Pratapaditya Pal, 69–80. Mumbai: Marg Publications, 1990.

Bean, Susan S. "Vessels for the Goddess: Unfired-Clay Images of Durga in Bengal." In *Goddess Durga: the Power and the Glory*, edited by Pratapaditya Pal, 38–53. Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2009.

Chaliha, Jaya, and Bunny Gupta. "Durga Puja in Calcutta." In *The Living City*, edited by Sukanta Chaudhuri, vol. 2, 331–6. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Huyler, Stephen. *Gifts of Earth: Terracottas and Clay Sculptures of India*. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts; Middletown, NJ: Grantha Corp, 1996.

Pal, Pratapaditya. *Hindu Religion and Iconology*. Los Angeles: Vichitra, 1981.

Shah, Haku. *Form and Many Forms of Mother Clay*. New Delhi: National Crafts Museum, 1985.

26

Malraux's Buddha Heads

Gregory P. A. Levine

The fragments of the past that are most eagerly snapped up by our museums are neither happily inspired "patches," nor striking arrangements of "volumes"; they are heads.

André Malraux[1]

In March 1948, André Malraux (1901–76), the French writer, adventurer, anti-fascist, resistance fighter, and later Minister of Cultural Affairs, posed for the photographer Yale Joel (1919–2006) in the salon of his villa in the Paris suburb Boulogne (fig. 26-1). Malraux is flanked, to his right, by his wife Marie-Madeleine Lioux (b. 1914) and a reproduction from Piero della Francesca's (*c.* 1420–92) *Legend of the True Cross* (1457–*c.* 1466).[2] To his left is the torso-less head of an Afghan Buddhist statue, the partial figure of another Buddhist statue, and a lamp whose base appears to be a sculptural or architectural fragment.

This is a self-consciously fashionable, modern room, and its occupants are equally well arranged. Malraux, in a double-breasted suit and polished oxfords, stands on the border of an oriental rug and leans against Madeleine's piano. His head bends forward slightly as if to meet the smoke of the cigarette held in his right hand. Brow furrowed and lips compressed, he appears pained by the affairs of the world or the photographer's tribulations. In fact this is the practiced "Malrucian scowl."[3] Madeleine too gazes toward the camera. Her right hand, all but hidden in her sleeve, rests upon the piano bench and the other, one imagines, on the keyboard. For Madeleine, a formally trained pianist, the instrument is her embodiment and extension, but it is Malraux who presides here, loudly.

The sculpted head to Malraux's left, perhaps from an attendant figure or a mourner from a representation of the death of the Buddha, balances on a

FIGURE 26-1 Yale Joel, *French Writer André Malraux*, 1948. Time & Life Pictures. Photograph © Getty Images.

rectilinear base in a modern conjoining of fragmented antiquity and edifice of display. Its smile, like Madeleine's, is a foil to the brooding Malraux. The larger figure, a bodhisattva given the modern title *Spirit of the Flowers* (*Le génie aux fleurs*), rests on a pedestal nearly at eye-level but looks away from Malraux.

FIGURE 26-2 Maurice Jarnoux, *André Malraux*, 1948. Copyright Maurice Jarnoux/Paris Match/Scoop.

This room will become famous in the story of art and art history not because of Yale Joel's portrait but because of photographs taken about the same time for *Paris Match* by Maurice Jarnoux, in which Malraux surveys photographic reproductions of art works – many of them "head shots" – as he prepares his volume, *The Museum without Walls* (*Le musée imaginaire de la sculpture mondiale*; *c.* 1950).[4] In one of these photos, the head of a Buddha sits on the piano, another crowns a row of books aligned atop a radiator, and a third perches on a pedestal in the room's shadowy corner (fig. 26-2).[5] Widely circulated, the Jarnoux photographs became metonymic of Malraux's "master conceit": by decontextualizing art from local cultic/cultural and historical contexts through photographic reproduction (or physical removal and relocation to museums), one could discover the universal forms and styles of art and, in turn, the essence of human creativity.[6]

The Jarnoux and Joel photographs present Malraux as a "visionary connoisseur" and as a collector of Buddhist art.[7] This essay, however, is not strictly about Malraux. I shall consider Malraux's acquisition, exhibition, and interpretation of a "collection" of Buddhist sculptural fragments and tease out some of the responses they elicited, but I will not attempt to prove what Buddhist images and Buddhism meant to Malraux in an absolute sense or determine definitively where he acquired the heads that appear in the Jarnoux and Joel photographs. Malraux's writings on art deserve thoughtful attention, and I shall refer to their philosophical ideals and the so-called "Museum without Walls." At the same time, however, I wish to read them in relation to the field of Asian art in the early twentieth century, the antiquities trade and colonial scholarship, and the broader presences of fragments of ancient sculpture in interwar Euro-American modernism.[8] Malraux's "Buddha heads," as we might call them, invite us to consider as well how the broken body (human or divine, flesh or stone) is constitutive to our study of the past.

To elicit a richer sense of the Joel and Jarnoux photographs, therefore, we might turn to *Cleaning Buddha* taken by Sidney Gamble (1890–1968) at a Buddhist temple at Mt Tiantai, China, between 1921 and 1927 (fig. 26-3). Viewing the Gamble image, we look along the external corridor of a temple building in which a monk cleans a wood icon moved from its sanctuary and placed on stools without customary adornment and offerings. The forms of the half-clothed, standing monk and the seated statue reside in a narrow focal zone within the receding lines of the architecture and its painted ornament. The monk leans toward the statue with head lowered as he brushes at the image's lap; his other hand grasps the railing behind him. His lean musculature and curved torso juxtapose with the composed upright symmetry of the statue. His face is a dim profile; the Buddha gazes outward in distinct detail.

One may be tempted to draw a pop-Buddhist sense of bodily wholeness and spiritual completion from the arc of the standing monk's arms, across the shoulders and the decline of the neck, as he bows to touch the Buddha, perhaps embodying the process of moving from the frail and karmically bound realm of existence into the light and balance of non-duality and awakening. Appealing as such impressions may be, and I do not subscribe to them, one should note too the bowl, hand broom, chisels and knives, and the mop and bucket in the right foreground. *Labor* has a place in this photograph of an icon and its caretaker, as earthly time works upon both the human and sculptural body.

Indeed, the Joel and Gamble photographs do different sorts of labor.[9] In the former, Malraux's seemingly timeless, "god-like" centrality and scrutiny of the camera and the incomplete presences of Madeleine and the surrounding works of art contrast with the full figures of the monk and statue seemingly unaware of the camera. There are the art conscious appointments of Malraux's salon versus the monastic space and decoration; Malraux's pose of self-conscious power as opposed to labor and devotion; the position of Gamble, a foreign observer in China, photographing the unnamed monk amid the chores of "daily life," in

FIGURE 26-3 Sidney D. Gamble, *Cleaning Buddha*. Mt. Tiantai, China. 1921–7. Sidney D. Gamble Photographs, Archive of Documentary Arts, Duke University.

contrast to Joel, the professional photographer in Paris, on assignment for *Life* magazine, portraying the writer-politician at home. In the Gamble photograph, the intact icon rests upon a temporary dais for cleaning; Malraux's statues, frozen in fragmentariness, are given prosthetic stands that enable display despite their radical dislocation from body and context.

Discussion of Malraux and Asian sculpture, meanwhile, will evoke for some readers his arrest for looting in Cambodia in 1923.[10] In this well-known incident, Malraux, his friend Louis Chevasson (1900–83), and first wife, Clara (1897–1982) chiseled out sections of late tenth-century bas-relief sculpture from the Hindu temple Banteay Srei (Citadel of Women), near Angkor Wat. Arrested by the French colonial authorities, Malraux and Chevasson were put on trial and convicted despite Malraux's protestations of scholarly intent rather than profiteering (perhaps to recuperate his losses in the French stock market). Malraux's reputation as adventurer and looter hovers in the Joel and Jarnoux photographs, therefore, and the Buddhist sculptural heads and partial figure assume a weightier if still ambiguous presence. Indeed, where and how did this self-taught, would-be-archaeologist acquire these fragments of Afghan Buddhist sculpture?

Heads on View

Malraux's Afghan sculptures emerged into public notice in the January 1931 inaugural exhibition of the Paris art gallery of the literary magazine *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (*NRF*).[11] What the public saw were mostly torso-less heads of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other figures, which Malraux described in two brief, nearly identical texts, "Gothic-Buddhist Works of the Pamir" (*Oeuvres Gothico-Bouddhiques du Pamir*, 1930) and a review of the gallery's exhibition appearing in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (1931).[12]

Malraux was no C. T. Loo (1880–1957), the premier dealer of Asian art in the transatlantic context, and his Buddhist sculptures were not necessarily as stunning as works found in Paris's Musée Guimet.[13] As I shall suggest in the following pages, however, his Afghan fragments, several of which appear in the Joel and Jarnoux photographs, were "cutting edge" given their moment of expropriation to France and their relationship to a particular node of art historical discourse.

What drew the attention of viewers at the NRF gallery, no doubt, were the vividly sculpted faces: Buddhas and bodhisattvas with arching eyebrows, sharply delineated eyelids and lips; volumetric from chin to high forehead; a beatific smile here, a graceful tilt of the head there; and curls and waves of hair, seemingly natural yet perfected, existing in this world and beyond. The more exuberantly sculpted heads of attendants or donors, meanwhile, present a portrait-like sense of individualized features, gender, and age, captured it would seem amid the desires and roughness of existence. The stucco material too may have caught the eye: pocked, cracked, and worn; mostly bereft of original pigmentation (red lips, black hair and pupils, etc.); and jagged edges at the neck or rear of the head, marks of fracture evocative of antiquity.[14]

Paris was home already to notable collections of Asian art. We might therefore ask, what sorts of conversations did Malraux's Afghan fragments elicit in the gallery, brasserie, or academy? Perhaps they enhanced appreciation of Asian

FIGURE 26-4 Joseph Strzygowski, *The Afghan Stuccos of the NRF* (1931).

Publisher's Note:
Image not available
in the electronic edition

FIGURE 26-5 *Head of a Devata*. Central Asian. About fifth–sixth century CE, Tash Kurghan, China (Western) or Afghanistan. Stucco with traces of pigment. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Denman Waldo Ross Collection, 31.191. Photograph © 2010 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

art but, if so, in what terms? Did a torso-less condition confirm the face as a potent site of imagination, of the Orient and Oriental psychology? What, for that matter, was Gothic-Buddhist sculpture?

Of Dubious Discovery

By 1931 Malraux had attained notoriety and acclaim in Paris. From 1925 to 1926 he was back in Cambodia, where he edited anticolonial newspapers.[15] October 1930 saw publication of *The Royal Way* (*La voie royale*), his quasi-autobiographical adventure story about looting in the Cambodian jungle that evolves into a psychological portrait of two men and an argument for the choice of death over "being penned in by destiny."[16] A participant in the discourse on art in the 1920s and 1930s, meanwhile, Malraux engaged Cubism and Surrealism, organized and wrote for exhibitions, and joined the Left's antifascist protests.[17]

To acquire his Buddha heads, Malraux may not have decapitated statues, as did Victor Segalen (1878–1919) who sawed off the head a Buddha in China;

Henri Cernuschi (1821–96), who had a bronze Buddha in Tokyo dismantled for shipment to Paris; or Thomas Mendenhall (1841–1924), who precipitated the beheading of a stone statue at Nikko, Japan.[18] Like most Malraux episodes, however, his acquisition of the Afghan sculptures is a meaningful mélange of fact and fiction.[19] Malraux claimed to have discovered them while exploring the mountainous Pamir region of Afghanistan. Alternately he indicated that he had excavated them at Tashkurgan near the border between Afghanistan and Chinese Turkestan (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region).[20]

André and Clara traveled to Central Asia in 1930, that much seems clear.[21] In June they reached Kabul, the city tense from intertribal conflict fueled by European powers.[22] As for the statues, Clara Malraux's memoir of 1925–35, *Here Comes the Summer* (*Voici que vient l'été*), recounts the mundane: the couple purchased them illicitly in Rawalpindi (in present-day Pakistan).[23] The heads were then sent through Bombay and reached Paris without notice.[24] Needless to say, they were acquired independent of official excavation conducted by the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan.[25]

Shortly after their Paris debut, Gaston Poulain, a columnist for the magazine *Comœdia*, published an interview with Malraux in which he asked how the novelist had acquired the sculptures:

> MALRAUX: "I left [Paris] in June with my wife. I thought there was something out there. I looked. I found it."
>
> POULAIN: "Have you undertaken any special studies?"
> "I read Sanskrit, and I'm studying Persian."
> "Did you stay long on the Pamir plateau?"
> "Three and a half months."
> "And you found all that? Many scholars would wish as much luck, pardon me, skill . . . Do you think that a scientific mission would discover additional pieces?"
> "Why not? But it is a terribly dangerous area. Sixty kilometers outside Kabul, you would need machine guns."
> "But would you?"
> "For me it's not the same, I was a Commissar in Canton."

Poulain then turned more insistent; he wanted proof not just bluster:

> "Who assisted you in your excavation?"
> "Natives. There were no other whites except my wife and myself."
> "How is it that the heads that you exhibit have all been separated [from their bodies] in the same manner?"
> "It was the desert wind that severed them and the sand that covered and preserved them. As for their headless bodies, they were destroyed by the Hephtalite Huns."
> "Do you have photographs of yourself at the site?"
> "No. I have only photographs of the pieces that you have come to view. But, what have you to say about these works?"[26]

Poulain adds that he is curious what the Louvre curators Paul Vitry (1872–1941) and René Dussaud (1868–1958) might say about Malraux's statues but concludes: "Mysterious, without a doubt, and as regards the facts provided by M. Malraux, they remain rather imprecise."[27]

Malraux's comments, as represented by Poulain, seem savvy, fraudulent, cynical, and even absurd. In retrospect, we recognize an inflection of the colonial narrative (despite Malraux's purportedly anticolonial stance): off to uncivilized lands to see what could be seen and take what was found.[28] The wind, meanwhile, not Malraux, had lopped off the heads – "The French always manage to arrive after all the damage has been done."[29] Already broken, they could be taken without concern. There is André's somewhat dubious claim to proficiency in ancient languages, a requirement for any scholarly explorer.[30] Then there is machismo, Malraux facing down the nomads; intimations of danger intended, perhaps, to deflect suspicion. But Malraux has little use for archaeological documentation when the point is the sculptures themselves. He wishes, it seems, to "unwrap the mummies," turn objects into spectacle, and transform experiences (real and imagined) into prestige and myth.[31] In the coming months, however, Malraux's claims were put under severe scrutiny.

The Academy Attacks

Malraux followed his Paris presentation of his Afghan sculptures with a similar exhibition at the Stora Art Gallery, New York.[32] American collectors and museum institutions subsequently purchased several of the heads.[33] Accompanying the Stora show was *The Afghan Stuccos of the NRF*, a catalogue prefaced with an essay by the art historian Josef Strzygowski (1862–1941). Strzygowski's selection to extol the *NRF* finds was probably linked to his prominence in art historical circles during of the first years of the twentieth century.[34] Whatever interest Strzygowski may have had in Malraux's finds, however, he could only infer their archaeological circumstances from the discoveries of other explorers in Central Asia.[35] Notably, Strzygowski differentiated the *NRF* works from the Greco-Buddhist statuary that had "won a place in every European museum," adding that the *NRF* stuccos, "are not surpassed in plastic beauty by the objects dug up at Hadda [near Jalalabad] and brought to Europe by Mr. [Jules] Barthoux."[36]

Strzygowski thus framed the *NRF* fragments within the geography, epistemology, and museology of French colonial archaeology in the early twentieth century. It was in this context that scholars cried foul. A reviewer in the journal *Pantheon* noted that the *NRF* exhibition "has directly precipitated a lively polemic in the press – which, considering what was shown, was only to be expected." "Now it is the task of archaeologists," we read, "to give the decisive word on these finds."[37] In other words, the validity of the collection hangs upon its provenance, and it is clear to this reviewer who should have the final say.

Ernst Waldschmidt (1897–1985), scholar of Central Asian Buddhism, disputed Malraux's claims in *Berliner Museen*, pointing out that the *NRF* heads "might

easily appear to be the spitting image of those [sculptures] found in Hadda." Moreover, we read:

> the somewhat strangely initiated claim of Tash-Kourgan as place of origin, is in fact, most likely sheer fiction. In any case, Mr. Malraux would still have to produce the necessary proof that he really did excavate the pieces there. For the fact is that his collection had a previous owner, who had already offered numerous pieces of his collection to the Berlin Ethnographic Museum before Mr. Malraux acquired them. That many pieces of the Malraux collection are not in Berlin today is to be attributed only to the meager state of our resources.[38]

In the journal *Pantheon*, meanwhile, the art historian Ludwig Bachhofer (1894–1976) raised the matter of form:

> The persons in question will now perhaps seek to justify themselves by declaring that these works, even if not excavated by Mr. Malraux himself, were after all excavated in those regions to the east of Pamir . . . we must point out with great emphasis that so far no art works of similar form have come to us from these regions, for all the plastic works of central Asia which Sir Aurel Stein, le Coq and Pelliot excavated on the northern and southern borders of Chinese Turkestan belong to entirely different art spheres with completely dissimilar forms.[39]

Instead, Bachhofer points to the Hadda site Tapa-i-Kafariha, reproduced in Barthoux's *Excavations at Hadda* (1930).[40] Indeed, a bodhisattva head in the Malraux collection "falls astonishingly close to the heads reproduced in Barthoux."[41] As far as Bachhofer is concerned, Hadda is the source of Malraux's heads. Later, however, Benjamin Rowland (1904–72) would state that Malraux's finds "were in actuality acquired from clandestine excavations in the Peshewar area south-east of Hadda."[42]

The playing field was arguably not level between Malraux and his scholarly critics. But Malraux's concerns lay not with the scientific documentation, epigraphic and philological analysis, and historical study that preoccupied Waldschmidt, Bachhofer, and others but with demonstrating that art, unbounded by history and context, expresses universal humanity through shared aesthetic form.[43] Characteristically, Malraux's reply to his critics was laden with sarcasm:

> The exhibition of objects I brought back from Central Asia has set the mercury climbing, which is predictable. There are those who are surprised to see so many heads without bodies (whereas the Guimet has fewer bodies than we do) . . . Never mind . . . As I have already said, if there are only heads, it is because I am still making feet; and the places I dug in were revealed to me by a séance table. But next year, I'll take a bailiff with me.[44]

Certainly one might accuse Malraux of taxing the truth in his explanations of his Afghan stuccos – to suggest their authenticity, not to mention his own virility.

But his responses to the academy suggest, more potently perhaps, a form of antiknowledge production, one that should be juxtaposed with the positivist practices of his scholarly critics and their faith in empirical truth. One wonders, for instance, if the scholars were upset by undocumented objects or at being scooped by an amateur.[45] Nowhere in the critics' disgruntled commentary, meanwhile, is there concern for the removal of objects from the colonial sphere of Central Asia to Europe.

Gothic-Buddhist Sculpture

Art-savvy audiences in interwar Paris were familiar with headless bodies, torsoless heads, hands, and other sculptural body parts, be it the Louvre's Egyptian, Greek, and Roman treasures or the Musée Guimet's Chinese, Japanese, Khmer, and Afghan finds.[46] They sampled from the mesmeric masks, fetishes, and sundry remains removed from the French colonies to the Musée d'Ethnographie and displayed at the Colonial Expositions. Exclusive galleries channeled heads, sections of relief sculpture, and more or less intact figures into private salons and artists' studios. The photographic reproduction of art, instrumental to the art market, expanded the visual library of enthralling fragments.[47]

Malraux's "Gothic-Buddhist" sculptures, a number of which sold despite the crash of 1929, joined this world of precious pieces.[48] For some viewers, they may have evoked the ruins of exotic, distant lands now made proximate in the gallery. But the romantic sensations they incited were probably joined by and infused with modernist interests in the fragment. The avant-garde's disintegration (and reanimation) of representation in the interwar years was enacted partly through "all so many heads floating free of their bodies"[49] and parts of the artifactural other used in mashups and reformations. Truncation and the "fortunate mutilation," therefore, resurrected the redemptive whole of art.[50] Afghanistan, it might be added, was included in the "Surrealist Map of the World" (1929).[51]

Asia had considerable allure for Malraux, although not to the point of crowding out other cultures and regions outside Europe. If in his novel, *The Temptation of the West* (*La tentation de l'occident*, 1926), he proclaimed Europe a "great cemetery where only dead conquerors sleep," Malraux's trilogy of Asian novels and early essays suggest interests in Asia that turned the aesthetic, metaphysical, and political into and, to some extent, against one another.[52] It seems fair to conclude that Malraux's interest in Buddhism lay not in doctrine, icons, and living Buddhists, but in the manifestation of a particular Buddhist spirituality in sculpted and painted faces as it related to the problem of "humanism."[53] Indeed, the "Buddha's smile" was an established trope by the early twentieth century, one that Malraux was surely aware of, and is manifest in his formulation of the Gothic-Buddhist. Western audiences were often captivated with sensations of the sublime and mystical that the faces of Buddhist sculpture seemed to provoke. Victor Segalen put it this way: "because these faces of Buddhas, which

are expressionless both by nature and by dogma, cannot be called beautiful in a material sense, they were credited with a spiritual beauty, 'spirituality.' People went into ecstasies over them. The rest was up to the dealers."[54] Such responses, as Segalen described them, share something with Malraux's emphasis upon formal and psychological values. Within the scholarly community (and for dealers such as C. T. Loo), meanwhile, there was what, in hindsight, I would call the "smile periodization" of early Chinese Buddhist sculpture: the faces of works of the Northern Wei dynasty (386–535 CE) were deemed "archaic," the faces of statues dated to the Sui (589–618) were "enigmatic," and those of the Tang (618–907) "animate."[55] Chronology, however, is of negligible importance to Malraux.

Despite Segalen's dismissal of the material and aesthetic value of Buddhist sculpture, the 1910 and 1920s were years in which numerous European and North American expeditions were conducted in Asia, international exhibitions of Asian art were gaining in size and diversity, and publications devoted to Asian art were becoming more lavish and accessible.[56] If there was any single place in Paris to see a profusion of Buddhist heads, as well as more intact statues, meanwhile, it was the Guimet.[57] Malraux appears to have been a habitué of its galleries, where he would have encountered, for instance, Head of a Buddha from Tapa-Kalan, Hadda. For Malraux, however, the *NRF* sculptures presented a very different set of faces – faces that he wanted viewers to appreciate.

In his brief texts on the *NRF* Afghan heads Malraux wrote with modernist zeal inclined toward incantatory rather than explanatory prose, shifting near-fantastical imagery, and resistance to chronology.[58] His voice is also that of the adventurer returned from the high passes of Central Asia and of the connoisseur-critic authorized to explicate the "Gothic-Buddhist." The *Greco*-Buddhist, it might be noted, was quite familiar at the time, for a debate regarding the influence of Hellenistic sculptors in Bactria upon the origins of the first figural representations of the Buddha, said to appear in the Gandharan region of northwestern India in the second through third centuries CE, had preoccupied scholars since the nineteenth century.[59] But Malraux points to something different in the Afghan fragments:

> Unknown crowns: traits of race encountered for the first time in Asiatic sculpture; the nature of the mystery that surrounds these statues is, provisionally, unique in the world. These Buddhist figures bathe in the same troubled atmosphere as the bronze [age] pre-Hittites, as the countenances of magicians in the bas-reliefs of Boghaz-Khan – tragic Ubus that would have really been kings – as the demons of Mesopotamia with heads divided in the form of trees . . . Our mind is stopped here, seduced, because it seeks references, ceaselessly has the impression that it is approaching them, and does not find them. We are however acquainted – albeit poorly – with this civilization of the oases of Central Asia; but at the time of Milindapanha or of Qizyl; a bit earlier or later, further to the east or to the west; in sites and times where there is no place for the Gothic character of the works that we see here.[60]

Malraux thus promotes the novelty of his Afghan heads, which came into being in the sort of dark and menacing milieu that produced stunning monuments of the ancient Near East.[61] He cautions, however, that none of the works that readers may know compare, for they lack the "Gothic."

Malraux was not the first to compare Asian and Gothic sculpture. Guillaume le Gentil de la Galasière (1725–92), traveling in India from 1760 to 1768, wrote of sculpture "exactly similar in taste to those which are preserved in our Gothic churches."[62] Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), undoubtedly familiar with scholarship on the French Gothic, likened a statue of the Eleven-Headed Kannon at the Japanese temple Yakushiji "to the statues upon the façades of Amiens and Rheims." This "Japanese naturalization of far-away Greek types," he suggests, "so parallels the medieval unconsciousness of the classic tradition that remotely conditions its work, as to justify us in adopting for this style, if not for the Greco-Buddhist art as a whole, 'the Buddhist Gothic.'" Unlike Malraux, Fenollosa's concern lay with demonstrating the evolution of Asian art – hence "Buddhist" before "Gothic."[63] In 1928, meanwhile, the art critic Waldemar George (1893–1970) suggested that the Musée Guimet's relief of *The Assault of Mara*, from the life of the Buddha, "belongs to the Gothic family in the sense that it is based on violent contrasts of heights and depths, a free style and a treatment of the heads in places with sharp ridges."[64]

Malraux reworked the Gothic-Buddhist pairing. To make his stuccos knowable and enthralling, and enhance their value, he sought to explain (away) the temporal and geographic disjuncture of two Gothics: the Gothic of third- through fifth-century CE Central Asia and that of thirteenth-century Europe.[65]

> "But," someone says to me, "the same causes produce the same effects: both Gothics, this one here and the one from Reims, show us the transformation of a classical art by a religious spirit that dominates pity . . ." Classical art? In Asia – a Hellenistic art dominated by the will of seduction, absolutely master of its means; in Europe – a Roman or Byzantine art, indifferent to seduction, submitted to the portrait or to the schema, essentially maladroit . . . Between the end of the empire and the Gothic European, there was the Roman, and here is the fascinating element of these statues [from Afghanistan]: we are in the face of a Gothic *without the Roman*.[66]

The Gothic of Europe, which arose from the classical age with the intervening impact of Roman art, is embodied for Malraux in the dense, diverse sculptural program of Notre-Dame de Reims (mid-thirteenth century). The Gothic of the Afghan stuccos, meanwhile, developed from a Hellenized beginning (like Greco-Buddhist sculpture) without the intervention of Roman art. Malraux then links the two Gothics not through influence but through shared sculptural "sentiment":

> at Reims and here, the same sentiment expresses itself: tenderness in front of the human being conceived as a living creature and not as a creature of pain. In both arts, a sublimated face: here the prince that will become the Buddha gives the essential note, there the angel, and these two faces, by their very nature, escape from pain.[67]

In the faces from Afghanistan and Reims is the Gothic of tenderness, release from suffering, and earthly but liberated humanity. The sculptures' formal resonance, in Malraux's explanation, embodies the same ecstatic state, and these are faces that reveal the universal spirit of art. That the Afghan heads should evoke such sentiment is all the more remarkable, for Malraux, given the then common characterization of Buddhism as world-renouncing and aloof from emotion.[68] As Malraux put it, "we see here the moment, unique in the history of Asia, where it [Buddhism] accepted it [the world]."[69]

Unlike Fenollosa and others who posited the spread of Greco-Buddhist art into China and Japan, Malraux rejects an evolutionary-geographic sequence in favor of a suspended moment outside time and cultural particularity. Through this comparison the Afghan stuccos enter the modern aesthetic and emotional space and the French Gothic, already there, is re-aestheticized and emotionalized while enhanced as national patrimony. Not interested per se in describing the Buddhist sculptural past as "modern," Malraux's modernist turn was to promote the liberating presence in the present of two Gothics – an ancient Buddhist "then" and a more recent but still distant Christian "then" – that reveals what is truest in art.[70]

In *Les voix du silence* (1951), Malraux would exploit the medium of photography to embolden this comparison, posing on facing pages a photograph of the face of the angel from the left side of the north portal of the west façade of the Reims Cathedral with an Afghan Buddhist head (fig. 26-6).[71] Malraux wasn't shy about his manipulation of photography (scale, lighting, angle).[72] In this instance

Publisher's Note:
Image not available
in the electronic edition

FIGURE 26-6 "Le Sourire de Reims (XIIIe S)," and "Gandhara (IVe S) – Tête bouddhique" in André Malraux, *Les voix du silence*. Photograph © Éditions Gallimard.

he may have had the Afghan head – the head on the piano in the Joel photograph? – photographed so as to harmonize in pose, contrast, and sensation with an existing photograph of the Reims angel taken, apparently, by Jacques Doucet (1853–1929). The photographic "unmooring of sculpture"[73] revealed what Malraux asserted to be "a family likeness to objects that have actually but slight affinity . . . each in short, has practically lost what was specific to it – but their common style is by so much the gainer."[74] To borrow from Mary Bergstein, moreover, the photograph's "tonality of enveloping shadow allow[ed] the viewer to deny" the fragmentation of the Buddhist head from its torso.[75]

Although not entirely akin to Malraux's later dispatching abroad of icons of French culture (as France's Minister of Culture) – the *Mona Lisa* to the United States (1963) and modern French paintings (1961) and the *Venus de Milo* (1964) to Japan – the display of the *NRF* sculptures in New York was arguably an assertion of French cultural authority. Reviewers of the Stora Art Gallery exhibition of the *NRF* fragments echoed Malraux and Strzygowski's comments on the mysterious and uncanny resemblances of the Gothic and Buddhist. One even proposed that "some of the heads were attributed to the French artist, Guillaume Bouche, who lived in the twelfth century."[76] That collectors were captivated by such resemblance is suggested by two heads in the collection of the Harvard University professor of art Denman W. Ross (1853–1935) that were donated to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: the Afghan *Head of a Devata* (*Head of a Girl*) (fig. 26-5) and a fragment of a *Head of an Angel* identified as French Gothic of the thirteenth century.[77]

Once Malraux's Afghan Gothic-Buddhist heads were out in the open, they became sites for others to explain the relationship of east and west. Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877–1947), linking the Malraux finds with excavations at Hadda, deemed *Head of a Devata* as astonishing in its similarity in form and emotional quality to European Gothic sculpture. The temporal dilemma can be resolved, Coomaraswamy argues, because "Mahayana Buddhism and Mediaeval Christianity, however independent, are emotionally akin, and we can only say that on the one hand in Asia, on the other in Europe, at a certain stage in the stylistic sequence, the two faiths found expression in analogous forms of art."[78] What may distinguish Coomaraswamy's interpretation from that of Malraux, despite a shared turn to emotive content, was an underlying allegiance to periodization; art proceeds through sequences of style be it in Afghanistan or France. For Malraux, sequences of this sort were strictures of the old world to be abandoned.

Redeeming Faces from Oblivion

Malraux sought to incite a sense of wonderment arising from sculpture of resonant form and affect; he wants his viewers to feel through comparison.[79] One can admit the potent resemblance. For art audiences unfamiliar with Gandharan Buddhist sculpture, meanwhile, the Afghan stuccos excavated from Hadda in the

late 1920s and those acquired by Malraux may have been tantalizingly novel even as this allure depended upon "intimate distance" – exotic, they were nevertheless accessible through their assumed relationship to western art.[80] This was by no means unusual: a refrain of western art historical writing of the 1920s and 1930s was the accessibility of the Other through the Self. As Roger Fry (1866–1934) put it, Chinese sculpture can be appreciated, "if one approaches it in the same mood of attentive passivity which we cultivate before an Italian masterpiece of the Renaissance, or a Gothic or Romanesque sculpture."[81]

Comparison with the sculpture at Reims was potent not simply in artistic and psychological terms but in national symbolism and rhetoric. A monument of the French Gothic, the cathedral was a fertile ground for modern French art and identity. Bombarded by German artillery on September 14, 1914, the cathedral was reduced to "a sort of sinister skeleton charred by flames . . . to which cling still, here and there, a few fragments of the most wondrous sculptures of Virgins and Angels."[82] "Martyred" during World War I, it underwent restoration through the 1920 and 1930s and arose to symbolize a France that had survived invasion and been reborn. In this context, the approachable and seemingly knowable resemblance of the two Gothics – expressing "radiant ecstasy" as Benjamin Rowland put it[83] – may have been seen to dispel the trauma of the war. Indeed, as a reviewer of C. T. Loo's 1931 exhibition of Chinese art put it, "Many of the large pieces of ancient sculpture look out with peculiarly serene faces toward the turmoil of the twentieth century."[84] To behold the fragmented Buddha heads, despite the violence that produced them and lingered at ragged edges, was perhaps therapeutic; rather than traces of destruction, they were faces of rebirth. Thus, to reduce Malraux's two Gothics simply to the allure of beguiling smiles, those of Buddhist figures and those of the famous angels of Reims, is to ignore the poignant possibility of joy and liberation.[85] If in the modern world "man has lost his visage," as Malraux put it, "this same 'disfeatured' man has redeemed the world's noblest of faces from oblivion."[86] Having recovered these faces, Malraux sought "resuscitations of the past" for the creation of a new world.[87]

Despite this goal of redemption, Malraux's infatuation with the "sentiment" shared by the Gothic-Buddhist and French Gothic should be contextualized in relation to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial deracination of Asian artifacts and the agendas (intellectual, aesthetic, and commercial) of the west. In this sense, the Afghan heads and faces served Malraux, and perhaps others, as a "place from which to think various moral and philosophical issues (the relation to death, to others, or the aesthetic impulse) on a global scale and precisely as a condition of a universalized humanity beyond historical or cultural particularity."[88] Put differently, Malraux engages in epistemological herding, in which the Afghan heads are driven into the domain of the western visual and aesthetic tradition and the modern narrative of the interrelation, interaction, or simultaneity of cultures east and west, ultimately to be made part of what would later be described as Malraux's "total world of art forms" aligned with "the condition and the destiny of man."[89]

Malraux's project also performed a cultural and lexical hyphenation within a nationalistic ideology that rendered nonwestern artifactual discoveries amenable to taxonomies of art historical style and histories of World Art.[90] As Stanley Abe notes, the debate over the origins of the first images of the Buddha led to a "profusion of hyphenated terms" including Indo-Hellenic, Indo-Roman, Romano-Buddhist, Greco-Afghan, and so on.[91] Malraux's Gothic-Buddhist was a particular sort of hyphenation, for he did not posit a western origin and influence, the crux of the Greco-Buddhist debate, or emphasize the Buddhist anticipation of the Gothic. Instead he evokes the sympathy of historically disjunctive form and the perception of shared psychological content; we are to be awakened and surprised by this commonality without concern for archaeological provenance or temporal-cultural context. It should not be forgotten, however, that the awakening of the universal humanity that Malraux sought (even if it arose partly in response to the trauma of World War I) was dependent upon works of art that, as commodities in the market, were the subject of considerable competition among European and North American collectors and destined, through their exhibition and explication, to serve national agendas.

After the *NRF* and New York exhibitions of the Afghan stuccos and hubbub over their Gothic-Buddhist character, Malraux apparently retained a dozen or so heads (presumably hidden during World War II), the most famous being *Le génie aux fleurs.* The head that appeared on the piano in the Joel photograph is now owned by his daughter Florence.[92] During the postwar decades, Malraux's Buddha heads may have served as "sites of memory" even as he may have endeavored to acquire more fragments in his capacity as France's culture minister.[93] During his 1965 visit to China, Malraux appears to have proposed a loan exhibition of Chinese art that would include, as the biographer Todd puts it, "high-relief sculptures cut out to be shown in Paris."[94] Malraux even had one of the Afghan heads sawn into two profiles – fragmenting the fragment to achieve, perhaps, a new sort of "sentiment" arising from affective volume juxtaposed with silhouette.[95] Heads also crop up in recollections of Malraux. Ilya Ehrenburg (1891–1967), describing Malraux's apartment at 44 rue du Bac, commented that "He lives surrounded by Buddhas, but this doesn't stop him from being deeply concerned by the economic problems of the world." Other heads served Malraux as a form of currency. Paul Valéry's (1871–1945) living room displayed a Buddhist head given to him by Malraux; the poet is said to have grumbled: "He was my publisher. He did that awful edition of the *Odes* that didn't sell very well. At least I suppose it didn't, for he was never able to pay me. In the end, after I complained, he gave me that, one of the things he stole in Indochina, I suppose." "To close friends," Todd notes, "Malraux will sometimes . . . offer a little Gothico-Buddhist head, like a very big box of chocolates."[96]

Stucco Buddha heads from Afghanistan still attract interest in the art world. A March 20, 2009 sale at Christie's, New York included a stucco head of a bodhisattva (from a "Private Japanese collection, acquired in the 1990s") that sold for US$2,500.[97] Where this head came from, and when it left Afghanistan, may

be anyone's guess, but Malraux, if he were alive, could no doubt offer incantatory words for the sentiment evoked by its striking face, "redeemed" perhaps from a landscape of ruin in a recent age of trauma.

Acknowledgments

This essay is dedicated to Joanna Williams. My sincere thanks to Mont Allen, Sherry Ehya, Christine Guth, Jacqueline Jung, Sonal Khullar, William Ma, Mia M. Mochizuki, Tom McDonough, Michael Nylan, David Pettersen, and Yueni Zhong. Bridget Alsdorf assisted at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Writing began with a grant from the Townsend Center for the Humanities, U.C. Berkeley.

Notes

1 Malraux, *The Voices of Silence*, 619 (italics in original). Tom McDonough suggests that "taches" refers to Tachisme and "volumes" to Abstraction Froide (personal communication).

2 San Francesco, Arezzo, Italy. The artist was "rediscovered" during the post-World War I *retour à l'ordre*.

3 See Yousuf Karsh, *Malraux* (1954). Photograph, gelatin silver print. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (1998.362): http:www.mfa.org/collections/object/andre-malraux-97628.

4 See Lyotard, *Signed, Malraux*, 265–6.

5 In a second photograph, a Buddha head and bust of a woman by Jean Fautrier (1898–1964) sit on the piano.

6 Malraux's use of photography no doubt had multiple antecedents and inspirations: Aby Warburg's (1866–1929) *Mnemosyne Atlas* tableau of the late 1920s; Walter Benjamin's (1892–1940) essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936); Heinrich Wölfflin's (1864–1945) comparative method; and George Bataille's *Documents* (1929–30). See Krauss, "Postmodernism's Museum," 341, 344–6; Savedoff, *Transforming Images*, 153–7.

7 Lyotard, *Signed, Malraux*, 82.

8 Malraux is not generally taken to be a chief voice in the art history of Asia, but his universalist and psychological proposals regarding art require consideration alongside of the official and scholarly narratives that are more often the focus of study. I thank Rebecca Brown for emphasizing this point to me.

9 This apt characterization was suggested by Sonal Khullar (personal communication).

10 *New York Times*, "'Art Agent' Is Sentenced"; Fujiwara, *Orientarisuto*, ch. 5; Norindr, *Phantasmatic Indochina*, ch. 4.

11 Gaston Gallimard established the gallery in 1929; Malraux served as a supplier. Todd, *Malraux*, 97–8.

12 Malraux, *Oeuvres Gothico-Bouddhiques* and "Exposition Gothico-Bouddhique."

13 See Wang, "Loouvre from China."

14 Stucco, often using molds, was employed in sites such as Hadda and Taxila. The material (slaked lime, gypsum, or chalk) was applied to a core of sand, clay, or pebbles, combined with lime, straw, or hair. Czuma and Morris, *Kushan Sculpture*, 215–16.
15 Todd, *Malraux*, chs. 5, 6.
16 Malraux, *The Royal Way*, 87. On Malraux's colonial writing, see Ha, *Figuring the East*, ch. 3.
17 Malraux wrote a preface for *L'Exposition D. Galanis*, Galerie de la Licorne, Paris (1922); published "A propos des illustrations de Galanis," in *Arts et Métiers graphiques* 4 (April, 1928); and in December 1931 organized an exhibition of works by Jean Fautrier. Todd, *Malraux*, 100; Lyotard, *Signed, Malraux*, 295–6.
18 Faure, *Double Exposure*, 62–3; Chang, "Collecting Asia"; Rubinger, *An American Scientist*, 42–4.
19 Fiction, for Malraux, was as useful as fact for revealing the human condition. Savedoff, *Transforming Images*, 172.
20 In *Antimémoirs* (1967), 73–4, Malraux (referring imaginatively to himself, no doubt) described "the mingled sound of horses and lorries of the Afridis clattering down the mountain slopes as in Kipling's time into some Afghan or Indian town, and the caravan of the archaeologist who had just discovered several hundred Greco-Buddhist stucco statues."
21 Cates, *André Malraux*, 147.
22 See Wilson, "Afghanistan." Malraux's research prior to his Cambodia escapade suggests that the Afghanistan trip was informed of French excavations and finds. See Fujiwara, *Orientarisuto*, 241–54.
23 Malraux, *Voici que vient l'été*, 117–36.
24 Todd, *Malraux*, 100; Cates, *André Malraux*, 148–9.
25 The Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan, established in 1922, split its finds between the Kabul Museum and Musée Guimet. Olivier-Utard, *Politique et archéologie*.
26 Poulain, "L'écrivain archéologue"; Todd, *Malraux*, 96–7; Cates, *André Malraux*, 154–5.
27 Vitry was a scholar of medieval and Renaissance sculpture, Dussaud of the ancient Near East.
28 Full discussion of Malraux's colonial/anticolonial views is not possible here. One might consider the Afghan stuccos exhibition in early 1931 in relation to the Exposition Coloniale Internationale and Surrealist Contre-Exposition later that year. See Norindr, *Phantasmatic Indochina*, ch. 3.
29 Hsieh, *From Occupation to Revolution*, 25.
30 It is Malraux's fictional counterpart, Vannec, in *La voie royale*, who holds such credentials. Malraux's claim of serving as an advisor during the Communist insurrection in Canton has been discounted.
31 Established dealers such as C. T. Loo and Yamanaka Sadajirō (1866–1936) cultivated similar persona. Wang, "Loouvre from China," 18, 22, 150.
32 Raphael Stora, who ran galleries in Paris and New York in the 1930s, sold works of Gothic statuary, "Hittite," Etruscan, and Greek bronze sculpture, African masks, as well as other sculptural works. Several Gothic statues were purchased by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The New York gallery was located at 670 Fifth Avenue.

33 The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and, it appears, the City Art Museum, St. Louis, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Farnsworth Museum, Wellesley, acquired heads. See *The Art Digest*, "'Gothic' Art in Asia"; Siple, "Stucco Sculptures" and "Recent Acquisitions,"109; *New York Times*, "Museum Buys Asian Art"; Coomaraswamy, "A Stucco Head"; Bachhofer, "Oriental Art."

34 Strzygowski became famous for insisting upon the Oriental (especially Iranian), rather than Greek or Roman, sources of late antique and medieval European art and architecture. That he later became a Nazi sympathizer may have shocked Malraux. On Strzygowski see Marchand, "Rhetoric of Artifacts."

35 Strzygowski, *Afghan Stuccos* includes photographs from Sir Aurel Stein's 1906 excavation at Shorchuk, Karashahr, that function as surrogate *in situ* evidence. See Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art*, figs. 5.44l, 5.44o.

36 Gandharan sculpture was first shown in Europe in 1873 and New York in 1926. Strzygowski, *Afghan Stuccos*, 4–5, 7; Todd, *Malraux*, 99–100. Hadda was an ancient pilgrimage site famed for the shrine of the Buddha's skull-bone relic. Military conflicts since the 1980s have largely destroyed the site.

37 Heilmaier, "Gotisch-Buddhistische," translated by Mont Allen.

38 Waldschmidt, "Die Stuccoplastik," 2, 3, translated by Mont Allen. European, Japanese, and American collectors were in active competition. See *New York Times*, "American Collector Gets Rare Collection."

39 Bachhofer, "Eine Sammlung Nordwestindischer Stuckplastik."

40 Tapa-Kalan was the source of many of the Guimet's Hadda fragments.

41 Bachhofer, "Eine Sammlung Nordwestindischer Stuckplastik," 84.

42 Rowland, "A Cycle of Gandhara," 125.

43 "Those interested in scientific considerations and the problems they pose will find an account in the works of the French Delegation in Afghanistan on the excavations at Hadda Al-Hadda by J. Barthoux, their director." Quoted in Todd, *Malraux*, 97.

44 Ibid.

45 Many scholars supported the removal of Asian artifacts for study in Europe and North America. See Wang, "Loouvre from China," 192–9. That the academy may not have attacked C. T. Loo (who trafficked undocumented objects) suggests that Malraux's lack of membership in this level of the art world may have spurred criticism.

46 The sculptural head and mask were potent sites of encounter between the west and non-west, partly due to the allure of the exotic and the face as locus of visual presence and psychology. Still influential were the physiognomic theories of Johann Caspar Lavater (1741–1801), Charles Bell (1774–1842), and Charles Darwin (1809–82). Note too the ethnographic busts of Charles Cordier (1827–1905) and Malvina Hoffman (1887–1966).

47 On photography and the art market, see Wang, "Loouvre from China," 54, 169, 229; Abe, "Collecting," 436.

48 On collecting before the crash, see Wang, "Loouvre from China," 33–6. Todd recounts, from records in the Gallimard archive, that: "One aspect [of the *NRF* gallery] remains sunny throughout: sales of heads from Asia. . . . For a Gothico-Buddhist head of twenty centimeters, offered at 27,000 francs, it is advised to let it go, if necessary, at 24,000 francs." Todd, *Malraux*, 98.

49 See Baker, "Artwork," 53.

50 Zerner, "Malraux," 118; Bergstein, "'We May Imagine It'," 11; Meijers, "The Museum," 15.

51 "Le monde au temps des Surrealistes," published in *Variétés*, special issue *Le Surréalisme en 1929* (June, 1929). Afghanistan, Tibet, and China figured in Surrealist Orientalism; André Breton's antinationalist efforts used an idealized eastern thought to counter western rationalism. Silver, *Esprit de Corps*, 393; Antle, "Surrealism and the Orient," 4–5.
52 Ha, *Figuring the East*, 48–9; Malraux, *The Temptation of the West*, 121.
53 See Lebovics, *Mona Lisa's Escort*, 82; Ha, *Figuring the East*, 48.
54 Faure, *Double Exposure*, 61.
55 Bosch Reitz, "Khmer Sculpture" and "The Statue of a Bodhisattva"; Sirén, "An Exhibition of Chinese Sculptures," 217; George, "Art in France," 206; Wang, "Loouvre from China," 135–7.
56 The Musée Cernuschi 1913 exhibition of Buddhist art and Akademie der Künste, Berlin 1929 Chinese art exhibition were well noted on both sides of the Atlantic. Abe, "Collecting," 436–8.
57 The Musée Guimet, which opened in Paris in 1889, was the repository for works acquired by Édouard Chavennes (China, 1893); Paul Pelliot (China, Central Asia; 1906–9), Alfred Foucher (Afghanistan, 1896–7; 1922), Joseph Hackin (Afghanistan, 1924); and Jules Barthoux (Afghanistan, 1926–7). Southeast Asian works moved to the Guimet from the Musée Indochinois du Trocadéro (est. 1882), and donations also swelled the collection. Jarrige *et al.*, *Spiritual Journey*, 17, 88; Foucher, "Greek Origin," 111. On Malraux at the Guimet, see Lyotard, *Signed, Malraux*, 80.
58 Harris, *André Malraux*, 175–6.
59 Abe, "Inside the Wonder House"; Wang, "Loouvre from China," 128–9. Malraux had probably read Foucher, "L'origine grecque de l'image du Bouddha" (1912).
60 Malraux, *Oeuvres Gothico-Bouddhiques*, 3. I thank Sherry Ehya and David Pettersen for their translations.
61 Malraux refers to the reliefs at Yazilikaya completed by Tudhaliya IV (1227–1209 BCE) near Bogazkoy, Turkey. Malraux was not alone in stressing the mysterious darkness of the past. See Wang, "Loouvre from China," 172.
62 Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters,* 115.
63 Fenollosa, *Epochs*, vol. 1, 51, 74, 106.
64 George, "Art in France." Display in Paris of finds from Hadda, before the *NRF* exhibition, led to the use of the term "Gothico-Buddhist art" and comparison to the gargoyles of gothic cathedrals. Strzygowski, *Afghan Stuccos*, 17; Reau, "Art Activities," 44.
65 Malraux was no doubt familiar with Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture* (1854–68), Paul Vitry, *Le cathédral de Reims* (1919), and Henri Focillon's (1881–1943) study of Romanesque sculpture.
66 Malraux, *Oeuvres Gothico-Bouddhiques*, 4–5; italics in original.
67 Malraux, *Oeuvres Gothico-Bouddhiques*, 6.
68 Payne, *Portrait of André Malraux*, 162.
69 Malraux, *Oeuvres Gothico-Bouddhiques.*
70 Perhaps Malraux, like other modernists, "understood the Middle Ages to be a period of cultural unity, of true socialism, of the brother-hood of man that . . . found perfect spiritual expression in the Gothic cathedral." Bismanis, "Necessity of Discovery," 117.
71 Malraux's *Psychologie de l'art* (1948) reproduces several *NRF* stuccos but does not juxtapose the Reims angel and Afghan head. Malraux, *Psychologie de l'art*, vol. 2, 34–5. See Kurmann, *La façade de la cathédrale de Reims*, vol. 2, figs. 8, 848, 853.

72 Hershberger, "Malraux's Photography," 272; Zerner, "Malraux," 119–22.
73 Hamill, "David Smith," 26.
74 Malraux, *Voices of Silence*, 21.
75 Bergstein, "Lonely Aphrodites," 488.
76 *Art* Digest, "'Gothic' Art in Asia"; Harris, "Art That Is Now Being Shown."
77 Karnaghan, "Ross Collection," 18.
78 Coomaraswamy, "A Stucco Head," 42. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, also acquired the *NRF Bodhisattva Maitreya* (1931.267): Rowland, "A Cycle," 127.
79 Norindr, *Phantasmatic Indochina*, 90.
80 This was true too for Greco-Buddhist sculpture. Wang, "Loouvre from China," 129. Commenting on a Gandharan Buddha, Foucher ("Greek Origin," 119–20) urged: "Your European eyes have in this case no need of the help of any Indianist." For "intimate distance," see Stewart, *On Longing*, 147.
81 Fry, *Chinese Art*, 1.
82 "The Cathedral of Rheims, 1211–1914," 6; Balcon et al., *Mythes et realities.*
83 Rowland, "A Cycle," 126.
84 Wang, "Loouvre from China," 170–1.
85 Binski, "Angel Choir"; Svanberg, "Gothic Smile."
86 From the epigraph to *Voices of Silence.*
87 Ibid., 619.
88 Van Den Abbeele "*L'Asie fantôme*," 650.
89 Lewis, "Malraux," 21.
90 Abe, "Inside the Wonder House," 80, 83; Wang, "Loouvre from China," 133.
91 Abe, "Inside the Wonder House," 72–3. George Groslier termed pre-Angkor sculpture "Graeco-Gupta." Jarrige et al., *Spiritual Journey*, 26.
92 For recent exhibition of two works see Réunion des musées nationaux de France et al., *Afghanistan*, 132–3.
93 The term is Pierre Nora's; see "Between Memory and History."
94 Todd, *Malraux*, 384–5.
95 Lyotard, *Signed, Malraux*, 286–7. A photo of the split head, taken in 1977, is found in the Getty Images database: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/51513405/AFP.
96 These recollections appear in Todd, *Malraux*, 101.
97 Lot 1249, Sale 2271; www.christies.com. The head was probably looted during the Afghan Civil War (1978–present).

References

Abe, S. "Collecting Chinese Sculpture: Paris, New York, Boston." In *Journeys East: Isabella Stewart Gardner and Asia*, 432–42. Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2009.

Abe, S. "Inside the Wonder House." In *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism Under Colonialism*, edited by Donald Lopez, Jr., 63–106. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995,

Antle, M. "Surrealism and the Orient." *Yale French Studies* 109, Surrealism and Its Others (2006): 4–16.

The Art Digest. "'Gothic' Art in Asia Presents a Mystery." *The Art Digest* (April 1, 1931): 14.

Bachhofer, L. "Eine Sammlung Nordwestindischer Stuckplastik [An Assemblage of Stucco Sculpture from Northwest India]." *Pantheon* 10 (Nov., 1932): 348–51 (English translation, 83–4).

Bachhofer, L. "Oriental Art in America. Recent Acquisitions in American Museums." *The Art Bulletin* 20, no. 2 (June 1938): 232.

Baker, G. "The Artwork Caught by the Tail." *October* 97 (Summer 2001): 51–90.

Balcon, S., M. Bouxin, B. Decrock, and D. Liot. *Mythes et réalities de la cathédral de Reims* [*Myths and Facts of the Cathedral of Reims*]. Paris: Somogy Editions d'Art, 2001.

Bergstein, M. "Lonely Aphrodites: On the Documentary Photography of Sculpture." *The Art Bulletin* 74 no. 3 (Sept. 1992): 475–98.

Bergstein, M. "'We May Imagine It': Living with Photographic Reproduction at the End of Our Century." In *Art History Through the Camera's Lens*, edited by Helene E. Roberts, 3–34. Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1995.

Binski, R. "The Angel Choir at Lincoln and the Poetics of the Gothic Smile." *Art History* 20 no. 3 (Sept. 1997): 350–74.

Bismanis, M. R. "The Necessity of Discovery." *Gesta* 28 no. 2 (1989): 115–20.

Bosch Reitz, S. C. "Khmer Sculpture." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 18 no. 5 (May 1923): 129–30.

Bosch Reitz, S. C. "The Statue of a Bodhisattva from Yun-Kang." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 17 no. 12, Part 1 (Dec. 1922): 254, 255.

Cates, C. *André Malraux: A Biography*. London: Hutchinson, 1995.

"The Cathedral of Rheims, 1211–1914." Special number, *L'Art et les artistes*. Paris: 1915.

Chang, T. "Collecting Asia: Théodore Duret's *Voyage en Asie* and Henri Cernuschi's Museum." *Oxford Art Journal* 25 no. 1 (2002): 23–5.

Coomaraswamy, A. "A Stucco Head from Central Asia." *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* (Boston) 29 no. 173 (June 1931): 39–43.

Czuma, S. J., with Rekha Morris. *Kushan Sculpture: Images from Early India*. Cleveland, OH: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1985.

Faure, B. *Double Exposure: Cutting Across Buddhist and Western Discourses*. Translated by Janet Lloyd. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004.

Fenollosa, E. F. *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art: An Outline History of East Asiatic Design*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1913 [1912].

Foucher, A. "The Greek Origin of the Image of the Buddha." In *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, translated by L.A. Thomas and F. W. Thomas, 111–37. Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1917.

Fry, R. *Chinese Art: An Introductory Review of Painting, Ceramics, Textiles, Bronzes, Sculpture, Jade, etc*. London: B. T. Batsford, 1925.

Fujiwara, S. *Orientarisuto no yūutsu: shokuminchishūgi jidai no Furansu Tōyōgakusha to Ankoru iseki no kōkogaku* [*Melancholia of the Orientalist: French Orientalist Scholars in the Colonial Period and the Archaeology of Angkor Wat*]. Tokyo: Mekong, 2008.

George, W. "Art in France: Khmer and Indian Art in the Musée Guimet." *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 52 no. 301 (April 1928): 206.

Ha, M. *Figuring the East: Segalen, Malraux, Duras, and Barthes*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.

Hamill, S. "David Smith in Two Dimensions: Sculpture, Photography, and Space." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2007.

Harris, G. T. *André Malraux: A Reassessment*. London: Macmillan, 1996.

Harris, R. G. "Art That is Now Being Shown in Various New York Galleries." *New York Times* (March 29, 1931): X13.

Heilmaier, H. "Gotisch-Buddhistische und Indo-Helenistische Plastiken in der Galerie NRF [Gothic-Buddhist and Indo-Hellenistic Sculpture in the NRF Gallery]." *Pantheon* 9 no. 4 (April 1931): xxvii.

Hershberger, A. E. "Malraux's Photography." *History of Photography* 26 no. 4 (Winter 2002): 269–75.

Hsieh, Y. Y. *From Occupation to Revolution: China through the Eyes of Loti, Claudel, Segalen, and Malraux (1895–1933)*. Birmingham: Summa Publications, 1996.

Jarrige, J., J. Gies, and A. Ertug. *Spiritual Journey: Sacred Art from Musée Guimet*. Paris: Ertug and Kocabiyik, 2004.

Karnaghan, A. "The Ross Collection." *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* (Boston) 30 no. 177 (February 1932): 8–21.

Krauss, R. E. "Postmodernism's Museum Without Walls." In *Thinking About Exhibitions*, edited by R. Greenberg, B. W. Ferguson, and S. Nairne, 341–8. London: Routledge, 1996.

Kurmann, P. *La façade de la cathédrale de Reims* [*The Façade of the Cathedral of Reims*], vol. 2. Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1987.

Lebovics, H. *Mona Lisa's Escort: André Malraux and the Reinvention of French Culture*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Lewis, R. W. B. "Malraux and His Critics." In *André Malraux*, edited by Harold Bloom, 21–32. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988.

Lyotard, J. *Signed, Malraux*. Translated by Robert Harvey. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Malraux, A. *Antimemoirs*. Translated by T. Kilmartin. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

Malraux, A. "Exposition Gothico-Bouddhique. – Exposition Gréco-Bouddhique (Galerie de la NRF) [Gothic-Buddhist Exhibition; Greco-Buddhist Exhibition]." *La Nouvelle Revue Française* 209 (February 1931): 298–300.

Malraux, A. *Oeuvres Gothico-Bouddhiques du Pamir* [*Gothic-Buddhist Works of the Pamir*]. Paris: Gallimard, 1930.

Malraux, A. *La psychologie de l'art* [*The Psychology of Art*]. 3 vols. Geneva: A. Skira, 1947–50.

Malraux, A. *The Royal Way*. Translated by S. Gilbert. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas, 1935.

Malraux, A. *The Temptation of the West*. Translated by Robert Hollander. New York: Vintage Books, 1961.

Malraux, A. *The Voices of Silence*. Translated by S. Gilbert. New York: Doubleday, 1953.

Malraux, C. *Voici que vient l'été* [*Here Comes the Summer*]. Paris: Grasset, 1973.

Marchand, S. L. "The Rhetoric of Artifacts and the Decline of Classical Humanism: The Case of Josef Strzygowski." *History and Theory* 33 no. 4 (Dec. 1994): 106–30.

Meijers, D. J. "The Museum and the 'Ahistorical' Exhibition." In *Thinking about Exhibitions*, edited by R. Greenberg, B. W. Ferguson, and S. Nairne, 7–20. London: Routledge, 1996.

Mitter, P. *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

New York Times. "American Collector Gets Rare Collection of Chinese Art, Collection of Buddhas and Temple Furnishings Acquired in Manchurai." *New York Times* (January 6, 1929): 60.

New York Times. "'Art Agent' Is Sentenced: Frenchman Commissioned by American Convicted of Theft in Cambodia." *New York Times* (August 3, 1924): 18.

New York Times. "Museum Buys Asian Art: Collection of Typical Ancient Khotan Pieces Acquired." *New York Times* (March 4, 1930): 15.

Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: Les lieux de mémoire." *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7–25.

Norindr, P. *Phantasmatic Indochina: French Colonial Ideology in Architecture, Film, and Literature*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996.

Olivier-Utard, F. *Politique et archéologie: Histoire de la Delegation archéologique française en Afghanistan (1922–1982)* [*Politics and Archaeology: A History of the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan, 1922–1982*]. Paris: Editions Recherche sur les civilizations, 1997.

Payne, R. *A Portrait of André Malraux*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1970.

Poulain, G. "L'écrivain archéologue. Qui sculpta les pierres que M. André Malraux a rapportées du Pamir? Des corps décapité par les Huns hephthalites . . ." [The Writer-Archaeologist: Who Sculpted these Stones Brought back from the Pamir by M. André Malraux? Bodies Decapitated by the Hephtalite Huns . . .]. *Comœdia* (January 2, 1931): v.

Reau, L. "Art Activities in Paris." *Parnassus* 1 no. 5 (May, 1929): 20–1 and 43–4.

Réunion des musées nationaux de France, M.-C. Bianchini, and C. Guichard. *Afghanistan: Une histoire millenaire* [*Afghanistan: A Thousand-Year-Old History*]. Paris: Editions de la réunion des musées nationaux, 2002.

Rhie, M. *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia*, 2 vols. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999–2002.

Rowland, B. "A Cycle of Gandhara." *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* (Boston) 63 no. 333 (1965): 114–29.

Rubinger, R., ed. *An American Scientist in Early Meiji Japan: The Autobiographical Notes of Thomas C. Mendenhall*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989.

Savedoff, B. E. *Transforming Images: What Photography Does to the Picture*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000.

Silver, K. *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914–1925*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; London: Thames and Hudson, 1989.

Siple, E. S. "Recent Acquisitions in America." *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 60 no. 347 (Feb. 1932): 109–16.

Siple, E. S. "Stucco Sculptures from Central Asia." *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 59 no 342 (Sept. 1931): 140–5.

Sirén, O. "An Exhibition of Chinese Sculptures." *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 46 no. 266 (May 1925): 217–24.

Stewart, S. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993.

Strzygowski, J. *The Afghan Stuccos of the NRF Collection*. Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française; New York, Stora Art Gallery, 1932.

Svanberg, Jan. "The Gothic Smile." In *Künstlerischer Austausch, Artistic Exchange, Akten des XXXVIII. International Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte,* Berlin, July 15–20, 1992, edited by Thomas W. Gaehtgens, vol. II, 357–70. Berlin: 1993.

Todd, O. *Malraux: A Life*. Translated by Joseph West. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.

Van Den Abbeele, G. "*L'Asie fantôme*: or, Malraux's Inhuman Condition." *MLN* 115 no. 4 (2000): 649–61.

Waldschmidt, E. "Die Stuccoplastik der Gandhära-Schule [The Stucco Sculpture of the Gandharan School]." *Berliner Museen* 53 no. 1 (1932): 2–8.

Wang, Y. "The Loouvre from China: A Critical Study of C. T. Loo and the Framing of Chinese Art in the United States, 1915–1950." PhD diss., Ohio University, 2007.

Wilson, P. W., "Afghanistan: The Kingdom of Tumult, Lying Between Russia and British India, It Is a Factor in the Great Game of Nations." *New York Times* (January 6, 1929): 86.

Zerner, H. "Malraux and the Power of Photography." In *Sculpture and Photography*, edited by Geraldine Johnson, 116–30. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Further Reading

Barthoux, J. *The Hadda Excavations*. Edited by Bruce L. Miller, translated by Nilofaur Moaven Fatemi, and Azizeh Azodi. Bangkok: SDI Publications, 2001.

Chave, A. C. "New Encounters with *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*: Gender, Race, and the Origins of Cubism." *The Art Bulletin* 76 no. 4 (Dec. 1994): 597–611.

Crimp, D. "On the Museum's Ruins." In *On the Museum's Ruins*, 44–64. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993.

Guha-Thakurta, T. *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Post-colonial India*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

King, R. *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India, and "The Mythic East."* London: Routledge, 1999.

Krauss, R. E. *The Originality of the Avant Garde and other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989.

Lacouture, J. *André Malraux*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. London: André Deutsch, 1975.

Lottman, H. *The Left Bank: Writers, Artists, and Politics from the Popular Front to the Cold War*. San Francisco: Halo Books, 1991.

Nochlin, L. *The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2001.

Orban, C. *The Culture of Fragments: Words and Images in Futurism and Surrealism*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997.

Varma, K. M. *Technique of Gandharan and Indo-Afghan Stucco Images (Including Images of Gypsum Compound)*. Santiniketan: Proddu, 1987.

Index

Page numbers in *italics* denote an illustration