

Josef KREINER (ed.): *Japanese Collections in European Museums. Reports from the Toyota-Foundation-Symposium Königswinter 2003*, 2 vols., Bonn: Bier'sche Verlagsanstalt 2005; vol. I (256 pp.), vol. II (774 pp.), maps, tables, a bibliography, and several indices.

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The object as material manifestation of the past as well as a significant testimony of “other” cultures provides a popular field of inquiry in a variety of academic disciplines. It seems as if this approach is not quite yet accepted in Japanese studies within the European academic sphere. As a member of the Viennese school of cultural history and its focus on material culture, Josef Kreiner can certainly be credited for tirelessly working on the accessibility of Japanese artefacts (mainly of Ainu and Okinawa origin) stored in European collections. Based on a symposium and a publication, *Japanese Collections in Museums of Central Europe: History, Origin and Current Problems*, under his leadership in 1980–81,¹ Kreiner aims in his recently edited two volumes, *Japanese Collections in European Museums*, to promote a discussion of visual material as a crucial element in understanding the ever changing concept of Japan through collecting histories. The result is the first European endeavour to offer an encyclopaedic survey of European collections of Japanese objects including arts, crafts and ethnographic material assembled from the late sixteenth century to the present. As hard as it is to find information on particular objects and specific aspects of individual collections (despite the books' many indices, see below), the publication will remain an important contribution to the field, which every serious library will be proud to provide.

Assembling a large quantity of relevant information (including websites, email and postal addresses of museums) was obviously the aim of the work rather than to strive to offer innovative theories (on, for example, intercultural exchanges, gender-related aspects of cultural appropriations etc.) or redefine a new area within Japanese studies.² It is a fair choice given the scarce

1 Josef KREINER (ed.): *Japan-Sammlungen in Museen Mitteleuropas. Geschichte, Aufbau und gegenwärtige Probleme*, Bonn: Förderverein Bonner Zeitschrift für Japanologie 1981.

2 The approach to focus on the compilation of Japanese objects from multiple sources coincides with comparable Japanese projects on an albeit different scale and usually with a focus on art objects only. Numerous footnotes throughout the publication refer to, e.g.,

information available for an audience lacking Japanese language skills. The review below will therefore concentrate on a description of the contents with only cursory discussions of diverging viewpoints in the last two sections.

Volume I

Volume I will be of use for curators, school teachers, and college instructors and may function as a textbook for university-level seminars on the relationship between Europe and Japan in terms of its ethnographic and material appropriation. This book covers an introduction by the editor (3–52); a detailed, yet rather subjective chronology (53–75) of the history of collecting, exhibiting and publishing Japanese objects in Europe from 1543 to the present (the year 2003); five survey chapters which center on groups of objects or regional areas of collecting activities (79–143); an extensive bibliography in multiple languages (147–222); another list of publications on Ainu collections (233–41); and indices of groups of objects, collectors, and artists (244–56; the indices are extended in vol. II).

In his introduction, Kreiner covers a broad historical survey of Japanese collections in Europe, divided into four distinct periods: the era of the *Kunst- und Wunderkammer* from the mid-sixteenth to the seventeenth century (4–8); the epoch of large-scale export art, mainly ceramics, lacquer and textiles produced upon European orders from about 1650 to the latter half of the eighteenth century (8–13); the “discovery” of ukiyo-e art, Japan at international expositions and globally active art dealers and collectors in the second half of the nineteenth century, which define the origin of many if not most European collections (15–31); and the twentieth century, labeled by the author as “random collecting” (31–34). After raising the problem of museums of ethnology

EDO TOKYO MUSEUM (ed.): *A Report on Japanese Materials in Europe*, Tokyo: Edo Tokyo Museum 1997. Since 1991, the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties works on an ongoing series of Japanese art collections in foreign countries (including North America), with 10 volumes to date; see TÔKYÔ KOKURITSU BUNKAZAI KENKYÛJO (ed.): *Kaigai shozai Nihon bijutsuhin chōsa hōkoku*, Kobunkazai Kagaku Kenkyūkai. Less comprehensive in scope, and more concerned with quality is the art series *Hizō Nihon bijutsu taikan*, edited by HIRAYAMA Ikuo and KOBAYASHI Tadashi, Kōdansha 1992–94, 12 vols., whilst an earlier series looks at Ukiyo-e paintings and prints only; *Hizō Ukiyoe taikan / Masterpieces of Japanese Prints: the European Collections*, supervised by NARASAKI Muneshige, Kōdansha and Kodansha International 1988, 16 vols.

versus art museums, discussed below, Kreiner addresses Japan's changing image in the West (36–38) and the uneven distribution of Japanese collections within European states as a result of political conditions and the colonial past (38–43). The Japanese agency in developing and publishing European collections of Japanese art is the topic of a short section which focuses on research assistance and resulting publications in the twentieth century. By way of a conclusion, the author mentions current projects, unpublished archival material and points to the necessity to research the lives of individual collectors and art historians as a medium through which collecting histories can be advanced.

Kreiner reminds us to delve into archives to reveal the existence of collected items that have not survived. One of the much-neglected areas is the fashion for Japanese textiles. The “Japonsche rocken” were ordered by the Dutch as early as 1641 (8), and by the end of the seventeenth century their popularity resulted in an early modern imitation industry producing robes in “Japanese style” on the Coromandel coast to satisfy the great demand and to lower costs (12).

The numbers, tables and statistics from various sources included in the essay – among them the range of Japanese objects exhibited at international expositions; the number of artefacts stored in European countries, or in individual museums – define the reference character of the two volumes. This information is integrated in a narrative of countless short biographies of collectors and dealers as well as familiar and lesser-known details (did you know that the merchant Yamada Torajirô [1866–1957] kept a curio shop with Japanese objects in Istanbul between 1892 and 1914 and again after the First World War? See vol. I, 26 and vol. II, 277–78), which in turn set the tone of the publication.

In the foreword, the editor mentions the discrepancy between more thoroughly researched collections of Japanese fine arts and the neglect of ethnographic or ethnological collections (v). He decides to shed light on the latter in the choice of five survey chapters in volume I under the heading of “General Prospects” written by experts in the field. Claudius Müller's pithy contribution to Japanese objects in German ethnological museums (79–84) reveals the financial, spatial, and research problems of these institutions. Thomas Leims presents an overview of noh, kyôgen, bunraku and kabuki items and their representations in prints (85–95). While both Müller's and Leims' contributions focus on the German-speaking part of Europe, the chapter on “*Inrô* Collecting and Collections in Europe” (97–115) covers a comprehensive approach to the subject. The authors and collecting couple Else and

Heinz Kress who are well-published on the subject and known for their vast archive have done extensive fieldwork on *inrô* (literally “seal basket”) in European museums. Their essay presents the numbers of objects and short collecting histories of the respective museums rather than a visual assessment of the types, iconographies or materials of *inrô* favoured in one collection over another. European collections from Ryûkyû/Okinawa (117–127) are the topic of a chapter by Josef Kreiner, one of his main areas of expertise. Hans Dieter Ölschleger’s lucid contribution on “Ainu Collections in European Museums” (129–143) includes a list of collectors of Ainu material culture, and tables of Ainu objects by country and museum. But Ölschleger also contemplates collecting theories, particularly the nature of the object, which erroneously suggests a greater objectivity than linguistic analyses, oral history or other tools to approach a culture (130). He argues convincingly that preconceived ideas of what the Ainu represent as well as the collector’s choice to opt for a particular aspect of Ainu culture defines the matrix which shapes different collecting strategies and hence profiles conflicting images of the Ainu (as a “spiritual people,” a “primitive” culture, etc.).

Volume II

The significance of *Japanese Collections in European Museums* lies in its comprehensiveness. Nearly all traceable Japanese collections in museums³ including forty, mostly little-known, museums from Eastern European countries are introduced in volume II. One hundred and twelve annotated reports authored by curators ranging from less than one page to forty pages cover at times only two objects, in others several thousand. Many reports are provided by participants of the conference in Königswinter (see below) from thirty European countries (including Israel) while others were sent in for publication by curators who did not attend the meeting, or else – where no authors are mentioned – they were apparently compiled by the editorial team. The volume serves as a comprehensive and annotated European counterpart of, for instance, the annually updated list of museums in Japan, published by the monthly art journal *Bijutsu techô*.

3 Notable exceptions are the museums in Russia and the Community of Independent States, excused by the editor on the grounds of language difficulties (vol. I, 40), the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, the Natural History Museum in London, the Museum of Design in Zurich, among others.

The editor decided to refrain from editing or revising the papers of the contributors, thus presenting a refreshing range of approaches from the purely chronological (Johannes Wieninger for the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna, 501–09); a focus on the donors and their biographies (Katharina Epprecht for the Rietberg Museum in Zurich, 475–79); a narrative covering donors as well as the development of the collection against the historical and political background of the country (Malgorzata Martini for the Cracow National Museum, 131–148); or a mixture of some of the above (e.g. Helen Loveday for the Baur Collections in Geneva, 481–85). While the axiom *variatio delectat* generally holds true, the varying foci of the authors (as well as the different degree of research already accomplished) result in disparate information which jeopardises a user-friendly reference work.

Utterly surprising discoveries are provided by some of the contributing authors. Among them is a copper puppet (*dô ningyô*) dated to as early as 1669 (if we are to believe the inscription on its left foot), owned by the Hamburg Museum of Ethnology (540–41). This rare puppet (only one more example of its kind is extant at the Tokyo National Museum) once belonged to the personal physician of the feudal lord in Kii (modern Wakayama prefecture). It measures 135 cm in height and, as curator Susanne Knödel explains, the net-like structure of the skin is removable to allow the viewer to study the interior of the body including the detachable organs. It is “enshrined” in a large lacquer case with a door opening to the right resembling a private altar with a Buddhist deity. While this remarkable object should be of interest to a larger scholarly community and is part of the holdings in Hamburg since 1929, its preciousness was only recently discovered during an exhibition of the Japanese holdings of the museum in 2000–01. If indeed this puppet is of Japanese origin (and not Chinese),⁴ it may well offer new insights into the independent development of anatomic knowledge in Japan prior to the impact of “Dutch studies” (*rangaku*) in the eighteenth century, culminating in the adaptation of Johann Adam Kulmus’ (1689–1745) *New Treatise of Anatomy* (*Kaitai shinsho*) by Sugita Genpaku (1733–1817) in a woodblock printed edition of 1774.

Another group of objects represented in a number of European museums and recently at the center of scholarly attention are the life-like mannequins, or *iki ningyô* (“living puppets”).⁵ Meticulously sculpted in different poses

4 I owe this suggestion to Doris Croissant.

5 Included are references to *iki ningyô* in the Stibbert Museum in Florence (305), the *Japonica Humboldtiana* 10 (2006)

and groupings, hyper-naturalistically dressed in precious textiles and coiffed in various hairstyles, these truly life-like figures demonstrate the impressive craftsmanship of Japanese artisans during the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. They served to illustrate Japanese everyday-life in dioramas matching current displays in natural history museums and supplied a tangible representation of Japanese people of varying social strata, gender, and age. An exhibition of these puppets in Japan in 1994 drew attention to this understudied group of sculptures which combine a myriad of techniques and materials and present a wide field of inquiries.⁶ Problems of mimesis and naturalism in what was conceived of as “high” versus “low” art during Japan’s adaptation of Western visuality in the late nineteenth century are of concern here as is the questionable yet telling divide which increasingly defined the different status of praised and prized sculptors at national art schools versus, for example, the gradually forgotten Matsumoto Kisaburô, once a well-known creator of *iki ningyô*. Display photographs of the First International Hygiene Exhibition in Dresden in 1911 (606), which show puppets now belonging to the Museum of Ethnology in Dresden, and another photo before 1914 in the Adelhausermuseum in Freiburg (686), demonstrate the popularity of these fascinating objects in Europe at the time.

Some photographs included in the reports are of tremendous historical interest to the scholar or aficionado of collecting and exhibition histories, as well as of the changing European concept of “Japan.” An etching (?) of the display of East Asian objects in 1896 and a photograph of the Japan section of the Übersee Museum in Bremen (ca. 1911) provided by Andreas Lüderwaldt exemplify the change in exhibition policies. The etching reflects the display conventions of international expositions with (hardly visible) objects in glass cases composed of exoticised and “Asianised” miniature architectures enlivened by a free-standing model in Japanese armor and natural palm trees to insinuate a non-European origin. This kind of “modern amusement park” was completely remodelled thirteen years later to teach the visitor a more encyclopaedic and scientific approach to non-European cultures by didactically arranging groups of objects (e.g. lacquer ware, ceramics, heads of “living

Edoardo Chiossone Museum of Japanese Art in Genoa (323), the Übersee-Museum in Bremen (561) and two more mentioned below.

6 NANTOBI Hiroshi et. al. (eds.): *Iki-ningyô to Matsumoto Kisaburô* (“Living puppets” and Matsumoto Kisaburô), exhibition catalogue, Kumamoto: Kumamoto Gendai Bijutsukan / Ôsaka Rekishi Hakubutsukan 1994.

puppets”) neatly in tall glass cases of the kind still employed by study displays in some museums.

Volume II breathes the positive and proactive atmosphere of the symposium in Königswinter and imparts the whiff of grass-roots activism. The majority of the authors/curators were trained in Chinese studies or ethnology, hardly anyone has a thorough background in the history of East Asian art or material culture, and most lack knowledge in Japanese language, East Asian culture or a general art historical expertise.⁷ Without the help of specialists, very few are able to categorise or determine securely individual objects or even identify their Japanese origin. As a consequence, the reader is alerted to the difficulty of assessing Japanese objects. Additionally, the busy everyday of museum management, exhibition duties, building restorations and, of course, the persistent lack of financial means, are among the frequently mentioned impediments to effective work on the Japanese holdings. Rather than concealing these facts, the contributors are willing to share information and discuss the struggle to cope with and publish largely unknown objects. Positive results of the symposium include the lively contact and mutual help between the participants; the organization of a second symposium at the National Gallery in Prague in September 2005 (sponsored by the Japan Foundation), which focused on the introduction of databases and possibilities of digitising Japanese collections; and the establishment of a website, entitled ENJAC (European Network of Japanese Art Collections; <http://www.enjac.net/>). The regrettable disinterest of academics towards the collections mentioned in the volumes was met in turn by a general suspicion on the part of ENJAC towards an involvement of scholars (in universities) pronounced on the website: “Membership of ENJAC is open to all European-based curators and independent scholars with an interest in promoting the art and culture of Japan through their collections.” While the establishment of a network between curators and “activists” is most welcome and promises to result in productive collaborations of advancing knowledge of Japanese objects and their histories in European collections, it is unfortunate that there does not seem to be any link to the Japanese Art History Forum (JAHF), an association as well as a mailing list founded by historians of Japanese art based in the United States but with a broad membership elsewhere. While financial and institutional problems may occasionally differ on the European continent and the U.S., some of the aims addressed by ENJAC, such as the establishment and use of

⁷ This fact is lamented by several authors in both volumes.

databases and networking with Japanese colleagues are frequently taken up by members of the JAHF as they are of concern to curators, scholars, and collectors worldwide.

Art Versus Ethnographical Material

The two volumes are the result of a symposium by the same title in Königswinter in September 2003, sponsored by the Toyota-Foundation. The symposium was incongruously organised on the occasion of the Japanese art exhibition from holdings of the Tokyo National Museum at the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bonn.⁸ Epitomized by the title *Japans Schönheit, Japans Seele. Meisterwerke aus dem Tokyo National Museum* (*Japan's beauty, Japan's soul: Masterworks from the Tokyo National Museum*), this exhibition aimed at identifying and presenting “the genesis of Japanese aesthetics”⁹ with art works from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries.¹⁰ The show clearly strove to exclusively present Japanese art at its purest, including three national treasures and twenty-three important cultural properties.¹¹ However, its curator Josef Kreiner, intended to eliminate any difference between “high” and “low” art, both at the symposium in Königswinter and in the present publication. Instead, he subsumes all visual objects from Japan under the heading of “Japanese art.” He addresses the problem of “Museums of Ethnology versus Art Museums, A Question of Honour?” in a section of his historical introduction by narrating different attitudes towards Japanese objects and their presentations in the twentieth century,¹² but refrains

8 See the exhibition catalogue, KUNST- UND AUSSTELLUNGSHALLE DER BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND (ed.): *Japans Schönheit, Japans Seele. Meisterwerke aus dem Tokyo National Museum. Die großen Sammlungen*, Munich: Hirmer 2003.

9 Tomoe KREINER: “Japans Schönheit, Japans Seele. Zur Ausstellung von Meisterwerken aus dem Tokyo National Museum”, in *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift, New Series 5* (Spring 2003), 31.

10 See the preface of the exhibition catalogue by Wenzel Jacob and Nozaki Hiroshi in KUNST- UND AUSSTELLUNGSHALLE DER BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND (ed.) 2003: 6.

11 For a critical review of the exhibition, see Doris CROISSANT: “‘Japans Schönheit, Japans Seele’: Eine Nachlese zur Ausstellung in Bonn”, in *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift, New Series 7* (Spring 2004), 47–52.

12 According to Kreiner, among these attitudes is Alfred Janata’s exhibition of 1965, *Das Profil Japans*, in which he used art objects “to illustrate, for instance, the lifestyle of the feudal aristocracy,” and Adolf Fischer’s intention to build a museum of Japanese art

from historicising or problematising these approaches. The pivotal question of defining art versus ethnographic material lies at the heart of modern European collecting of (not only) Japanese art. Up until the late nineteenth century, Japanese export lacquer, ceramics, textiles, and metalwork dominated the interest of the European élite in Japanese cultural production, whereas since the mid-nineteenth century also woodblock prints, as well as objects of scientific or ethnological interest played an increasingly important role. These objects came to be stored in museums of arts and crafts and ethnology. The majority of “random” collectors in the late nineteenth and twentieth century continued to amass souvenirs or the “decorative arts of the Edo period and the Meiji era” (32) based on the taste of the international expositions in the late nineteenth century.

Japanese painting and sculpture were added for the first time to the list of desiderata of some select collectors. While the French Émile Guimet (1836–1918) and the British William Anderson (1842–1900) focussed on assembling Buddhist art and later painting respectively, Otto Kummel (1874–1952), the founder of the Museum of East Asian Art in Berlin, has to be credited for a pioneering vision of East Asian art as an equivalent of European fine art. His standard of collecting art objects for the museum in Berlin, established in 1906, was based on quality, above all, followed by the idea of presenting an overview of Chinese and Japanese culture by prioritising painting.¹³ A discussion of quality or distinctions between objects of art and ethnography may be alien to a postmodern concept of visual culture, which integrates every visual object as (social, political) evidence of a particular culture. However, this problem was not only at the core of aesthetic discussions at the turn of the twentieth century, but it is the stuff of the everyday in many of the mentioned museums, some of which receive gifts of collectibles that do not fit the profile or the standard of their collection.

At the same time, Kreiner clearly favours museums of ethnology over those of fine art in his *Japanese Collections*. The themes of the survey essays in volume I mentioned above, as well as the choice of illustrations¹⁴ clearly

rather than one of ethnology (see vol. I, 35).

13 See Lothar LEDDEROSE: “Einleitung: Zur Geschichte der Sammlung,” in LEDDEROSE, Lothar: *Orchideen und Felsen: Chinesische Bilder im Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst Berlin*, Berlin: Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst 1998: 9–26, particularly pp. 11–12. As Ledderose points out, Kummel’s principles are based on Ernest Fenollosa’s collecting strategies (see below) as well as Hayashi Tadamasu’s and Ernst Grosse’s view of East Asian art (ibid. 11).

indicate this preference. He justifies this choice by correctly stating that museums including Japanese fine arts are more widely published. Nevertheless, I know of hardly any article which analyses, for example, the history of collecting Japanese paintings or sculpture in Europe. Additionally, it is inconceivable why the mentioned Museum of East Asian Art in Berlin is represented in volume II, while the important Japanese holdings of the British Museum (including William Anderson's painting collection) are not discussed and the Musée Guimet in Paris is only summarised (vol. II, 413). It may have been wise to exclude art collections altogether and instead focus on ethnological and ethnographic collections, thus developing an understanding of a distinctly European approach to Japanese culture.

*Josef Kreiner's "Some Remarks
on Japanese Collections in Europe"*

In his introduction in volume I, Kreiner shares with most publications on collecting histories the understanding of collecting as a reflection of changing self-definitions of the collector rather than as a representation of what is being collected (3). The author therefore spotlights relevant social and political issues in Europe. However, the late nineteenth century saw a steep increase of collectors and rising numbers of publicly accessible collections which beg a more in-depth analyses of the economic significance of export art in Japan as well as of its political promotion by the Japanese government. The carefully crafted objects designed for Western consumption amazed not only artisans committed to innovate their progressively industrialising crafts in Europe and the United States, but the much-praised exhibits at international fairs (particularly those in Vienna in 1873, and the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago) were seen as the reflection of a Japanese national character defined as elegant, meticulous, and advanced.¹⁵ Ailing Qing China was unable or unwilling to bolster its international image likewise, and commentators in

14 An example of a *warazan*, a straw object recording information and data made in Okinawa since the seventeenth century is reproduced even twice (vol. I, 123 and vol. II, 656).

15 The *New York Times* states already on the occasion of Matthew Perry's naval expedition to Japan on 7 February, 1852, that "the Japanese, as evidenced by their crafts, were an advanced culture and in no need of a jolt from the United States." (Warren COHEN: *East Asian Art and American Culture*, New York: Columbia University Press 1992: 15; more on the topic on pp. 32–33.)

the European and North American press contrasted “progressive Japan” with “slothful China,” resulting, for example, in a Western prejudice in favour of the Japanese role in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95.¹⁶ These political aspects of promoting artefacts on an international scale are on a par with financial interests of the Japanese government in advocating its contemporary arts and crafts. After all, art objects covered ten percent of the national export from the early 1880s until the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ Rather than “art” (*bijutsu*, a word translated into Japanese from the German on the occasion of the international exposition in Vienna, 1873),¹⁸ the exported wares were considered industrial products. Aided by the cheap yen and a favourable exchange rate, collecting things Japanese was not restricted to the financially privileged.

The focus on Europe is complex enough to cover more than one thousand pages, but it may have been healthy to venture into comparative territory on a historical level. For example, the collecting history of Japanese art in the U.S. is remarkably different in many respects.¹⁹ While most European collectors in the late nineteenth century were steeped in the fad of Japonisme, some far-sighted American collectors saw Japanese art as part of a world art history. The foremost trend-setter of a new Japanese aesthetics and collector of Japanese art who formed the basis of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts’ collection of Japanese art, Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), had a far-reaching vision of what Japanese art (and East Asian art at large) was to embody for a North American audience. He was invited to teach philosophy at Tokyo University in 1878 and was well-connected with the political and social establishment in Japan. Unimpressed by the orientalist gaze of a European audience interested in an exoticised Japan as it represented itself at international expositions, he collected fine arts only in the 1880s. Until late in his life, Fenollosa despised

16 See COHEN 1992: 30. Cohen remarks: “Theodore Roosevelt insisted that the Chinese and the Japanese could not be considered of the same race.” Ibid.

17 This number is mentioned in the report of the Fourth Domestic Industrial Fair in 1896, and is quoted in SATŌ Dōshin: “Rekishi shiryō toshite no korekushon” (Collections as Historical Documents), in *Kindai gasetu* 2 (December 1993), 39–51, especially p. 44.

18 SATŌ, Dōshin: “*Nihon bijutsu*” *tanjō*. *Kindai Nihon no “kotoba” to senryaku* (The Birth of “Japanese Art.” “Terminologies” and Strategies in Modern Japan), Kōdansha sensho mechie, vol. 92, Kōdansha 1996: 34–41.

19 In a passage on ranking art collections, Kreiner does mention, however, the superior holdings of Japanese art in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and at the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., to which “no one single European collection of Japanese art can be compared” (vol. I, 30–31).

Japanese woodblock print, then regarded as the loathsome product of popular tastes by the Japanese élite. According to him, the Japanese paintings and sculptures were to lead the other arts in defining an aesthetic Zeitgeist within history. The East Asian “high art” was to delineate a historical development with the intention of creating a comprehensive world art history.²⁰

This historical background set the stage for serious art collecting in the U.S. during and after the Second World War, rather than in Europe.²¹ Then, American military intelligence was trained in Japanese language and culture, and the occupation period opened a new view of a civilised and cultured Japan to the American public. Japanese collectors were forced to part with some of their most valuable objects after the end of the war and the American forces held a primary position in acquiring them right there and then. Outstanding public collections of Japanese fine arts grew during the post-war decades such as those in Seattle, New York, Kansas City, Chicago, and Honolulu, as well as exceptional private collections amassed by Mary Griggs Burke, Harry Packard, Kimiko and John Powers, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Price, and Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller. After the economic bubble burst in the early 1990s, North American collectors and museums profited again from the unfortunate economic circumstances causing a number of Japanese museums and collections to sell their treasures.²² In the meantime, most European countries were forced to cope with the disastrous economic effects of the two World Wars, and some, as in the case of Germany, relinquished their colonial and military aspirations – so pivotal in motivating the creation

20 In the introduction to his posthumously published two volumes, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, he states: “The purpose of this book is to contribute first-hand material toward a real history of East Asiatic Art. ... Its treatment of the subject is novel in several respects. Heretofore most books on Japanese Art have dealt rather with the technique of industries than with the aesthetic motive in schools of design, thus producing a false classification by materials instead of by creative periods. ... Thus painting and sculpture, instead of being relegated to separate subordinate chapters, along with ‘ceramics,’ ‘textiles,’ ... are shown to have created at each epoch a great national school of design that underlay the whole round of industrial arts.” Ernest F. FENOLLOSA: *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1963, vol. I: xxiii.

21 According to the acclaimed art historian Sherman Lee, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Freer Gallery in Washington, D.C., are exceptions in prime collections of Japanese art prior to the late 1930s; see Sherman LEE et al.: *One Thousand Years of Japanese Art (650–1650) from the Cleveland Museum of Art*, New York: Japan Society 1981: 9–12.

22 The private collection of Japanese art assembled by John C. Weber in New York is a case in point (Melanie TREDE with Julia MEECH (eds.): *Arts of Japan – The John C. Weber Collection*, Berlin: Museum of East Asian Art, National Museums in Berlin 2006: 8).

of precious East Asian art collections in the early twentieth century²³ – after 1945. These political circumstances resulted in the dwindling attraction of and decreasing monetary means allotted to non-European cultures in the post-war period; a situation which only changed recently by way of outstanding private collecting activities in contemporary East Asian art.²⁴

That said, all curators, scholars, students, and interested readers in Japanese visual culture should be enormously grateful to Josef Kreiner and his editorial assistants for the enormous service to the field. The two volumes will remain the standard work on the subject for many years to come.

23 The striking example of Otto Kummel's mission to assemble the best collection of Chinese painting for the Royal Museums in Berlin in the first decades of the twentieth century vis-à-vis the outstanding collections on the East Coast of the United States and those assembled by European neighbours, particularly France and Britain, is discussed in LEDDEROSE: "Einleitung: Zur Geschichte der Sammlung," 1998, particularly pp. 9–10.

24 See, for example, the comprehensive Sigg collection of contemporary Chinese art, exhibited at the Bern Art Museum in 2005, and in Hamburg in 2006 (*Mahjong, Chinesische Gegenwartskunst aus der Sammlung Sigg*, edited by the KUNSTMUSEUM BERN, Bernhard FIBICHER and Matthias FREHNER, Hatje Cantz Verlag 2005). There are exceptions to the rule, as for example, the internationally acclaimed Pulverer collection of Japanese woodblock prints and books dating to the Tokugawa period (see the Japanese exhibition catalogue *Doitsu Puruverâ korekushon ukiyoe hanga meihinten / Masterpieces of ukiyo-e from the Pulverer collection*, edited by the ASAHI SHINBUNSHA BUNKA KIKAKUKYOKU, Asahi Shinbunsha 1990).