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JAPANESE INK PAINTINGS

FROM AMERICAN COLLECTIONS:
THE MUROMACHI PERIOD
AN EXHIBITION
IN HONOR OF SHŪJIRŌ SHIMADA

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INTRODUCTION

Detail of
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Landscape

IN THE EARLY fourteenth century Takashina Takakane was chief painter of the Edokoro, the Bureau of Painting at the Imperial Court in Kyōto. Legend has it that he painted the first four scrolls which narrate the miraculous events connected with the founding of the temple of Ishiyama-dera near Kyōto (fig. 1). Takakane worked in the time-honored native Japanese style called Yamato-e, “the painting of Yamato” (home region of the Japanese people). He painted the rolling hills of his land in conventionalized undulations of vivid mineral green pigments, with stylized spits and swirls of opaque clouds. He created bold patterns of densely leafed trees and pines laden with clusters of needles. In his scrolls the Japanese people saw their landscape, their legends, their love of color and design.

About the same time, before 1317, a painter named Shikan — perhaps an amateur painter, a monk in one of Kamakura’s Zen monasteries — painted a very different landscape in pure ink (fig. 2), very likely from a sequence of eight hanging scrolls. Shikan’s subject had nothing to do with Japan: each scroll celebrated the beauty of one of the *Eight Views of Hsiao and Hsiang*, a pair of rivers in far-off China. The misty spires of distant mountains in Shikan’s scroll find no parallel on the Japanese islands. Shikan himself had probably never seen such peaks, but learned of them through painted landscapes brought to Japan from China.

Ink painting (*suibokuga*) is executed on paper or silk, with a wide range of values produced by black ink diluted with water. Its tools are those traditionally used for writing in China and Japan and its expressive possibilities are enormous. In contrast to the rhythms of opaque pigments arranged by a Yamato-e artist, the ink painter orchestrates combinations of descriptive outlines, suggestive textures, and evocative washes not seen in native art until the Japanese began to experiment with techniques they saw in Chinese paintings. Increased contact with the mainland during the thirteenth century hastened the educative process. The most vigorous assimilation occurred during the fourteenth century; it underwent progressive transformation during the fifteenth, and continued fully “Japanized” throughout the sixteenth. These are the centuries in Japanese history called the Muromachi period.

Muromachi is the name of the quarter northwest of the old Imperial Palace in Kyōto. Here Ashikaga Taka’uji (1305–1358), maneuvering within the political conflicts of court disputes on the succession, established his government in 1338. Japan was divided between two courts, each emperor claiming to be the sole legitimate heir to the throne. The Northern court operated from Kyōto, supported by Taka’uji, while the Southern court established its center at Yoshino, south of Nara. This epoch, called by historians the Nambokuchō (Northern and Southern dynasties), lasted until 1392, when the country was unified under one emperor. With court disputes put to rest, the government functioned under the executive leadership of the Ashikaga family in Kyōto. The Shōgun, or military chief, exercised unlimited power to which even the emperor had to yield. Descendants of the first Shōgun, Ashikaga Taka’uji, managed to keep this position, though



Figure 1. *Ishiyama-dera Engi* (*The Legends of Ishiyama-dera Temple*), scroll one, scene one, attributed to Takashina Takakane (fl. early 14th century). Handscroll, colors on paper, 33.64 cm high. Ishiyama-dera, Ōtsu, Shiga prefecture

with decreasing effectiveness, until the fifteenth Shōgun, Ashikaga Yoshi'aki, was deposed in 1573 by provincial lords. This entire period of a little over two centuries takes its name from the Muromachi quarter.

Not all Ashikaga Shōguns were powerful or even especially relevant to cultural history. Their political and social influence was strongest during the time of the third Shōgun, Yoshimitsu (r. 1368–1394), and the fourth, Yoshimochi (r. 1394–1423). These two reigns are referred to as the Kitayama epoch, after the name of Yoshimitsu's residence on "North Hill" (Kitayama) in northwestern Kyōto. This was the site of the family's chapel, the Kinkaku or "Golden Pavilion," until it was burned by an arsonist-monk in 1953. A copy of the building stands today, picturesquely overlooking a lotus pond.

By the time of the eighth Shōgun, Yoshimasa (r. 1449–1473), factionalism within the Ashikaga family led to the Ōnin Civil War, eleven years of devastation from 1467 to 1477 that left Kyōto a shambles. Yoshimasa sequestered himself in the eastern hills of Kyōto, or Higashiyama. Hence the years until Yoshimasa's death in 1490 are known as the Higashiyama period.

The political and social impact of the Ōnin Civil War should not be understated. The Ashikaga Shōguns

emerged in a precarious position; their economic base diminished as provincial families gained power. By the close of the fifteenth century, provincial military chiefs claimed local autonomy and Japan was bitterly divided. The long period of unrest from 1490 until 1573 is known by historians as the Sengoku Jidai, the Age of the Country at War.

During the first century of the Muromachi period, the development of Japanese ink painting was closely linked with the institutional, social, and cultural history of Zen Buddhism. Almost a hundred years old by the time of Ashikaga Taka'uji, the Japanese Zen community had matured during the second half of the thirteenth century under the enthusiastic patronage of the Hōjō family in the city of Kamakura. Chinese Ch'an priests determined the nature of its development: the Kenchō-ji was established in 1253 under a Chinese abbot, followed in 1282 by the Engaku-ji, built for a famous Chinese expatriate monk.

Impressive numbers of Japanese flocked to Kamakura to receive instruction from such famous Chinese. By 1325 the monastic population of Engaku-ji alone was about seven hundred. Young Japanese priests, encouraged by their Chinese masters, traveled to the continent on private trade ships to study at Chinese monasteries;



Figure 2. *Descending Geese on Sandbanks, Shikan*, inscribed by I-shan I-ning (1247–1317). Hanging scroll, one of the *Eight Views of Hsiao and Hsiang*, ink on paper, 57.6 x 30.3 cm. Satomi Collection, Kyōto

contemporary literary sources record over two hundred Japanese pilgrim-monks during the first half of the fourteenth century. Many stayed ten years or longer; at least two remained over forty years. Welcomed by their Chinese contemporaries, these Japanese priests gained first-hand knowledge from noted Confucian scholars as well as from Ch'an masters.

At this time China was dominated by a foreign dynasty, the Mongols, who had established no official diplomatic contacts and no officially sanctioned trade with Japan. Indeed, Mongol naval forces had attempted to conquer Japan in 1274, and again in 1281. Partly as a result of "barbarian" control, many Chinese intellectuals entered Ch'an monasteries, making them centers of scholarship. And to evade political unrest in their homeland, not a few prominent monks emigrated to Japan. The first half of the fourteenth century is notable as a time of extremely close contact between individuals of the two countries, and consequently as one of the most creative epochs in Sino-Japanese cultural history.

In the fourteenth century the institutional make-up of Japanese Zen monasteries was thoroughly Chinese, and Japanese monks were deeply involved in Chinese scholarship and arts. Following Chinese precedent, the most important monasteries were designated as the Gozan, or "Five Mountains." By the end of the fourteenth century, there were five Gozan temples in Kamakura (the most important were Engaku-ji and Kenchō-ji), and five in Kyōto (highest ranking were the Tenryū-ji, Shōkoku-ji, and Tōfuku-ji; of lesser importance were the Kennin-ji and Manju-ji). Overseeing all Gozan monasteries was the most prestigious and powerful of all, Nanzen-ji in Kyōto. The most prominent priests were affiliated with these institutions, and are referred to as Gozan monks.

Impressive collections of Chinese books supplemented the intellectual influence of Chinese abbots to make Gozan monasteries centers of Chinese learning. A literary movement initiated in the early fourteenth century by the Chinese expatriate monk I-shan I-ning (1247–1317; called Ichisan Ichinei in Japanese) developed among Japanese Sinophile priests. During the fourteenth century *bunjin-sō*, or "humanist monks," avidly studied Chinese literature and wrote poetry in classical Chinese. Their literary movement was called Gozan Bungaku, or "Literature of the Five Mountains." The movement was strongest during the second half of the fourteenth century, when it was led by disciples of Musō Soseki (1275–1351). Besides being spiritual advi-

Figure 3. *Hōnen Shōnin Gyōjo Gazu* (*The Biography of Saint Hōnen*), scroll four, scene four, datable 1307–17, attributed to eight artists. Handscroll, colors on paper, 33.64 cm high. Chi'on-in, Kyōto



sor to the first Shōgun, Ashikaga Taka'uji, and an extremely successful proselytizer for the Zen sect, Musō was a noted scholar. During his time, Japanese Zen studies of Chinese classics and neo-Confucian philosophy became so intense that Musō warned his contemporaries of misplaced emphasis on secular learning. Just before his death he said: "I have three classes of disciples: those who steadfastly pursue enlightenment by severing all earthly connections are considered to be the Upper Class. Those who are being trained but meddle in impure and miscellaneous studies, they are called Middle Class. Those who are merely content with savoring their own spiritual elevation, tasting just the saliva of the patriarchs, they are the Lower Class. Those whose minds are intoxicated by books other than Buddhist, and those who make writing their calling, they are laymen with shaved heads." Ironically, Musō's disciples were the monks most closely involved with Chinese literature and the arts for a century after his death. In the second half of the fourteenth century, the Gozan Bungaku movement revolved around Musō's most prominent followers, Gidō Shūshin (1324–1388) and Zekkai Chūshin (1336–1405). The school continued in the fifteenth century, but shifted its focus from Chinese literature and poetry to Confucian scholarship and historical studies.

This rich artistic context nurtured Japanese ink painting. Initially, priests who painted in the Chinese manner were amateurs, humanist monks first and painters second. Professional Buddhist painters (*ebusshi*) continued to create conservative icons executed in full color, but their works reveal the influence of Chinese ink vocabularies in ancillary motifs such as rocks and trees (see fig. 30). Traditional Yamato-e painters were also aware of the new monochrome style: a handful of narrative handscrolls in the indigenous Japanese style show ink paintings on sliding doors or folding screens (fig. 3). But the fact remains that Japanese ink painting developed in the cultural milieu of the Zen monasteries.

Two monks in particular typify the early stages of the ink-painting tradition of the first half of the fourteenth century: Moku'an Rei'en and Ka'ō. A young and promising monk from Kamakura, Moku'an went to China as a pilgrim about 1326 or 1328, visited several important monasteries, and died in 1345 without returning to his homeland. One of his best-known works, *The Four Sleepers* (fig. 4), is inscribed by a Chinese monk, bears the seal of a Chinese collector, and reflects the style Moku'an learned from his Chinese contemporaries in the Ch'an monasteries. The narrative subject, popular in Zen circles, is Han-shan and Shih-te asleep with Feng-kan and his tiger (in Japanese they are called Kanzan, Jittoku, and Bukan; see cat. no. 5). The composition focuses on the figures in the middle ground, leading the viewer toward them across a foreground articulated by zigzag sweeps of pale ink wash and a few dark pebbles. The figures are placed against a neutral background and framed by a cliff on the left, where a few freely drawn tree branches and grasses direct attention to the sleepers. In contrast to the careful style of contemporary *ebusshi* and Yamato-e artists, Moku'an's method relies on spontaneity. Ka'ō's unstudied approach parallels that of Moku'an, as is evident from his *Kensu* (fig. 32). Although Ka'ō's biography remains obscure (see cat. no. 1), his painting reflects an attitude and a style derived from the same Chinese Ch'an artists that lie behind Moku'an's work, especially the thirteenth century Ch'an monk Mu-ch'i (figs. 23 and 26).

By the second half of the fourteenth century, amateurs were joined by more specialized monk-painters working in the pure ink medium. The technical mastery evident in the *White-Robed Kannon* by Ryōzen (fig. 5) speaks of a professional training also notable in the *Kannon* attributed to Isshi (cat. no. 2). Ryōzen's formal symmetry, his controlled delineation of face and drapery

Figure 4. *The Four Sleepers*, Moku'an Rei'en (fl. 1323, d. 1345). Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 73.0 x 32.2 cm. Maeda Ikutoku Foundation, Tōkyō

Figure 5. *White-Robed Kannon*, Ryōzen (fl. mid-14th century), inscribed by Kempō Shidon (d. 1361). Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 88.7 x 41.0 cm. Myōkō-ji, Ichinomiya, Aichi prefecture



JAPAN IN THE MUROMACHI PERIOD



PROVINCES

Aki D₂
 Awa (Honshū) I₅
 Awa (Shikoku) E₄
 Awaji E₄
 Bingo D₃
 Bitchū E₃
 Bizen E₃
 Bungo C₃
 Buzen C₂
 Chikugo B₂
 Chikuzen B₂
 Dewa L₂
 Echigo J₃
 Echizen G₃
 Etchū H₃
 Harima F₃
 Hida H₃

Higo B₃
 Hitachi J₅
 Hizen B₂
 Hōki E₂
 Hyūga B₄
 Iga F₄
 Inaba F₃
 Ise G₄
 Iwaki K₄
 Iwami D₂
 Iwashiro J₄
 Iyo D₃
 Izu H₅
 Izumi F₄
 Izumo E₂
 Kaga H₃
 Kai H₄
 Kawachi F₄

Kazusa I₅
 Ki'i F₄
 Kōzuke I₄
 Mikawa G₄
 Mimasaka E₃
 Mino G₄
 Musashi I₄
 Mutsu L₃
 Nagato C₂
 Noto H₂
 Ōmi G₄
 Ōsumi A₄
 Owari G₄
 Sagami I₅
 Sanuki E₃
 Satsuma A₃
 Settsu F₃
 Shimōsa J₅

Shimotsuke J₄
 Shinano H₄
 Suruga H₅
 Suwō C₂
 Tajima F₃
 Tamba F₃
 Tango F₃
 Tosa D₄
 Tōtōmi H₅
 Wakasa G₃
 Yamashiro F₄
 Yamato F₄

CITIES AND TOWNS

Aizu J₃
 Ama no Hashidate F₃
 Atami I₅
 Edo I₅
 Fuku'i G₃
 Fukushima K₃
 Gifu G₄
 Hakata B₂
 Hamada D₂
 Hamasaka F₃
 Hikari C₃
 Hikone G₄
 Himeji F₃
 Hiroshima D₂
 Itsukushima D₃
 Kagoshima A₄
 Kamakura I₅

Kanazawa H₃
 Kasagi F₄
 Kōbe F₄
 Kōchi D₄
 Kurashiki E₃
 Kutsuki G₃
 Kyōto F₄
 Matsu'e E₂
 Matsuyama D₃
 Mihara D₃
 Miharu K₄
 Miyazaki B₄
 Nagasaki A₂
 Nagoya G₄
 Nara F₄
 Niigata J₃
 Odawara D₅
 Ōita C₃

Okayama E₃
 Ōsaka F₄
 Ōta J₄
 Ōtsu F₄
 Sendai K₃
 Shimonoseki C₂
 Shizu'oka H₅
 Takamatsu E₃
 Tokushima E₄
 Tottori F₂
 Toyama H₃
 Tzu G₄
 Tsuruga G₃
 Utsunomiya J₄
 Wakayama F₄
 Yamaguchi C₂

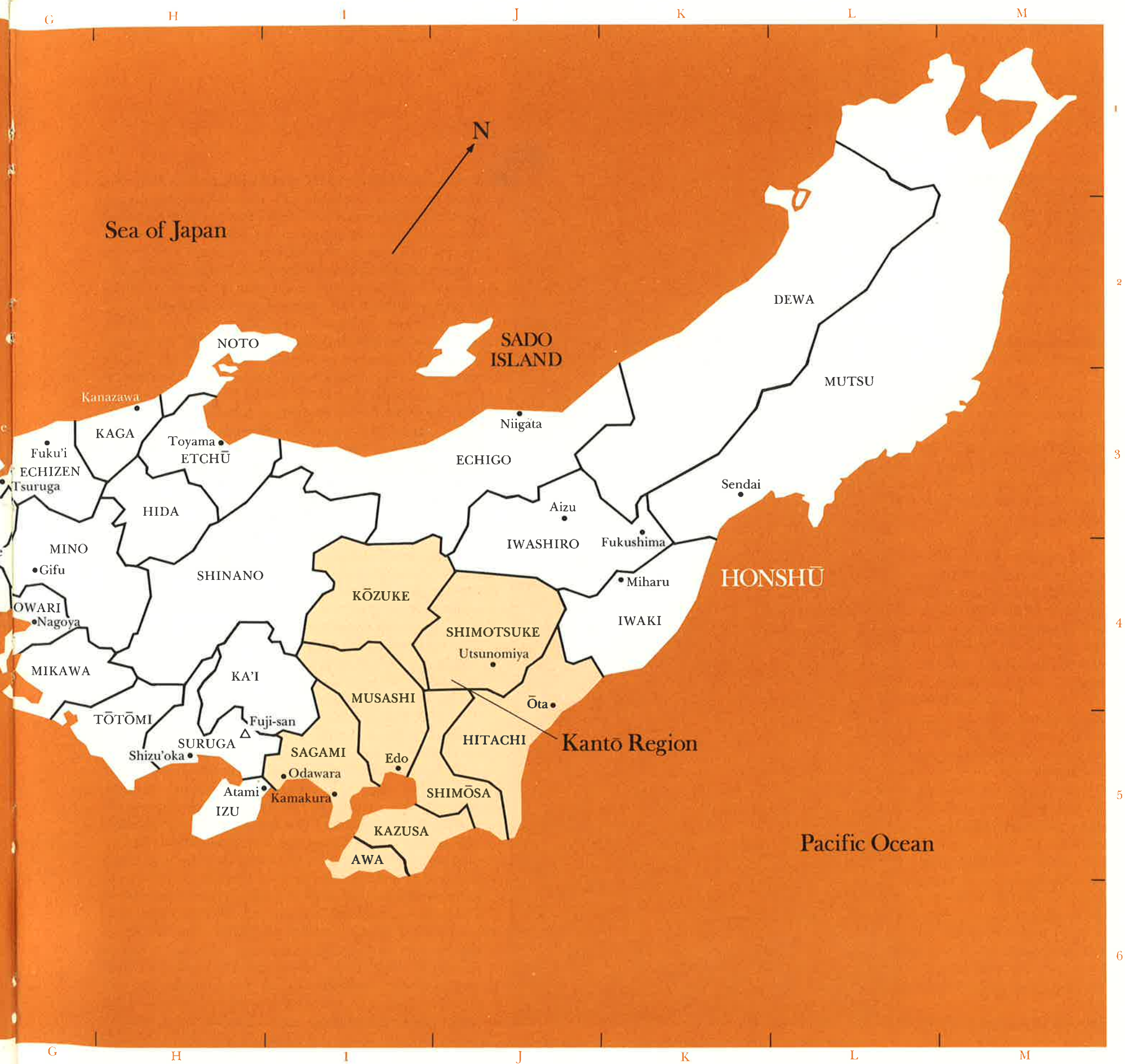


Figure 6. *Rainy Landscape*,
Gukei Yū'e (fl. 1361–75).
Hanging scroll, ink on paper,
82.3 x 32.2 cm. Tōkyō National
Museum



supplemented by carefully graded ink wash to describe forms, contrasts markedly with the abbreviated, casual approach of Moku'an and Ka'ō. The two categories of Zen monk painters continued to flourish for another century in Japanese monasteries, although not always with discernible stylistic differences. Professional painters were capable of spontaneity just as amateur painter-monks could acquire polished professional skills.

The figure paintings in this exhibition reveal a stylistic variety rather loosely linked with amateur or professional status. The *Daruma* by a true amateur, the fourth Ashikaga Shōgun Yoshimochi (cat. no. 3), is a variant of an abbreviated style widespread in Ch'an circles over a hundred years earlier in China. Another secular amateur of high social status, the sixteenth century warrior Yamada Dō'an (cat. no. 9), was inspired by his own Japanese ink-painting tradition of the fourteenth century monk-painter Moku'an. Paintings emerged from artists' workshops in major monasteries: both Sekkyakushi and Reisai (cat. nos. 4 and 5) worked in Kyōto's Tōfuku-ji monastery, where a thriving atelier had grown up around one of the pioneers of ink painting, Kichizan Minchō (1351–1431). In a Kamakura temple studio, Chū'an Shinkō (cat. no. 6) — and just possibly the earlier painter Isshi (cat. no. 2) — developed a fifteenth century style apparently influenced by professional *ebusshi* production of the early fourteenth century. But perhaps most indicative of the development of ink figure painting in Muromachi Japan is Yōgetsu's *Kensu* (cat. no. 8). Whimsically engrossed in his squirming shrimp, this figure by a late-fifteenth century monk represents a complete "Japanization" of the Chinese figure style learned two centuries earlier by the monk-painter Ka'ō.

While Buddhist figure subjects comprised the major category of early ink paintings, fourteenth century monk-painters, especially the amateur *bunjin-sō*, treated a wide range of themes. The influx of Chinese scholarship brought subjects not specifically Buddhist, but favored by Confucian men of letters in Sung and Yüan China. Symbolic plants, such as orchids and bamboo, were treated by two high-ranking Japanese monks of mid-century, Tesshū Tokusai and Chō'un Reihō (cat. nos. 30–33). Both traveled to China. Tesshū was a highly respected scholar of his day, abbot of a Gozan monastery and close friend of the eminent Gidō Shūshin, who inscribed one of his paintings (cat. no. 30). Orchids continued to be painted by *bunjin-sō* of the early fifteenth century, most notably by Gyoku'en

Bompō, a leader in Kyōto's Gozan literary circles, a friend of Shōgun Yoshimochi, and eventually the abbot of Nanzen-ji (cat. no. 34).

Tesshū's range of subjects was broad. Extant today besides his orchid paintings are several scrolls treating an allegorical Zen theme, reeds-and-geese (cat. no. 32). One of Tesshū's disciples, Gukei Yū'e (fl. 1361-1375), also painted a variety of subjects, from Buddhist figures to plants and landscapes, in various styles. The Chinese prototypes for almost all his surviving paintings can be identified. Especially important are his landscapes (fig. 6), for they reflect familiarity with the ink-breaking (*haboku*) method associated with the thirteenth century Chinese artist Yü-chien (see cat. nos. 14 and 19). In contrast to the linear style of Shikan's *Descending Geese* (fig. 2), Gukei's manner is painterly, achieved by broadly applied ink washes which suggest a moist atmosphere. Motifs are abbreviated, details eliminated. Pictorial structure is vertical, from the rocks at the bottom to the mountain cliff at the top; there is little penetration into depth and even less solid form. Gukei focuses on the ephemeral drama of mists and rain.

The fourteenth century transplantation of Chinese culture into Japanese monasteries was direct and swift, creating an artistic context in Japan close to that of China. The painting style developed by painter-monks such as Moku'an, Ka'ō, and Chō'un Reihō closely echoed that of their Chinese models. In some cases, such as the early fourteenth century *Reeds and Geese* in cat. no. 29, the nationality of an anonymous artist is difficult to determine.

It was Chinese paintings that the Zen monks valued, however, and they brought scores of them to Japan. By the mid-fourteenth century there was a sizable collection of Chinese painting, calligraphy, and utensils at the Engaku-ji in Kamakura; it was inventoried in the *Butsunichian Kumotsu Mokuroku* in 1365. This impressive collection included Buddhist iconic paintings, Zen narratives, and Taoist-inspired dragons and tigers, some of which were recorded in sets of two or four. The inventory provides evidence of the first Japanese attempts to collect Chinese paintings systematically: it records requests to purchase paintings from the collection, made by the Ashikaga Shōguns in Kyōto and by influential vassals in the provinces. The important Ashikaga Shōgun collection of Chinese paintings recorded about the third quarter of the fifteenth century in the *Gyomotsu On'e Mokuroku* was thus begun a hundred years earlier.

During the third quarter of the fourteenth century the focal center of the Zen monastic system started to shift from Kamakura to Kyōto. In particular, *bunjin-sō* disciples of Musō Soseki (1275-1351) began to assume important positions in the capital: Tesshū Tokusai became abbot of Manju-ji in 1362, Shun'oku Myōha abbot of Nanzen-ji in 1379, and Shōgun Yoshimitsu himself called Gidō Shūshin to Kyōto in 1380 to become abbot of Kennin-ji. The Shōkoku-ji monastery was founded in 1382 and from its inception was dominated by succeeding generations of humanist monks in Musō's "line of transmission."

By the opening of the fifteenth century the center of activity rested solidly in the large metropolitan monasteries of Kyōto: Nanzen-ji, Tenryū-ji, Kennin-ji, Shōkoku-ji. There was little direct influence of Chinese monks in these communities. Times had changed. The Ming government had restricted private trade, fewer Japanese pilgrims traveled to China, and their visits were shorter. Japanese Zen communities became more Japanese.

In 1394 the third Shōgun, Yoshimitsu, stepped down from his executive position, took the tonsure, and his young son Yoshimochi became the fourth Shōgun. Throughout the first quarter of the fifteenth century, Yoshimochi played a significant role in support of Zen monasteries in Kyōto. Well versed in the history and traditions of the sect, he became closely allied with prominent monks of the time, such as Gyoku'en Bompō (cat. no. 34). And he also painted (cat. no. 3).

After the turn of the century ink landscape painting suddenly flourished. During this period emerged the first artistic personality of the great triumvirate of landscape painters affiliated with the Shōkoku-ji monastery: Josetsu. Apparently a professional monk-painter, Josetsu was commissioned by Shōgun Yoshimochi to paint a Zen literary riddle concerning capturing a slippery catfish with an equally slippery gourd (fig. 7). Some thirty Gozan monks were assembled to compose and inscribe short poems on a paper to be attached to the reverse side of a small screen used to display the painting. (Today the inscribed paper is mounted above the painting.) These monks were the most noted poets of their day. Many were disciples of Gidō Shūshin or Zekai Chūshin, in the line of Musō Soseki, who formed a literary society (*yūsha*) centering around the major temples of Kyōto.

A significant feature of Josetsu's picture is the faint

Figure 7. *Catching a Catfish with a Gourd (Hyōnen)*, ca. 1413, Josetsu (fl. early 15th century), inscribed by Gyoku'en Bompō and thirty other monks. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on paper, 111.5 x 75.8 cm. Taizō-in, Myōshin-ji, Kyōto



distant mountain which creates a depth of pictorial space not seen in fourteenth century painting. Clearly, as noted by one of the inscribers, a new style is emerging. Foreground terrain, bamboo trees, a running stream, the distant mountains rising beyond a vast stretch of space — these are the elements of one of the earliest well-articulated ink landscapes, forerunner of the evocatively idealistic paintings of Shūbun and the solidly constructed, vigorously executed scenes of Sesshū. It is also one of the earliest paintings known as *shigajiku*, scrolls which combined poetic inscriptions with landscape paintings and became the major pictorial expression of the first half of the fifteenth century. The format follows that of Chinese literati paintings of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, known today only through literary descriptions. These paintings are, consequently, further testimony to the influence of predominantly Confucian ideals on the culture of the Japanese Zen community. *Shigajiku*, like other Chinese-inspired art and literature, rapidly assumed its own Japanese character in the hands of Gozan monks.

Basically two types developed. The first served a commemorative purpose, as an expression of fellowship pre-

sented to a departing monk. Through the poetry inscribed on the painting the recipient would be reminded of the friends he left behind. While the landscape was imaginary and the poetry frequently Chinese, the *shigajiku* functioned as a token of communal relationship.

The second type of *shigajiku* served a supportive purpose, as an expression of friendship and encouragement to a monk within the monastery. These were called *sho-saizu*, "paintings of the study." Fifteenth century Kyōto monasteries bustled with activity, developing a congested atmosphere from which reflective scholarly monks longed to escape, but could not. Unlike Chinese Confucian scholars who frequently chose a socially accepted way of life in retirement, Japanese Zen priests had to remain in their busy temple precincts. Gozan monks active in these large metropolitan monasteries gave names to their private studies which expressed their own ideals of peace. It became popular to have a painting made of this study, not as it existed within the temple walls, but as it was idealized by the priest. Other monks inscribed poetry on the painting, generally supporting the noble ideals suggested by the name of the scholar's study. The *bunjim-sō* could project his mind

Figure 8. *Cottage by a Mountain Stream* (*Kei'in Shōchiku*), 1413, artist unknown, attributed to Minchō (1351–1431), inscribed by Gyoku'en Bompō and six other monks. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 101.5 × 34.5 cm. Konchi-in, Nanzen-ji, Kyōto



and heart into the painting and its accompanying poetry for spiritual solace.

One of the earliest existing *shosaizu* is *Cottage by a Mountain Stream* (*Kei'in Shōchiku*, fig. 8). The preface to the painting clearly describes its intention: "The temple has become a noisy and annoying place, but one must face the bustling market with a heart as silent as water." It is not a representation of a specific hermitage built in a certain region; rather it is an idealized retreat which dwells in the heart. It is, as the inscriber goes on to mention, a *shinga* or "picture of the heart." In the most profound Zen belief, the distinction between heart (or mind) and matter ceases to exist. Even living within a densely crowded Gozan monastery, the Zen adept finds mountains, pure waters, and quiet. Thus it is not necessary to depict actual scenery in a *shosaizu*. Any quiet landscape, even the landscape of China, serves as a spiritual refuge.

Cottage by a Mountain Stream is associated with the Tōfuku-ji workshop of Minchō (1351–1431), who, like his contemporary Josetsu at Shōkoku-ji, was a professional monk-painter active within a major Kyōto monastery. Minchō is known for a number of figure paintings which are significant as bridging the gap from careful colored productions of *ebusshi* to the new ink-painting style (see cat. nos. 4 and 5). Several early *shigajiku*, in which elements from Chinese landscapes appear, are also traditionally attributed to him.

Shigajiku landscapes generally picture tall mountains and expansive lakes, moored skiffs and distant sailboats. The towering peaks that form evocative skylines in these paintings mark no mountainous region of Japan; nor is a floating life on a river-boat part of Japanese experience. The motifs are derived from Chinese landscape paintings. Literal scenery is not the point at issue, for the significance of *shigajiku* goes beyond resemblance to an actual place.

Illuminating in this connection is a preface included in a literary anthology by a Gozan poet-monk. It was written in 1435 on a painting, now lost, entitled *Rozan* (or Lu-shan, a picturesque mountain in China's Kiangsi province known for its famous waterfall; see cat. no. 6). A priest who had never visited China took the Lu-shan landscape, painted by an artist who had likewise never been to China, to the Gozan poet-monk. He requested an inscription in which the poet praised the painting as a consoling substitute for a view of the actual scenery. The poet-priest demurred, protesting that he had never seen

Figure 9. *Chikusai Dokusho*
 (*Reading in the Bamboo Study*),
 detail, attributed to Shūbun (fl. 1423–60),
 inscribed by six Zen priests,
 preface by Jiku'un Tōren dated 1446.
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 134.8 × 33.3 cm.
 Tōkyō National Museum



the famous mountain. The owner explained that it was precisely for that reason that the monk, as well as he himself and the painter, could understand the essence of the spot in his heart. The poet-monk then wrote the inscription.

It is not surprising that poems composed as inscriptions on paintings became an independent genre, indicated as such in the literary anthologies of fifteenth century humanist monks. The strong spiritual correspondence between poetry and painting, in scrolls such as *Cottage by a Mountain Stream*, loosened as poets sought literary effects and painters aimed at uniquely visual expressions. The format, however, had become standard: an extremely vertical scroll containing a landscape in its lower portion and inscriptions in the larger upper section. Within this format developed a landscape painting style based on Chinese paintings of the Southern Sung Academy. This is the style associated with the elusive painter-monk of Shōkoku-ji, Tenshō Shūbun (fl. 1423, d. ca. 1460).

There is an enormous gap between the magnitude of Shūbun's name and the dearth of biographical information, between the volume of paintings attributed to him and the works that possibly represent his style. The facts are few. Shūbun was a monk at Kyōto's Shōkoku-ji, a financial executive (*tokan*) in the administrative branch of the monastery. This suggests that he was not a learned classical scholar as were earlier *bunjin-sō* such as Tesshū Tokusai or Gyoku'en Bompō, who attained the abbacy of important Gozan monasteries. On the other hand, he accompanied a diplomatic mission to Korea in 1423–1424 to secure a printed edition of the Korean *Tripitaka*, so he had an opportunity for first-hand experience of foreign painting. Contemporary documents refer to his wide variety of artistic activities, including the carving and coloring of sculpture, the painting of *fusuma* (sliding doors) and *byōbu* (folding screens). They suggest that he was a skillful professional artist fulfilling the needs of his monastic community and taking outside commissions as well. He received a stipend from the Shōgunate. Artistic lineage charts designate him as the direct disciple of Josetsu and the teacher of Sesshū, but the details of his life are less important than the works associated with him. Shūbun's significance lies not in his biography but in the ink-painting tradition bearing his name as it developed during and after the second quarter of the fifteenth century.

Although there is no painting, among the scores attributed to him, that scholars agree is the authentic work

Figure 10. *Landscape*, attributed to Hsia Kuei (fl. ca. 1190–1230). Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 46.3 x 106.6 cm. Hatakeyama Collection, Tōkyō, formerly Asano Collection, Tōkyō



of Shūbun, many can be dated to the years of his activity on the basis of their inscriptions. These works present the landscape style that subsequent Japanese connoisseurs found reason to link with his name. Two landscapes in particular are important to convey what can be called the style of the Shūbun school: *Chikusai Dokusho* (*Reading in the Bamboo Study*) (fig. 9) and *Suishoku Rankō* (*Color of Stream and Hue of Mountain*) (fig. 39). Both are datable by their inscriptions to about 1445, and they illustrate two basic *shosaizu* compositions: one contrasts an enormous mountain cliff on one side with a deep and wide lake view on the other; the second places a towering central mountain across a misty lake from a foreground cottage. Both share an evocative sense of expansive space permeating every corner of the landscape. Diffused contours make background images seem to float above intervening mists, while crisp definition silhouettes foreground trees.

Individual motifs in such paintings of the Shūbun school as *Chikusai Dokusho* and *Suishoku Rankō* are Japanese reincarnations of features in Chinese paintings attributed to the Southern Sung Academy artists active in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, Ma Yüan and

Hsia Kuei (fig. 10). The pair of pine trees in *Chikusai Dokusho* (one growing straight up with the other twisting diagonally in front to point across the lake to distant shores) find their antecedents in the pines attributed to Hsia Kuei. The angular facets of rock faces in *Suishoku Rankō* are rendered with axe-cut textural strokes similar to the descriptive rock motifs in the Southern Sung painting. There are parallels in brushwork and use of ink: the heavy jagged contour lines of trees and rocks, the dark silhouetted edges of distant mountains which quickly fade into mist. What is different in the fifteenth century Japanese works is the emphasis on pervasive atmospheric space at the expense of logical clarity. In the Chinese painting the form of each landscape feature is clearly described: assertive texture strokes slice out facets of solid rock, a darker tree stands clearly in front of a muted background tree, mountains recede in logical stepped recession. Such attention to explicit definition is not a concern of the Japanese artist, and the viewer's attempt to find logically traversable paths through his landscape will end in frustration. The Japanese artist presents instead an imaginary landscape of the mind, an ambiguous space that does not bind the eye

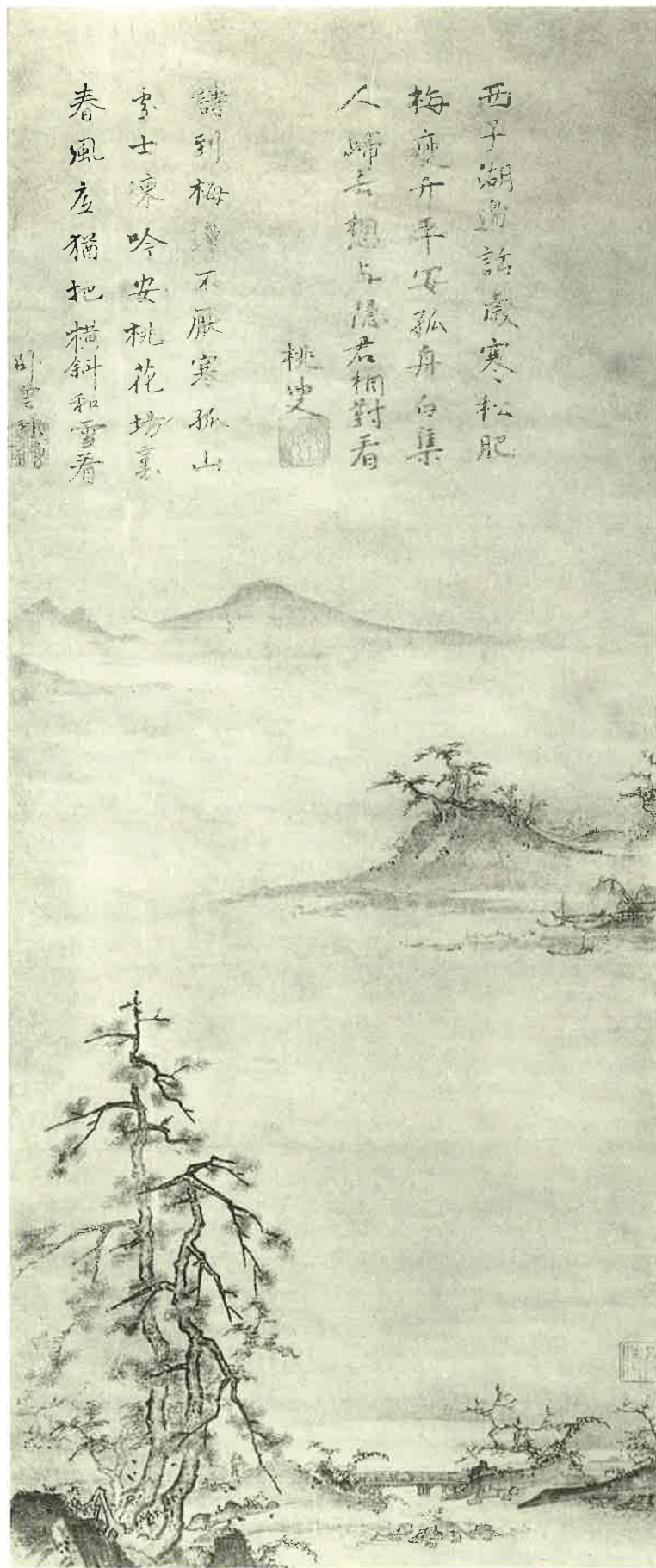


Figure 11. *West Lake, Bunsei* (fl. 1460's), inscribed by Zuikei Shūhō (d. 1476) and Ichijō Kanera. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 80.8 x 33.4 cm. Masaki Art Museum, Ōsaka

to forms but allows it to drift imperceptibly from solid to void. The essence of his landscape does not lie in forms depicted, but in the enigmatic fluidity of what is not clearly described. As the inscriber wrote in the preface to *Cottage by a Mountain Stream*, the significance of the landscape is felt in the heart or mind. It is a painting of a mental attitude, an expression of an ideal study in an ideal landscape that is not to be hindered by too literal description of non-ideal reality.

The aesthetic point of view embodied by these landscapes was also directed toward other artistic media of the period. It was articulated by the great master of Nō drama, Se'ami (1364–1443), in his treatise *The Book of the Way of the Highest Flower (Shikadō-sho)*: “Among those who witness Nō plays, the connoisseurs see with their minds, while the untutored see with their eyes. What the mind sees is the essence; what the eyes see is the performance” (Tsunoda et al., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 1: 296). The experience of viewing the symbolic mime of Nō is eloquently explained to a western audience by Sir George Sansom: “The most powerful effects are those which are obtained by allusion, suggestion and restraint, and in this respect the Nō is a counterpart of the contemporary painting which was governed by Zen principles. Se'ami in his works lays it down that realism (*monomane*, imitating things) should be an actor's chief aim, yet it is clear that he did not contemplate the grosser forms of mimicry, but had in mind more subtle indications of truth” (Sansom, *Japan: A Short Cultural History*, p. 388).

During the first half of the fifteenth century it was not customary for artists to sign their works: the landscape was, in any case, secondary to the poetic sentiments proudly signed and sealed by their inscribers. In mid-century, however, the situation changed. As landscape painting became a more independent and praiseworthy activity, more artists added their names to their productions. A number of Shūbun's successors can be identified: Shōkei Ten'yū, Bunsei, Gaku'ō, and, above all, Sesshū. They demonstrate how quickly the suggestive landscapes of Shūbun's day began to be replaced by explicit articulation of landscape forms.

Space in Shōkei Ten'yū's *Landscape with Distant Mountains* (cat. no. 11) can be measured by the sharp visual contrast of compactly detailed fore- and middle ground against the filmy ink wash of distant mountains. The painting can be logically traversed from foreground into distance via space markers. In addition, Ten'yū creates a visual language of differentiated techniques to de-



Figure 12. *Landscape, Gaku'ō*
(fl. late 15th–early 16th
century). Hanging scroll, ink
and slight color on paper, 80.7 x
36.0 cm. Smithsonian
Institution, Freer Gallery of
Art, Washington, D.C. (05.268)

scribe the physical properties of natural motifs. An assemblage of short broken lines cut out the angular surfaces of foreground rocks; horizontal dots create the lateral spread of pine needles; delicate cascades of pale ink strokes suggest the graceful sway of willow branches. Background mountains are hazy and layered, clearly receding into distance.

Bunsei's *West Lake* (fig. 11), datable prior to 1467 on the basis of one of its inscriptions, further shifts the significance of landscape from an ethereal realm to the real world. Bunsei replaces the unmeasurable space of the earlier Shūbun style with a carefully controlled spatial sequence. Tall trees in the lower left corner provide the vertical axis; strips of horizontal embankments in foreground and middle ground and a low mountain range in the background move in measured recession into distance. A dramatic contrast between substance and emptiness provides a kind of atmospheric purity which stresses correct visibility. Distinctions between form and non-form are beginning to be made manifest.

By the time of Gaku'ō in the late fifteenth century, suggestive space has all but disappeared (fig. 12). While conservatively following the compositional framework of Shūbun style landscapes (see cat. no. 13), Gaku'ō lavishes attention on local clarity of individual motifs and neglects the ambient atmosphere. He concentrates on building rhythmic dynamic forms with impetuous brushwork. The gain in solid representational form is at the expense of encompassing space. The undifferentiated atmosphere which suffuses the visionary landscapes of the time of Shūbun never returns to Muromachi ink landscapes.

The direct inheritor of Shūbun's style, Sesshū, most dramatically displaces the elusive space of his master with solid tactile form. With his Japanese heritage supplemented by knowledge of contemporary Chinese painting and thorough study of Sung and Yüan painting styles, Sesshū evolved a forceful individual manner that surpassed even Shūbun in its influence on subsequent Japanese artists.

Sesshū Tōyō (1420–1506) was born in Bitchū province (modern Okayama prefecture) and learned painting as a youth. After serving as a novice in a local temple, he entered Shōkoku-ji monastery in Kyōto where he studied Zen under Shunrin Shūtō (fl. 1430, d. 1463) and painting under Shūbun. In his later years he acknowledged his debt to the great accomplishments of his teacher Shūbun and of Shūbun's teacher Josetsu. Sesshū attained the rank of Guest Prefect (*shika*); it was



Figure 13. *Haboku Landscape*, detail, Sesshū (1420–1506), artist's inscription dated 1495. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 147.9 x 32.7 cm. Tōkyō National Museum

his duty to entertain official visitors and care for itinerant monks. His fellow priests called him Yōshika, or “Yō (from Tōyō) the Guest Prefect.” His position was not high, but he was a part of the “Western Rank” of the monastery which encompassed most of the priests involved in literature and scholarship.

Sesshū apparently left Shōkoku-ji shortly after his two influential masters died, for by 1465 he had established a painting studio called the Unkoku-an in the province of Suwō (modern Yamaguchi prefecture). He was apparently awaiting an opportunity to travel to China, a goal he achieved in 1467, when he accompanied a two-year Ōuchi family trade mission. A set of *Landscapes of the Four Seasons* (fig. 54) executed in China are his earliest known works. The monumental structure of these landscapes are nothing like the paintings of the Shūbun school, but directly reflect works in the Ming academic style which Sesshū saw on the mainland. Contemporary records by both Chinese and Japanese writers provide vivid evidence of his artistic activities in China. In Peking, Sesshū did a wall painting in the building of the Board of Rites; in villages and hamlets he made sketches of Chinese scenes; and he acquired a contemporary painting manual which he brought home with him in 1469.

After his return to Japan, Sesshū supplemented his exposure to contemporary Chinese painting with intensive study of Sung and Yüan scrolls. A number of sketches in fan format attest his examination of works by Li T'ang, Hsia Kuei, Mi Yu-jên (fig. 57), Mu-ch'i (fig. 49), and Yü-chien. Even these relatively faithful copies exhibit the unique brush manner and structural drawing which Sesshū developed into his personal artistic style.

Sesshū's *Haboku Landscape* (fig. 13), in the washy ink-breaking manner of Yü-chien (see cat. nos. 13 and 19), testifies to his personal transformation of the Chinese styles he studied. Yü-chien was one of the earliest Chinese landscape models used by Japanese ink painters. In the fourteenth century scroll by Gukei Yū'e (fig. 6), splashes of ink wash create a vertical essay in abbreviated atmosphere focusing on a cluster of moisture-laden trees. A *Haboku Landscape* from the second quarter of the fifteenth century (fig. 52) presents the Yü-chien subject matter infused by the nebulous space that permeates other idealized landscapes of the period. Sesshū's 1495 version of the theme reflects his solidly structural approach. He applies wash in cubist planes which build massive rocks, he sweeps rich black ink over



Figure 14. *Landscape*, detail, Sesshū (1420-1506), inscription by Ryō'an Keigo dated 1507. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper, 119.0 x 35.3 cm. Collection of Ōhara Ken'ichirō, Ōsaka

still-wet gray to model tree foliage in relief. Pale ink values merge into white paper to make a rock spire rise in the distance behind the middle-ground tree motif. Never have washes been so sculptural.

Shōkei Ten'yū and Gaku'ō altered the Shūbun tradition with localized development of motifs, and Bunsei redefined the visibility of space. Sesshū challenged the stillness of the void and the elusiveness of form, injecting robust volume into natural motifs clearly defined in space. He completely transformed the manner of his painting master at Shōkoku-ji. The metamorphosis is nowhere more dramatically illustrated than in the scroll considered to be Sesshū's last painting before his death in 1506 (fig. 14). Painted in the typical *shigajiku* format, the *Landscape* in the Ōhara collection includes the characteristic vertical peaks and the distant lake linked with the tradition of *Suishoku Rankō* (fig. 39). But instead of gently entering the picture at the foreground cottage and drifting into space, the viewer jumps between jutting foreground rocks and is quickly pulled along a zigzag path to the middle ground. Rocks and trees forcefully defined by galvanizing outlines and charged texture strokes assert their solid forms in the clear atmosphere. The landscape vibrates with the electric energy of diagonal thrusts and counterthrusts, held in check by the vertical axis of central pines and the crossing horizontal of distant mountains.

Like the typical *shigajiku* in the Shūbun style, Sesshū's *Landscape* carries poetic inscriptions written by friends, Bokushō Shūsei (see cat. no. 19) and Ryō'an Keigo (d. 1514). But while the poems on paintings such as *Chikusai Dokusho* philosophically allude to nature imagery from the Chinese classics, one of the inscriptions on the Ōhara *Landscape* expresses personal emotions about the relationship of inscriber and painter. The significance of *shigajiku* has changed. Bokushō's poem speaks appreciatively of the painting, but Ryō'an Keigo's inscription expresses his feeling toward Bokushō and Sesshū, who had died before Keigo arrived at the Unkoku-an.

Sesshū's disciples remained in the provinces outside Kyōto. Shūtoku (cat. no. 21) apparently took over leadership of the Unkoku-an in Suwō, while Tōshun (cat. no. 20) found commissions among former Sesshū patrons in other areas of Japan. By this time Kyōto had lost its force as the cultural center, for the Ōnin Civil War (1467-1477) had devastated the capital. Many intellectuals had fled, and provincial warlords began to assume increasing power and prestige.



Figure 15. *White-Robed Kannon*, dated 1466, Nō'ami (1397–1471). Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 77.6 x 39.3 cm. Mizoguchi Collection, Kanagawa prefecture

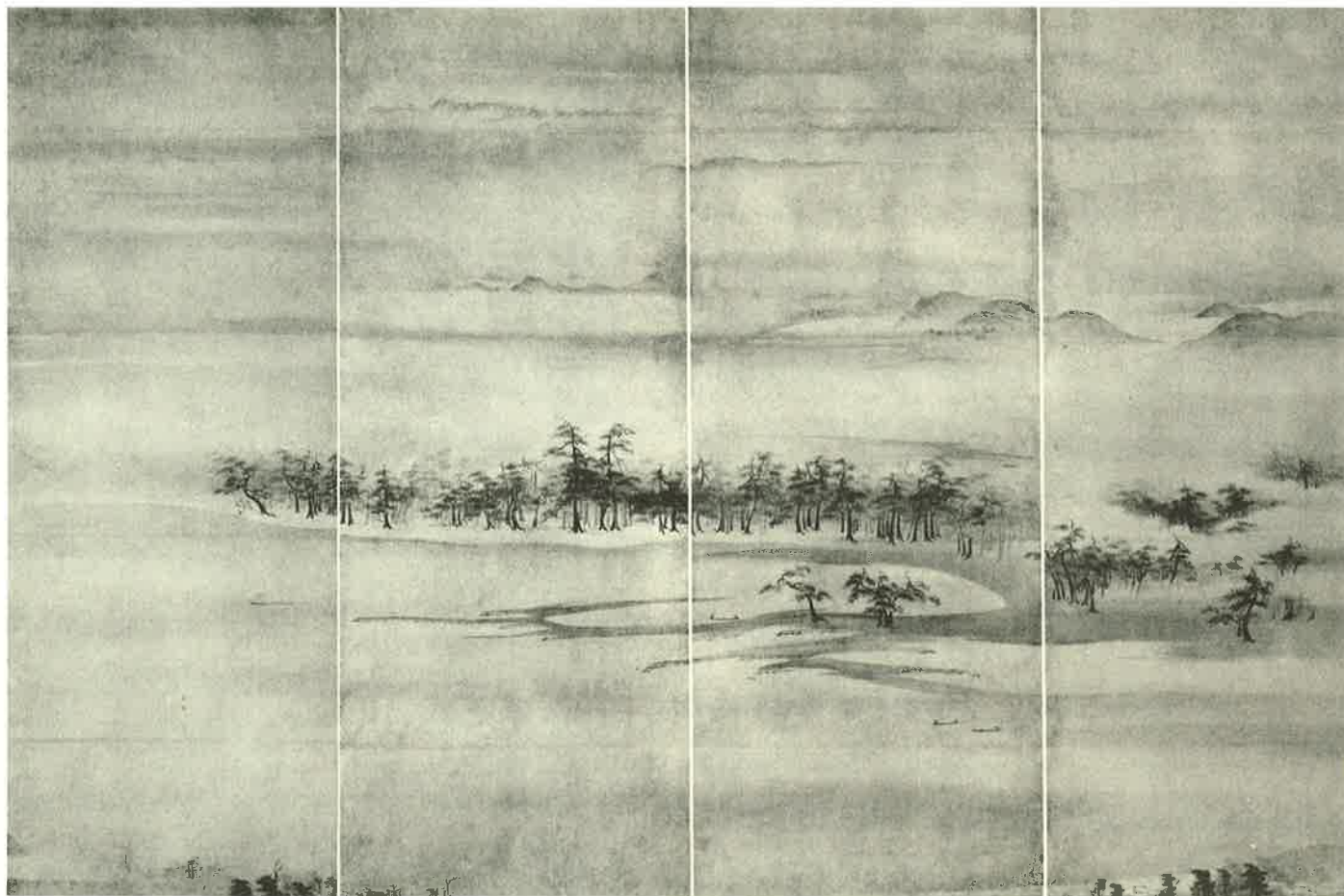
A very different patronage situation had developed. Active cultural centers in the provinces were nourished by such powerful families as the Ōuchi (who patronized Sesshū), the Asakura, and the later Hōjō. No longer was ink painting so intimately connected with the Zen sect; painters more frequently were secular art specialists. With Shūbun's death (ca. 1460) and Sesshū's departure shortly thereafter, Shōkoku-ji lost its artistic leadership. Shūbun's stipend from the Shōgun was received by Oguri Sōtan beginning in 1463. None of his works survives, but it seems he was initially a secular artist with links to the Daitoku-ji, the monastery most active in cultural activities during this tumultuous period of warfare. Paintings by Sōtan's son, Oguri Sōkei, executed in 1490 at Daitoku-ji's Yōtoku-in (fig. 38), reveal a conservative continuation of Shūbun's style with close dependence on specific Chinese model paintings.

Two schools of artists managed to flourish in the disrupted capital during the second half of the Muromachi period: the Ami and the Kano. They were able to function because of their unique patronage situations. The Ami were personal aesthetic advisors and painters-in-residence to the Shōgun, while the Kano operated a relatively independent workshop supported by commissions from the Shōgun, powerful provincial lords who had links with the capital, and certain thriving monasteries such as the Shin sect Ishiyama Hongan-ji in Ōsaka.

Cultural preferences of the Ashikaga Shōguns during the first half of the Muromachi period had been defined by close contact with *bunjin-sō* of Gozan monasteries, and Zen influence on the Shōgun was supplemented by the artistic direction of a special class of personal retainers called the *dōbōshū*. Many members of this group were bearers of the Ami name, indicating that they belonged to one of the Pure Land sects of Buddhism and were specialists in a wide range of arts, from Nō drama and *renga* (linked verse) poetry to connoisseurship and ink painting. During the second half of the fifteenth century and the first quarter of the sixteenth, three generations of Ami directed the cultural activities of the Shōgunate, overshadowing the strongly Sinophile influence of Zen monks with their own unique blend of cognizance of Chinese art with indigenous Japanese taste.

The first of the so-called three Ami was Nō'ami (1397–1471), a noted *renga* poet as well as a respected connoisseur of Chinese art objects and a proficient ink painter. The second was Ge'ami (1431–1485), who

Figure 16. *Miho Pine Forest*, detail, artist unknown, mid-16th century. Four of six hanging scrolls originally mounted as a folding screen, ink and gold on paper, each 155.3 × 55.1 cm. Egawa Museum of Art, Nishinomiya, Hyōgo prefecture



maintained close contacts with Zen monks. The third, Sō'ami (d. 1525), evolved at least two distinct painting styles reflecting his personal synthesis of Chinese and Japanese cultural influences (see cat. nos. 22 and 23). As curators of the Shōgun's collection of Chinese art objects, the Ami were responsible for two documents which provide valuable information about the aesthetic preferences of Muromachi Japanese. The *Gyomotsu On'e Mokuroku* is an inventory of selected Chinese paintings in the collection, listing the artist's name, the subject matter, the painting format, and frequently an inscriber's name. The *Kundaikan Sayū Chōki* is a connoisseur's manual, qualitatively ranking Chinese painters and giving information about such details as the proper method of exhibiting certain kinds of painting.

Because of their close contact with the Shōgun's collection, the three Ami were well informed concerning Chinese painting styles. Nō'ami's *White-Robed Kannon* (fig. 15) reveals familiarity with the style of Hsia Kuei (fig. 10) in the heavy lines delineating the rocks and the axe-cut strokes which texture them. Dated 1466, it was painted when Nō'ami was a mature artist. It displays the developing Ami family style in the blunt brush contour lines and the thick mists that swirl around the Kannon. These features continue to be found in works such as Gei'ami's *Viewing a Waterfall* (fig. 61), together with even

closer observation of paintings in the style of Hsia Kuei. The same tendencies were pursued by Gei'ami's disciple, Kenkō Shōkei (cat. no. 24).

Sō'ami followed his family tradition in two directions, developing a "formal style" based on his knowledge of Hsia Kuei motifs (fig. 58) as well as a "soft style" evolved from his studies of Mu-ch'i and the manner of a group of Chinese artists collectively known as the Mi family (figs. 56 and 57). Sō'ami brought to his studies of Chinese painting an artistic vision shaped by his upbringing in the Shōgun's household. Features conditioned by an appreciation of Yamato-e works enter his painting, giving it a gently undulating, rhythmic quality. A work by a later sixteenth century Ami follower, *Miho Pine Forest* (fig. 16), carries Sō'ami's "soft style" further into the context of Yamato-e. This composition merges Sō'ami's sand spits and foliage-dotted mountains with stylized land forms and softly layered hills. It incorporates his heavy mists with streaks of gold Yamato-e clouds, his dense foliage made with the side of a heavily loaded brush with stylized patterns of Yamato-e pines. At the end of the Muromachi period, Chinese styles merged with Japanese as creative artists developed their own personal visions.

The Kano masters also created a distinctive style which synthesized Chinese and Japanese features. The

Figure 17. *Landscape*,
 attributed to Kano Masanobu
 (1434–1530). Hanging scroll,
 ink and slight color on paper,
 95.5 × 35.3 cm. Konishi
 Collection, Itami, Hyōgo
 prefecture

first important painter of the school, Kano Masanobu (1434–1530), began taking commissions in Kyōto in the 1460's, and eventually became *goyō eshi*, or official painter, to the Ashikaga Shōgun in the 1480's. He was not connected with a Zen monastery; rather, he apparently came from a minor warrior family in the Izu-Suruga region (modern Shizu'oka prefecture) and was a member of the popularly supported Hokke sect of Buddhism that relied solely on the *Lotus Sūtra*. But he was a thoroughly secular painter. His style, as seen in a *Landscape* in the Konishi Collection (fig. 17), conservatively looks back to the Shūbun tradition. The rocky mountain spires with a high waterfall echo the motif in the mid-century Yamamoto *Landscape* (fig. 35), while the humble cottages recall the rustic hermitages in early *shosaizu* such as *Suishoku Rankō* (fig. 39). The tall pines in the left foreground resemble those in the Yamamoto *Landscape*, but instead of standing in front of the mountain spires to emphasize their verticality, they have been moved to the left to balance the mountain. And this is the feature most characteristic of Masanobu's style: balanced clarity. Every motif in the painting is explicitly rendered, every relationship clearly defined in a space devoid of atmosphere. Sharply rendered contours and bold axe-cut textures derived from Southern Sung models move a step closer to stylization.

It was Kano Motonobu (1476–1559; cat. no. 28), a thorough and astute professional, who synthesized the range of styles current at the opening of the sixteenth century to establish a solid foundation for subsequent Kano school artists. He decorated gold screens for court nobles, painted narrative handscrolls in the Yamato-e style for Buddhist temples, produced colorful academic bird-and-flower screens for temple living-quarters, and, with amazing versatility, he worked with the whole range of Chinese Sung and Yüan styles. Like the Ami artists, he merged Chinese and Japanese elements according to his own vision, frequently combining the splendid coloration of Yamato-e with the expressive line and sturdy compositions of Chinese art. His brush method was fundamentally Chinese and his dramatic tendency fundamentally Japanese, but both were filtered through his unique artistic personality, and all his painting bears the stamp of straightforward rationality. This uncomplicated but versatile style was supremely suitable for decorating buildings formally commissioned by feudal patrons. These families frequently lived in the provinces but diplomatically supported se-



Figure 18. *Shōshūsai*, Kenkō Shōkei (fl. late 15th–early 16th century), preface by Gyoku'in Eiyō dated either 1506 or 1518. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 78.9 x 27.6 cm. Ueno Collection, Ashiya, Hyōgo prefecture



lected Kyōto institutions as one means of reminding the titular government in the capital of their power.

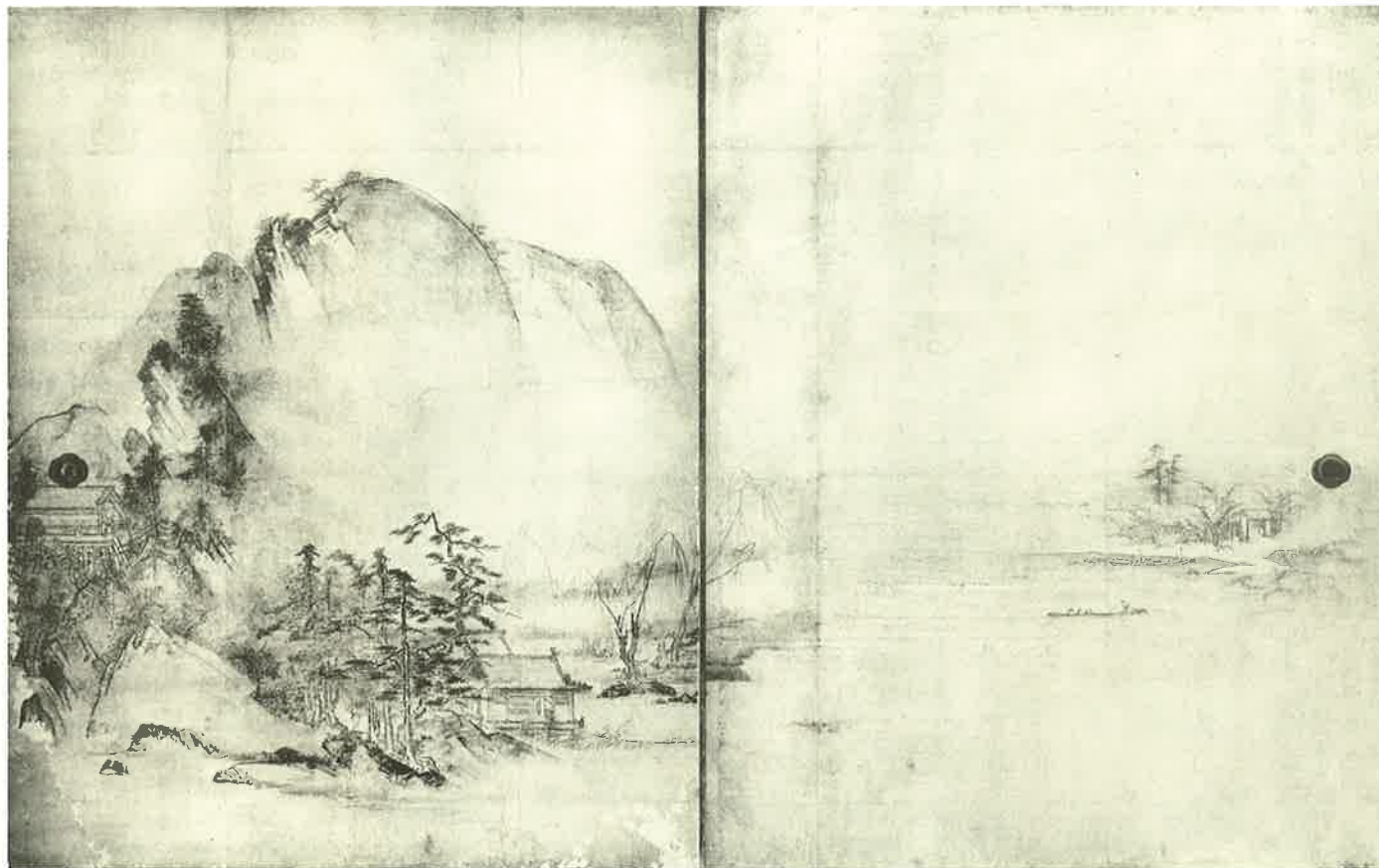
Outside the capital, a number of cultural centers developed around some of these powerful families. The later Hōjō, for example, who established themselves in the city of Odawara in the Kantō region (modern Kanagawa prefecture), imported artists from Motonobu's Kyōto workshop in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. These painters were active throughout the remainder of the century and are known as the Odawara Kano.

Nearby in Kamakura a thriving painting workshop had expanded from a modest operation centering around Chū'an Shinkō in the mid-fifteenth century. Chū'an Shinkō's pupil, Kenkō Shōkei (cat. no. 24), went to Kyōto in 1478 for three years of study with Ge'i'ami. He returned to the Kenchō-ji in 1480 with a *shigajiku* presented to him as a remembrance by his master, and a command of Chinese painting styles as transformed by Ge'i'ami.

Kenkō Shōkei's position in the Zen monastery was that of scribe (*shoki*) so he was known as Kei Shoki, or "Kei, the Scribe," and he was responsible for the production of all official monastery documents. Besides holding this important position, Kei Shoki painted prolifically and gathered a band of disciples that kept Kenchō-ji's atelier active throughout most of the sixteenth century. Certain painters such as Senka (fig. 62) are known as Shōkei's disciples, others such as Shikibu (cat. nos. 25 and 37) are linked with his workshop on the basis of style. And their style elaborates on the sharply outlined and markedly textured mode which Shōkei learned from Hsia Kuei via Ge'i'ami.

Shōkei himself continued to develop his individual manner in response to personal assimilation of visual stimuli. He returned to Kyōto in the early 1490's and there apparently saw works by painters who were reinterpreting the manner of the Shūbun school of the second quarter of the fourteenth century — works such as the *shosaizu* of Gaku'ō (see cat. nos. 12 and 13) and the paintings of artists of the Soga school at the Daitoku-ji (see cat. no. 14). Kei Shoki's latest dated work is the *Shōshūsai* in the Ueno Collection (fig. 18). Painted in the first decades of the sixteenth century, this *shosaizu* in the retrospective Shūbun tradition shows a Chinese landscape style modified by the less extreme natural landscape which surrounded and affected the Japanese artist. Still present are the sturdy-trunked trees and the

Figure 19. *Summer*, attributed to Soga Dasoku, probably painted by Sekiyō (fl. late 15th century). Two of eight door-panel paintings of *Landscapes of the Four Seasons*, datable to 1491, ink on paper, each panel ca. 178 x 141 cm. Shinju-an, Daitoku-ji, Kyōto



slashed texturing of rocks evolved from the Hsia Kuei tradition, but the motifs have been brought closer to the viewer for increased intimacy, the severity of the central mountain has been weathered and softened. Kei Shoki has assimilated the Chinese manner as if it were subject matter, just as Sō'ami and Motonobu were doing, transforming acquired motifs and brushwork according to his own artistic character.

Another group of artists, the Soga school, was involved in painting at the Daitoku-ji in Kyōto during the second half of the fifteenth century under the patronage of an upstart warlord, Asakura Toshikaga (1428–1481) of Echizen province (modern Fuku'i prefecture). In recent years several noted Japanese art historians have studied this school, focusing on a painter using the seal of *Sekiyō*. Besides several landscape scrolls (fig. 43), *Sekiyō* is thought to be the painter of the important *Landscapes of the Four Seasons* painted in 1491 on the *fusuma* at Daitoku-ji's Shinju-an subtemple (fig. 19). His style is characterized by angularity and economy of brushwork. In addition certain features, such as the softly rounded mountaintop with its crystalline rock outcroppings on one side in the *Summer* scene, hint at possible Korean influence. The traditional lineage charts of the Soga school indicate that the founder of the school was an immigrant from China or Korea, Ri Shūbun, who worked for the Asakura family in the second quar-

ter of the fifteenth century. Soga Dasoku, reputedly Ri Shūbun's son or his disciple, assumed prime importance in the second half of the century and it is to him that these monumental paintings at the Shinju-an are traditionally attributed. Unfortunately Dasoku's identity is shrouded in obscurity. A painter known as Bokkei Saiyo (see cat. no. 14), who was closely associated with the Zen reformer at Daitoku-ji, Ikkyū Sōjun (1394–1481), has also been linked with Dasoku, but the evidence is slight.

Despite the warning of Musō Soseki in the fourteenth century against excessive literary involvement, the Gozan Bungaku movement had thrived throughout the first half of the fifteenth century. As more monks became increasingly involved in Chinese studies, especially in classical literature, the spiritual significance of Zen institutions languished. Distressed Zen masters bitterly reprimanded priests who were famous not for their religious leadership but for their literary achievements. Incensed with the signs of degeneracy in increasing secularization, Ikkyū desperately campaigned to restore the vitality of Zen, particularly that of the Daitoku-ji line. He denounced the worldly priests, saying: "In bygone days those whose hearts were awakened to faith entered the monasteries, but now they all forsake the temples. A careful observer readily discovers that the bonzes are ignorant. . . . With much satisfaction they glory in their



Figure 20. *Eight Views of Hsiao and Hsiang*, detail, Sesson (ca. 1504–ca. 1589). Handscroll, ink on paper, 24.7 x 669.6 cm. Masaki Art Museum, Ōsaka

monastic robes, and though they wear the habits of a monk they are only laymen in disguise” (Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism*, p. 185).

Earlier, Shunrin Shūtō, Sesshū’s spiritual teacher and abbot of Shōkoku-ji, had criticized the priesthood for similar misplaced emphasis on secular learning. In particular he cursed the eminent literary monks who inscribed typical Shūbun style paintings. He said, “It is horrifying when an unenlightened priest receives contributions. Whatever an enlightened priest says will naturally show his true virtue. One who does not know the Way should not be considered a priest, and it has been that way since the time of the First Patriarch. A man who has only words is a Confucian, yet even Confucians have practiced Zen since Su Tung-p’o and Huang Shan-ku of the Sung dynasty. Monks like Ishō Tokugan and Kōzei Ryūha have nothing but words. They, in particular, are Confucians. They are not Zen priests” (*Gōko Fūgetsushū-shō*, cited by Haga, *Chūsei Zenrin*.)

The inefficacy of Zen was accelerated by the Ōnin Civil War that broke out in Kyōto in 1467. During these disruptive times Zen monasteries lost their cultural and religious vitality, and many leading Zen priests, like other intellectuals, fled the capital to seek shelter under provincial lords. Some of them, such as Banri Shūkyū (d. 1502), became desperate about the future of Zen Buddhism and returned to the secular world, concentrating on Chinese literature. At the other extreme, some sincere Zen teachers sought reform in the *rinka*, or “in forest,” movement: they took refuge in rural areas where they could cultivate a handful of devoted disciples in the essence of Buddhist belief. In the capital and its neighboring provinces, Zen had lost its vigor as a cultural force; Kyōto had lost its claim to cultural primacy. No single artistic tradition monopolized the sec-

ond half of the Muromachi period, and the provinces fostered the vital artistic activity that forecast a new age for Japan.

The last great Muromachi ink painter, Sesson (ca. 1502–ca. 1589; cat. nos. 26 and 27), lived into the new epoch in the provinces of north central Japan. He transmitted to his successors the Chinese styles that had been so repeatedly reworked during the two centuries of the Ashikaga Shōgunate, but he did not hand over these traditions in their original form.

Sesson’s handscroll in the Masaki Art Museum (fig. 20) depicts one of the earliest Chinese themes to be painted in the new manner of ink painting, *Eight Views of Hsiao and Hsiang* (see Shikan, fig. 2). The painting method follows the tradition of Yü-chien, one of the first Chinese landscape styles to be learned by Japanese ink painters (Gukei Yū’e, fig. 6). The artist himself inscribed on the scroll that he was painting Yü-chien’s *Eight Views*, but the transformation is so striking that Sesson’s subject and his style can no longer be considered either purely Yü-chien’s or Chinese. Sesson must have seen many Chinese paintings and many Muromachi artists’ interpretations of these works. And he had wielded his brush to paint not a philosophical ideal, not an awed imitation of a foreign culture, not even a representation of his native land, but a visual creation in ink on paper. The power that Sesson infuses into landscape motifs with his rich sweeps of ink wash can be found neither in a Yü-chien prototype (fig. 51), nor in Mu-ch’i (fig. 56), nor in any other artist. Sesson himself remarked that he studied Sesshū, but that his painting was not like Sesshū’s. The two artists’ treatment of form in space differs radically. Sesshū mobilizes dense interlocking constructions to propel the viewer in and out of cohesive space. Sesson energizes elastic masses, giving



Figure 21. *Lu Tung-pin (A Chinese Taoist Immortal)*, Sesson (ca. 1504–ca. 1589). Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 118.3 x 59.5 cm. Yamato Bunkakan, Nara

the forms themselves an inner dynamism. His viscous forms surge and swell independent of space.

Sesson's totally pictorial approach to painting is seen in his Chinese figure subjects. The Taoist immortal *Lu Tung-pin* (fig. 21) is humorous in his unnatural stance on a dragon's head. His contortionist posture and strangely bulging buttock are out of all human proportion. Yet, approached visually as a dramatic conception of ink forms, the painting assumes a different character. Sesson's rhythmic repetition of sinuous lines sweeps fanlike from the long whisker of the dragon at the bottom through the extravagant waves of the immortal's clothing. The movement pivots on the impossibly upturned head of *Lu Tung-pin*, following the line of his beard to the furiously active airborne dragon. Ultimately Sesson does not deal with objective reality. His pictures are newly created visual realms of energized ink on paper.

Sesson lived over eighty-six years, into a new era. Only twenty years after his death, Sōtatsu emerged from a different cultural background, the merchant class, to regenerate Japanese ink painting through traditional Japanese aesthetic ideas and techniques. The greatest of Sesson's followers is not one of the scores of minor late Muromachi ink painters working in the Chinese manner, but the great eighteenth century master of innovative design, Kōrin.

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