

**28-1** Ogata Korin, *Red Plum Blossoms*, Edo period, ca. 1710–1716. Detail of one of a pair of two-panel folding screens (Fig. I-12). Ink, color, and gold leaf on paper, each screen 5'  $1\frac{5}{8}$ "  $\times$  5'  $7\frac{7}{8}$ ". MOA Art Museum, Shizuoka-ken.

Ogata Korin was one of the leading painters of the 18th-century Rinpa School. In this work he reduced the landscape motifs to a minimum to offer a dramatic contrast of forms and visual textures.

# JAPAN AFTER 1336

E arly Japanese cultural history (see Chapter 8) reveals the dialogue that occurred between the Japanese islands and continental eastern Asia and the indebtedness of Japanese art and architecture to the paintings, sculptures, buildings, and crafts of China and Korea. Nonetheless, the Japanese developed a rich variety and unique identity in their art. This ability to incorporate foreign elements yet maintain a consciousness of their own heritage and traditions became more apparent in the arts of Japan as time progressed. It is especially evident from the 14th century to the present.

# JAPAN, 1336 TO 1868

In 1185 the Japanese emperor in Kyoto appointed the first *shogun* (military governor) in Kamakura in eastern Japan (MAP **28-1**). Although the imperial family retained its right to reign and, in theory, the shogun managed the country on the ruling emperor's behalf, in reality the emperor lost all governing authority. The Japanese *shogunate* was a political and economic arrangement in which *daimyo* (local lords), the leaders of powerful warrior bands composed of *samurai* (warriors), paid obeisance to the shogun. These local lords had considerable power over affairs within their domains. The Kamakura shogunate ruled Japan for more than a century but collapsed in 1332. Several years of civil war followed, ending only when Ashikaga Takauji (1305–1358) succeeded in establishing domination of his clan over all Japan and became the new imperially recognized shogun.

# Muromachi Period

The rise of the Ashikaga clan marked the beginning of the Muromachi period (1336–1573), named after the district in Kyoto in which the Ashikaga shoguns maintained their headquarters. During the Muromachi period, Zen Buddhism (see "Zen Buddhism," page 736) rose to prominence alongside the older traditions, such as Pure Land and Esoteric Buddhism. Unlike the Pure Land faith, which stressed reliance on the saving power of Amida, the Buddha of the West, Zen emphasized rigorous discipline and personal

#### RELIGION AND MYTHOLOGY

# Zen Buddhism

en (Chan in Chinese), as a fully developed Buddhist tradition, began filtering into Japan in the 12th century and had its most pervasive impact on Japanese culture starting in the 14th century during the Muromachi period. As in other forms of Buddhism, Zen followers hoped to achieve enlightenment. Zen teachings assert that everyone has the potential for enlightenment, but worldly knowledge and mundane thought patterns suppress it. Thus, to achieve enlightenment, followers must break through the boundaries of everyday perception and logic. This is most often achieved through meditation. Indeed, the word zen means "meditation." Some Zen schools stress meditation as a long-term practice eventually leading to enlightenment, whereas others emphasize the benefits of sudden shocks to the worldly mind. One of these shocks is the subject of Kano Motonobu's Zen Patriarch Xiangyen Zhixian Sweeping with a Broom (FIG. 28-4), in which the shattering of a fallen roof tile opens the monk's mind. Beyond personal commitment, the guidance of an enlightened Zen teacher is essential to arriving at enlightenment. Years of strict training that involve manual labor under the tutelage of this master coupled with meditation provide the foundation for a receptive mind. According to Zen beliefs, by cultivating discipline and intense concentration, Buddhists can transcend their ego and release themselves from the shackles of the mundane world.

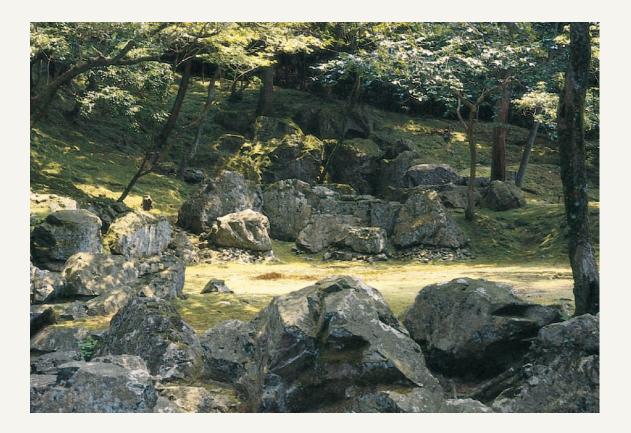
Although Zen is not primarily devotional, followers do pray to specific deities. In general, Zen teachings view mental calm, lack of fear, and spontaneity as signs of a person's advancement on the path to enlightenment.

Zen training for monks takes place at temples, some of which have gardens designed in accord with Zen principles, such as the drylandscape garden of Kyoto's Saihoji temple (FIG. 28-2). Zen temples also sometimes served as centers of Chinese learning and handled funeral rites. Zen temples even embraced many traditional Buddhist observances, such as devotional rituals before images, which had little to do with meditation per se.

As the teachings spread, Zen ideals reverberated throughout Japanese culture. Lay followers as well as Zen monks painted pictures and produced other artworks that appear to reach toward Zen ideals through their subjects and their means of expression. Other cultural practices reflected the widespread appeal of Zen. For example, the tea ceremony (see "The Japanese Tea Ceremony," page 740), or ritual drinking of tea, as it developed in the 15th and 16th centuries, offered a temporary respite from everyday concerns, a brief visit to a quiet retreat with a meditative atmosphere, such as the Taian teahouse (FIG. 28-7).

**28-2** Dry cascade and pools, upper garden, Saihoji temple, Kyoto, Japan, modified in Muromachi period, 14th century.

Zen temples often incorporated gardens to facilitate meditation. The dry cascade and pools of the upper garden of the Saihoji temple in Kyoto are an early example of Muromachi dry-landscape gardening (karesansui).



responsibility. For this reason, Zen held a special attraction for the upper echelons of samurai, whose behavioral codes placed high values on loyalty, courage, and self-control. Further, familiarity with Chinese Zen culture (see "Chan Buddhism," Chapter 7, page 201) carried implications of superior knowledge and refinement, thereby legitimizing the elevated status of the warrior elite.

Zen, however, was not simply the religion of Zen monks and highly placed warriors. Aristocrats, merchants, and others studied at and supported Zen temples. Furthermore, those who embraced Zen, including samurai, also generally accepted other Buddhist teachings, especially the ideas of the Pure Land sects. These sects gave much greater attention to the issues of death and salvation. Zen temples



MAP 28-1 Modern Japan.

stood out not only as religious institutions but also as centers of secular culture, where people could study Chinese art, literature, and learning, which the Japanese imported along with Zen Buddhism. Some Zen monasteries accumulated considerable wealth overseeing trade missions to China.

SAIHOJI GARDENS The Saihoji temple gardens in Kyoto bear witness to both the continuities and changes that marked religious art in the Muromachi period. In the 14th century, this Pure Land temple with its extensive gardens became a Zen institution. However, Zen leaders did not attempt to erase other religious traditions, and the Saihoji gardens in their totality originally included some Pure Land elements even as they served the Zen faith's more meditative needs. In this way, they perfectly echoed the complementary roles of these two Buddhist traditions in the Muromachi period, with Pure Land providing a promise of salvation and Zen promoting study and meditation.

Saihoji's lower gardens center on a pond in the shape of the Japanese character for "mind" or "spirit" and are thus the perfect setting for monks to meditate. Today those gardens are famous for their iridescently green mosses, whose beauty is almost otherworldly. In contrast, arrangements of rocks and sand on the hillsides of the upper garden, especially the dry cascade and pools (FIG. 28-2), are treasured early examples of Muromachi *karesansui* (dry-landscape gardening). The designers stacked the rocks to suggest a swift mountain stream rushing over the stones to form pools below. In eastern Asia, people long considered gazing at dramatic natural scenery highly beneficial to the human spirit. These activities refreshed people after too much contact with daily affairs and helped them reach beyond

**28-3** Sesshu Toyo, splashed-ink (haboku) landscape, detail of the lower part of a hanging scroll, Muromachi period, 1495. Ink on paper, full scroll 4'  $10\frac{1}{4}'' \times 1'\frac{7}{8}''$ ; detail 4'  $\frac{1}{2}''$  high. Tokyo National Museum, Tokyo.

In this splashed-ink landscape, the artist applied primarily broad, rapid strokes, sometimes even dripping the ink on the paper. The result hovers at the edge of legibility, without dissolving into sheer abstraction.

mundane reality. The dry landscape, or rock garden, became very popular in Japan in the Muromachi period and afterward, especially at Zen temples. In its extreme form, a karesansui garden consists purely of artfully arranged rocks on a raked bed of sand.

SESSHU TOYO As was common in earlier eras of Japanese history, Muromachi painters usually closely followed Chinese precedents (often arriving by way of Korea). Muromachi painting nonetheless displays great variety in both style and subject matter. Indeed, individual masters often worked in different styles, as did the most celebrated Muromachi priest-painter, Sesshu Toyo (1420-1506), one of the very few Japanese painters who traveled to China and studied contemporaneous Ming painting. His most dramatic works are in the splashed-ink (haboku) style, a technique with Chinese roots. The painter of a haboku picture paused to visualize the image, loaded the brush with ink, and then applied primarily broad, rapid strokes, sometimes even dripping the ink onto the paper. The result often hovers at the edge of legibility, without dissolving into sheer abstraction. This balance between spontaneity and a thorough knowledge of the painting tradition gives the pictures their artistic strength. In the haboku landscape illustrated here (FIG. 28-3), images of mountains, trees, and buildings emerge from the ink-washed surface. Two figures appear in a boat (to the lower right), and the two swift strokes nearby represent the pole and banner of a wine shop.



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KANO MOTONOBU The opposite pole of Muromachi painting style is represented by the Kano School, which by the 17th century had become a virtual national painting academy. The school flourished until the late 19th century. Kano Мотонови (1476–1559) was largely responsible for establishing the Kano style during the Muromachi period. His Zen Patriarch Xiangyen Zhixian Sweeping with a Broom (FIG. 28-4) is one of six panels depicting Zen patriarchs that Motonobu designed as sliding door paintings (fusuma) for the abbot's room in the Zen temple complex of Daitokuji in Kyoto. Later refashioned as a hanging scroll, the painting represents the Zen patriarch Xiangyen Zhixian (d. 898) at the moment he achieved enlightenment. Motonobu depicted the patriarch sweeping the ground near his rustic retreat as a roof tile falls at his feet and shatters. His Zen training is so deep that the resonant sound propels the patriarch into an awakening. In contrast to Muromachi splashed-ink painting, Motonobu's work displays exacting precision in applying ink in bold outlines by holding the brush perpendicular to the paper. Thick clouds obscure the mountainous setting and focus the viewer's attention on the sharp, angular rocks, bamboo branches, and modest hut that frame the patriarch. Lightly applied colors also draw attention to Xiangyen Zhixian, whom Motonobu portrayed as having let go of his broom with his right hand as he recoils in astonishment. Although very different in style, the Japanese painting recalls the subject of Liang Kai's Song hanging scroll (FIG. 7-25).

### Momoyama Period

Despite the hierarchical nature of Japanese society during the Muromachi period, the control the Ashikaga shoguns exerted was tenuous and precarious. Ambitious daimyo often seized opportunities to expand their power, sometimes aspiring to become shoguns themselves. By the late 15th century, Japan was experiencing violent confrontations over territory and dominance. In fact, scholars refer to the last century of the

Muromachi period as the Era of Warring States, intentionally borrowing the terminology used to describe a much earlier tumultuous period in Chinese history (see Chapter 7). Finally, three successive warlords seized power, and the last succeeded in restoring order and establishing a new and long-lasting shogunate. In 1573, Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) overthrew the Ashikaga shogunate in Kyoto but was later killed by one of his generals. Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598) took control of the government after Nobunaga's assassination and ruled until he died of natural causes in 1598. In the struggle following Hideyoshi's death, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616) emerged victorious and assumed the title of shogun in 1603. Ieyasu continued to face challenges, but by 1615 he had eliminated his last rival and established his clan as the rulers of Japan for two and a half centuries. To reinforce their power, these warlords constructed huge castles with palatial residences—partly as symbols of their authority and partly as fortresses. The new era's designation, Momoyama (Peach Blossom Hill), derives from the scenic foliage at one



**28-4** Кано Мотонови, Zen Patriarch Xiangyen Zhixian Sweeping with a Broom, from Daitokuji, Kyoto, Japan, Muromachi period, ca. 1513. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 5′  $7\frac{3}{8}'' \times 2'$   $10\frac{3}{4}''$ . Tokyo National Museum, Tokyo.

The Kano School represents the opposite pole of Muromachi style from splashed-ink painting. In this scroll depicting a Zen patriarch experiencing enlightenment, Motonobu used bold outlines to define the forms.

of Hideyoshi's castles southeast of Kyoto. The Momoyama period (1573–1615), although only a brief interlude between two major shogunates, produced many outstanding artworks.

**KANO EITOKU** Each Momoyama warlord commissioned lavish decorations for the interior of his castle, including paintings, sliding doors, and folding screens (*byobu*) in ink, color, and gold leaf. Gold screens had existed since Muromachi times, but Momoyama painters made them even bolder, reducing the number of motifs and often greatly enlarging them against flat, shimmering fields of gold leaf.

The grandson of Motonobu, Kano Eitoku (1543–1590), was the leading painter of murals and screens and received numerous commissions from the powerful warlords. So extensive were these commissions (in both scale and number) that Eitoku used a painting system developed by his grandfather that relied on a team of specialized painters to assist him. Unfortunately, little of Eitoku's elaborate work remains because of the subsequent destruction of the ostenta-



**28-5** Kano Eitoku, *Chinese Lions*, Momoyama period, late 16th century. Six-panel screen, color, ink, and gold leaf on paper, 7' 4" × 14' 10". Imperial Household Agency, Tokyo.

Chinese lions were fitting imagery for the castle of a Momoyama warlord because they exemplified power and bravery. Eitoku's huge screen features boldly outlined forms on a gold ground.

tious castles he helped decorate—not surprising in an era marked by power struggles. However, a painting of Chinese lions on a six-panel screen (FIG. 28-5) offers a glimpse of his work's grandeur. Possibly created for Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the second of the three great warlords of the Momoyama period, this screen, originally one of a pair, appropriately speaks to the emphasis on militarism so prevalent at the time. The lions Eitoku depicted are mythological beasts that have their origin in ancient Chinese legends. Appearing in both religious and secular contexts, the lions came to be associated with power and bravery and are thus fitting imagery for a military leader. Indeed, Chinese lions became an important symbolic motif during the Momoyama period. In Eitoku's painting, the colorful beasts' powerfully muscled bodies, defined and flattened by broad contour lines, stride

forward within a gold field and minimal setting elements. The dramatic impact of this work derives in part from its scale—it is more than 7 feet tall and nearly 15 feet long.

HASEGAWA TOHAKU Momoyama painters did not work exclusively in the colorful style exemplified by Eitoku's *Chinese Lions*. HASEGAWA TOHAKU (1539–1610) was a leading painter who became familiar with the aesthetics and techniques of Chinese Chan and Japanese Zen painters such as Sesshu Toyo (FIG. 28-3) by studying the art collections of the Daitokuji temple in Kyoto. Tohaku sometimes painted in ink monochrome using loose brushwork with brilliant success, as seen in *Pine Forest* (FIG. 28-6), one of a pair of sixpanel byobu. His wet brush strokes—long and slow, short and quick,



**28-6** Hasegawa Tohaku, *Pine Forest*, Momoyama period, late 16th century. One of a pair of six-panel screens, ink on paper,  $5' 1\frac{3}{8}'' \times 11' 4''$ . Tokyo National Museum, Tokyo.

Tohaku used wet brush strokes to paint a grove of great pines shrouded in mist. In Zen terms, the six-panel screen suggests the illusory nature of mundane reality while evoking a calm, meditative mood.

#### ART AND SOCIETY

# The Japanese Tea Ceremony

he Japanese tea ceremony involves the ritual preparation, serving, and drinking of green tea. The fundamental practices began in China, but they developed in Japan to a much higher degree of sophistication, peaking in the Momoyama period. Simple forms of the tea ceremony started in Japan in Zen temples as a symbolic withdrawal from the ordinary world to cultivate the mind and spirit. The practices spread to other social groups, especially samurai and, by the late 16th century, wealthy merchants. Until the late Muromachi period, grand tea ceremonies in warrior residences served primarily as an excuse to display treasured collections of Chinese objects, such as porcelains, lacquers, and paintings.

Initially, the Japanese held tea ceremonies in a room or section of a house. As the popularity of the ceremonies increased, freestanding teahouses (FIG. 28-7) became common. The ceremony involves a sequence of rituals in which both host and guests participate. The host's responsibilities include serving the guests; selecting special utensils, such as water jars (FIG. 28-8) and tea bowls; and determining the tearoom's decoration, which changes according to occasion and season. Acknowledged as having superior aesthetic sensibilities, individuals recognized as master tea ceremony practitioners (tea masters) advise patrons on the ceremony and acquire students. Tea masters even direct or influence the design of teahouses and of tearooms within larger structures (including interiors and gardens) as well as the design of tea utensils. They often make simple bamboo implements and occasionally even ceramic vessels.

28-7 SEN NO RIKYU, Taian teahouse (interior view), Myokian Temple, Kyoto, Japan, Momoyama period, ca. 1582.

The dimness and tiny size of Rikyu's Taian tearoom and its alcove produce a cavelike feel and encourage intimacy among the host and guests, who must crawl through a small sliding door to enter.



dark and pale—present a grove of great pines shrouded in mist. His trees emerge from and recede into the heavy atmosphere, as if the landscape hovers at the edge of formlessness. In Zen terms, the picture suggests the illusory nature of mundane reality while evoking a calm, meditative mood.

**SEN NO RIKYU** A favorite exercise of cultivation and refinement in the Momoyama period was the tea ceremony (see "The Japanese Tea Ceremony," above). In Japan, this important practice eventually came to carry various political and ideological implications. For example, it provided a means for individuals relatively new to political or economic power to assert authority in the cultural realm. For instance, upon returning from a major military campaign, Toyotomi Hideyoshi held an immense tea ceremony that lasted 10 days and was open to everyone in Kyoto. The ceremony's political associations became so serious that warlords granted or refused their vassals the right to practice it.

The most venerated tea master of the Momoyama period was SEN NO RIKYU (1522–1591), who was instrumental in establishing the rituals and aesthetics of the tea ceremony, for example, the manner of entry into a teahouse (crawling on one's hands and knees). Rikyu believed this behavior fostered humility and created the impression, however unrealistic, that there was no rank in a teahouse. Rikyu was the designer of the first Japanese teahouse built as an independent structure as opposed to being part of a house. The Taian teahouse (FIG. 28-7) at the Myokian Temple in Kyoto, also attributed to Rikyu, is the oldest in Japan. The interior displays two standard features of Japanese residential architecture of the late Muromachi period-very thick, rigid straw mats called tatami (a Heian innovation) and an alcove called a tokonoma. The tatami accommodate the traditional Japanese customs of not wearing shoes indoors and of sitting on the floor. They can still be found in Japanese homes today. Less common in contemporary houses are tokonoma, which developed as places to hang scrolls of painting or calligraphy and to display other prized objects.

The Taian tokonoma and the tearoom as a whole have unusually dark walls, with earthen plaster covering even some of the square corner posts. The room's dimness and tiny size (about six feet square, the size of two tatami mats) produce a cavelike feel and encourage intimacy among the tea host and guests. The guests enter from the garden outside through a small sliding door that forces them humbly to crawl inside. The means of entrance emphasizes a guest's passage into a ceremonial space set apart from the ordinary world.

SHINO CERAMICS Sen no Rikyu also was influential in determining the aesthetics of tea ceremony utensils. He maintained that value and refinement lay in character and ability and not in bloodline or rank, and he therefore encouraged the use of tea items whose value was their inherent beauty rather than their monetary worth. Even before Rikyu, in the late 15th century during the Muromachi



**28-8** Kogan, tea ceremony water jar, Momoyama period, late 16th century. Shino ware with underglaze design, 7" high. Hatakeyama Memorial Museum, Tokyo.

The vessels used in the Japanese tea ceremony reflect the concepts of wabi, the aesthetic of refined rusticity, and sabi, the value found in weathered objects. These qualities suggest the tranquility achieved in old age.

period, admiration of the technical brilliance of Chinese objects had begun to give way to ever greater appreciation of the virtues of rustic Korean and Japanese wares. This new aesthetic of refined rusticity, or *wabi*, was consistent with Zen concepts. Wabi suggests austerity and simplicity. Related to wabi and also important as a philosophical and aesthetic principle was *sabi*—the value found in the old and weathered, suggesting the tranquility reached in old age.

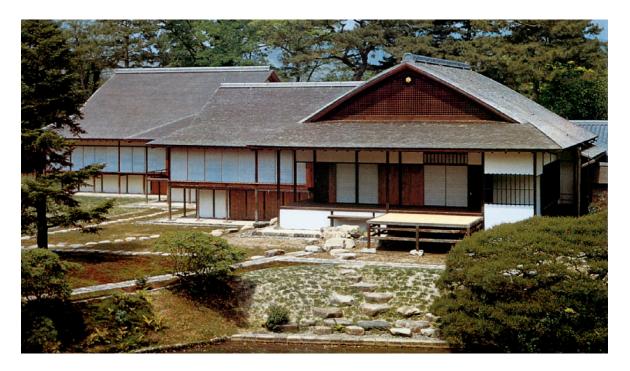
Wabi and sabi aesthetics underlie the ceramic vessels produced for the tea ceremony, such as the Shino water jar named *kogan* (FIG. **28-8**). The name, which means "ancient stream bank," comes

from the painted design on the jar's surface as well as from its coarse texture and rough form, both reminiscent of earth cut by water. The term *Shino* generally refers to ceramic wares produced during the late 16th and early 17th centuries in kilns in Mino. Shino vessels typically have rough surfaces and feature heavy glazes containing feldspar. These glazes are predominantly white when fired but can include pinkish red or gray hues. The kogans' coarse stoneware body and seemingly casual decoration offer the same sorts of aesthetic and interpretive challenges and opportunities as dry-landscape gardens (FIG. 28-2). The kogan illustrated here, for example, has a prominent crack in one side and sagging contours (both intentional) to suggest the accidental and natural, qualities essential to the values of wabi and sabi.

# Edo Period

When Tokugawa Ieyasu consolidated his power in 1615, he abandoned Kyoto, the official capital, and set up his headquarters in Edo (modern Tokyo), initiating the Edo period (1615–1868) of Japanese history and art. The new regime instituted many policies designed to limit severely the pace of social and cultural change in Japan. Fearing destabilization of the social order, the Tokugawa rulers banned Christianity and expelled all Western foreigners except the Dutch. The Tokugawa also transformed Confucian ideas of social stratification and civic responsibility into public policy, and they tried to control the social influence of urban merchants, some of whose wealth far outstripped that of most warrior leaders. However, the population's great expansion in urban centers, the spread of literacy in the cities and beyond, and a growing thirst for knowledge and diversion made for a very lively popular culture not easily subject to tight control.

KATSURA IMPERIAL VILLA In the Edo period, the imperial court's power remained as it had been for centuries, symbolic and ceremonial, but the court continued to wield influence in matters of taste and culture. For example, for a 50-year period in the 17th century, a princely family developed a modest country retreat into a villa that became the standard for Japanese domestic architecture. Since the early 20th century, it has inspired architects worldwide (FIG. 35-77), even as ordinary living environments in Japan became increasingly Westernized in structure and decor. The Katsura Imperial Villa (FIG. 28-9), built between 1620 and 1663 on the



**28-9** Eastern facade of the Katsura Imperial Villa, Kyoto, Japan, Edo period, 1620–1663.

This princely villa on the Katsura River has long been the standard for Japanese residential architecture. The design relies on subtleties of proportion, color, and texture instead of ornament for its aesthetic appeal. Katsura River southwest of Kyoto, has many features that derive from earlier teahouses, such as Rikyu's Taian (FIG. 28-7). However, tea ceremony aesthetics later moved away from Rikyu's wabi extremes, and the Katsura Villa's designers and carpenters incorporated elements of courtly gracefulness as well.

Ornament that disguises structural forms has little place in this architecture's appeal, which relies instead on subtleties of proportion, color, and texture. A variety of textures (stone, wood, tile, and plaster) and subdued colors and tonal values enrich the villa's lines, planes, and volumes. Artisans painstakingly rubbed and burnished all surfaces to bring out the natural beauty of their grains and textures. The rooms are not large, but parting or removing the sliding doors between them can create broad rectangular spaces. Perhaps most important, the residents can open the doors to the outside to achieve a harmonious integration of building and garden—one of the primary ideals of Japanese residential architecture.

THE RINPA SCHOOL In painting, the Kano School enjoyed official governmental sponsorship during the Edo period, and its workshops provided paintings to the Tokugawa and their major vassals. By the mid-18th century, Kano masters also served as the primary painting teachers for nearly everyone aspiring to a career in the field. Even so, individualist painters and other schools emerged and flourished, working in quite distinct styles.

The earliest major alternative school to emerge in the Edo period, Rinpa, was quite different in nature from the Kano School. It did not have a similar continuity of lineage and training through father and son, master and pupil. Instead, over time, Rinpa aesthetics and principles attracted a variety of individuals as practitioners and champions. Stylistically, Rinpa works feature vivid color and extensive use of gold and silver and often incorporate decorative patterns. The Rinpa School traced its roots to Tawaraya Sotatsu, an artist who emerged as an important figure during the late Momoyama period, but Rinpa takes its first syllable from the last syllable in the name of Ogata Korin. Both Sotatsu and Korin were scions of wealthy merchant families with close connections to the Japanese court. Many Rinpa works incorporate literary themes the nobility favored.

HONAMI KOETSU (1558–1637), the heir of an important family in the ancient capital of Kyoto and a greatly admired calligrapher. He also participated in and produced ceramics for the tea ceremony. Many scholars credit him with overseeing the design of wooden objects with lacquer decoration (see "Lacquered Wood," Chapter 27, page 724), perhaps with the aid of Sotatsu, the proprietor of a fan-painting shop. Scholars do know that together the two artists drew on ancient traditions of painting and craft decoration to develop a style that collapsed boundaries between the two arts. Paintings, the lacquered surfaces of writing boxes, and ceramics shared motifs and compositions.

In typical Rinpa fashion, Koetsu's *Boat Bridge* writing box (FIG. **28-10**) exhibits motifs drawn from a 10th-century poem about the boat bridge at Sano, in the eastern provinces. The lid presents a subtle, gold-on-gold scene of small boats lined up side by side in the water to support the planks of a temporary bridge. The bridge itself, a lead overlay, forms a band across the lid's convex surface. The raised metallic lines on the water, boats, and bridge are a few Japanese characters from the poem, which describes the experience of crossing a bridge as evoking reflection on life's insecurities. The box also shows the dramatic contrasts of form, texture, and color that mark Rinpa aesthetics, especially the juxtaposition of the bridge's dark metal and the box's brilliant gold surface. The gold decoration comes from careful sprinkling of gold dust in wet lacquer. Whatever Koetsu's contribution to the design process, specialists well versed in the demanding techniques of metalworking and lacquering produced the writing box.

OGATA KORIN The son of an important textile merchant, OGATA KORIN (1658–1716) was primarily a painter, but he also designed lacquers in Koetsu's manner. One of Korin's painted masterpieces is a pair of two-panel folding screens depicting red and white blossoming plum trees separated by a stream (FIGS. I-12 and 28-1). As Koetsu did with his writing box, Korin reduced the motifs to a minimum to offer a dramatic contrast of forms and visual textures. The landscape consists solely of delicate, slender branches, gnarled, aged tree trunks, and an undulating stream. Korin mixed viewpoints (he depicted the stream as seen from above but the trees from the ground)

**28-10** Honami Koetsu, *Boat Bridge*, writing box, Edo period, early 17th century. Lacquered wood with sprinkled gold and lead overlay,  $9\frac{1}{2}" \times 9" \times 4\frac{3}{8}"$ . Tokyo National Museum, Tokyo.

Koetsu's writing box is an early work of the Rinpa School, which drew on ancient traditions of painting and craft decoration to develop a style that collapsed boundaries between the two arts.



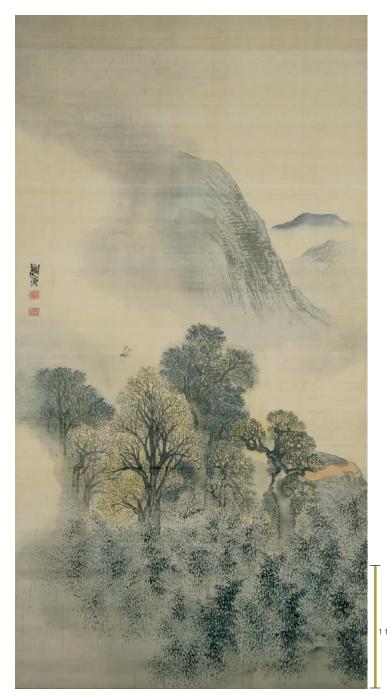
to produce a striking two-dimensional pattern of dark forms on a gold ground. He even created a contrast between the dark motifs of stream and trees by varying painting techniques. The mottling of the trees comes from a signature Rinpa technique called *tarashikomi*, the dropping of ink and pigments onto surfaces still wet with previously applied ink and pigments. In sharp contrast, the pattern in the stream has the precision and elegant stylization of a textile design, produced by applying pigment through the forms cut in a paper stencil.

**LITERATI PAINTING** In the 17th and 18th centuries, Japan's increasingly urban, educated population spurred a cultural and social restlessness among commoners and samurai of lesser rank that the policies of the restrictive Tokugawa could not suppress. People eagerly sought new ideas and images, directing their attention primarily to China, as had happened throughout Japanese history, but also to the West. From each direction, dramatically new ideas about painting emerged.

Starting in the late 17th century, illustrations in printed books and imported paintings of lesser quality brought limited knowledge of Chinese literati painting (see Chapter 27) into Japan. As a result, some Japanese painters began to emulate Chinese models, although the difference in context resulted in variations. In China, literati were cultured intellectuals whose education and upbringing as landed gentry afforded them positions in the bureaucracy that governed the country. Chinese literati artists were predominantly amateurs and pursued painting as one of the proper functions of an educated and cultivated person. In contrast, although Japanese literati artists acquired a familiarity with and appreciation for Chinese literature, they were mostly professionals, painting to earn a living. Because of the diffused infiltration of Chinese literati painting into Japan, the resulting character of Japanese literati painting was less stylistically defined than in China. Despite the inevitable changes as Chinese ideas disseminated throughout Japan, the newly seen Chinese models were valuable in supporting emerging ideals of self-expression in painting by offering a worthy alternative to the Kano School's standardized repertoire.

YOSA BUSON One of the outstanding early representatives of Japanese literati painting was Yosa Buson (1716–1783). A master writer of *haiku* (the 17-syllable Japanese poetic form that became popular from the 17th century on), Buson had a command of literati painting that extended beyond a knowledge of Chinese models. His poetic abilities gave rise to a lyricism that pervaded both his haiku and his painting. *Cuckoo Flying over New Verdure* (FIG. **28-11**) reveals his fully mature style. He incorporated in this work basic elements of Chinese literati painting by rounding the landscape forms and rendering their soft texture in fine fibrous brush strokes, and by including dense foliage patterns, but the cuckoo is a motif specific to Japanese poetry and literati painting. Moreover, although Buson imitated the vocabulary of brush strokes associated with the Chinese literati, his touch was bolder and more abstract, and the gentle palette of pale colors was very much his own.

*UKIYO-E* The growing urbanization in cities such as Osaka, Kyoto, and Edo led to an increase in the pursuit of sensual pleasure and entertainment in the brash popular theaters and the pleasure houses found in certain locales, including Edo's Yoshiwara brothel district. The Tokugawa tried to hold these activities in check, but their efforts were largely in vain, in part because of demographics. The population of Edo during this period included significant numbers of merchants and samurai (whose families remained in their home territories), and both groups were eager to enjoy secular city life. Those of lesser means could partake in these pleasures and amusements vicariously. Rapid developments in the printing industry led to the availability of numerous books and



**28-11** Yosa Buson, *Cuckoo Flying over New Verdure*, Edo period, late 18th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk,  $5'\frac{1}{2}''\times2'$   $7\frac{1}{4}''$ . Hiraki Ukiyo-e Museum, Yokohama.

Buson, a master of haiku poetry, was a leading Japanese literati painter. Although inspired by Chinese works, he used a distinctive palette of pale colors and bolder, more abstract brush strokes.

printed images (see "Japanese Woodblock Prints," page 744), and these could convey the city's delights for a fraction of the cost of actual participation. Taking part in the emerging urban culture involved more than simple physical satisfactions and rowdy entertainments. Many participants were also admirers of literature, music, and art. The best-known products of this sophisticated counterculture were known as *ukiyo-e*—"pictures of the floating world," a term that suggests the transience of human life and the ephemerality of the material world. The main subjects of these paintings and especially prints came from the realms of pleasure, such as the Yoshiwara brothels and the popular theater, but Edo printmakers also frequently depicted beautiful young women in domestic settings (FIG. 28-12) and landscapes (FIG. 28-13).

## **Japanese Woodblock Prints**

uring the Edo period, ukiyo-e (pictures of the floating world) woodblock prints became enormously popular. Sold in small shops and on the street, an ordinary print went for the price of a bowl of noodles. People of very modest income could therefore collect prints in albums or paste them on their walls. A highly efficient production system made this wide distribution of Japanese graphic art possible.

Ukiyo-e artists were generally painters who did not participate in the making of the prints that made them so famous both in their own day and today. As the designers, they sold drawings to publishers, who in turn oversaw their printing. The publishers also played a role in creating ukiyo-e prints by commissioning specific designs or adapting them before printing. Certainly, the names of both designer and publisher appeared on the final prints.

Unacknowledged in nearly all cases were the individuals who made the prints, the block carvers and printers. Using skills honed since childhood, they worked with both speed and precision for relatively low wages and thus made ukiyo-e prints affordable. The master ukiyo-e printmakers were primarily men. Women, especially wives and daughters, often assisted painters and other artists, but few gained separate recognition. Among the exceptions was the daughter of Katsushika Hokusai (FIG. 28-13), Katsushika Oi (1818-1854), who became well known as a painter and probably helped her father with his print designs.

Stylistically, Japanese prints during the Edo period tend to have black outlines separating distinct color areas (FIG. 28-12). This format is a result of the printing process. A master carver pasted painted designs face down on a wooden block. Wetting and gently scraping the thin paper revealed the reversed image to guide the cutting of the block. After the carving, only the outlines of the forms and other elements that would be black in the final print remained raised in relief. The master printer then coated the block with black ink and printed several initial outline prints. These master prints became the guides for carving the other blocks, one for each color used. On each color block, the carver left in relief only

the areas to be printed in that color. Even ordinary prints sometimes required up to 20 colors and thus 20 blocks. To print a color, a printer applied the appropriate pigment to a block's raised surface, laid a sheet of paper on it, and rubbed the back of the paper with a smooth flat object. Then another printer would print a different color on the same sheet of paper. Perfect alignment of the paper in each step was critical to prevent overlapping of colors, so the block carvers included printing guides—an L-shaped ridge in one corner and a straight ridge on one side—in their blocks. The printers could cover small alignment errors with a final printing of the black outlines from the last block.

The materials used in printing varied over time but by the mid-18th century had reached a level of standardization. The blocks were planks of fine-grained hardwood, usually cherry. The best paper came from the white layer beneath the bark of mulberry trees,



28-12 Suzuki Harunobu, Evening Bell at the Clock, from Eight Views of the Parlor, Edo period, ca. 1765. Woodblock print,  $11\frac{1}{4}$  ×  $8\frac{1}{2}$ . Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (Clarence Buckingham Collection).

Harunobu's nishiki-e (brocade pictures) took their name from their costly pigments and paper. The rich color and flatness of the objects, women, and setting in this print are characteristic of the artist's style.

> because its long fibers helped the paper stand up to repeated rubbing on the blocks. The printers used a few mineral pigments but favored inexpensive dyes made from plants for most colors. As a result, the colors of ukiyo-e prints were and are highly susceptible to fading, especially when exposed to strong light. In the early 19th century, more permanent European synthetic dyes began to enter Japan. The first, Prussian blue, can be seen in Hokusai's The Great Wave off Kanagawa (FIG. 28-13).

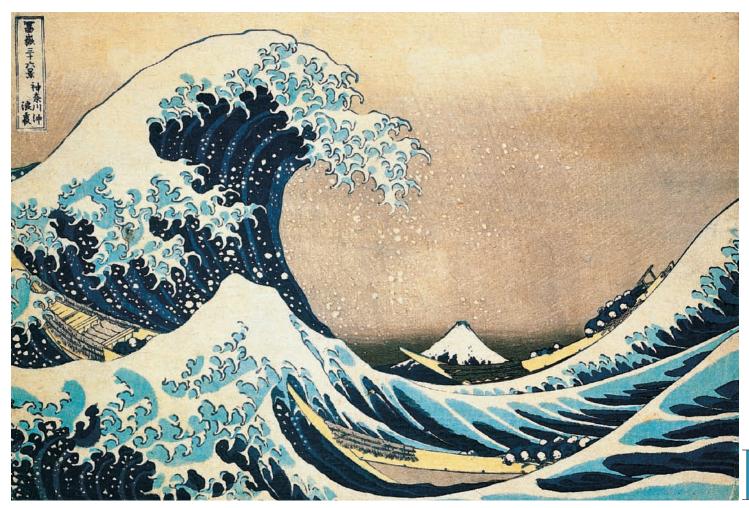
> The popularity of ukiyo-e prints extended to the Western world as well. Their affordability and portability facilitated the dissemination of the prints, especially throughout Europe. Ukiyo-e prints appear in the backgrounds of a number of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings, attesting to the appeal these works held for Westerners (see "Japonisme," Chapter 31, page 829).

SUZUKI HARUNOBU The urban appetite for ukiyo pleasures and for their depiction in ukiyo-e provided fertile ground for many print designers to flourish. Consequently, competition among publishing houses led to ever-greater refinement and experimentation in printmaking. One of the most admired and emulated 18th-century designers, Suzuki Harunobu (ca. 1725–1770), played a key role in developing multicolored prints. Called *nishiki-e* (brocade pictures) because of their sumptuous and brilliant color, these prints employed only the highest-quality paper and costly pigments. Harunobu gained a tremendous advantage over his fellow designers when he received commissions from members of a poetry club to design limited-edition nishiki-e prints. He transferred much of the knowledge he derived from nishiki-e to his design of more commercial prints. Harunobu even issued some of the private designs later under his own name for popular consumption.

The sophistication of Harunobu's work is evident in *Evening Bell at the Clock* (FIG. **28-12**), from a series called *Eight Views of the Parlor*. This series draws upon a Chinese series usually titled *Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers*, in which each image focuses on a particular time of day or year. In Harunobu's adaptation, beautiful young women and the activities that occupy their daily lives became the subject. In *Evening Bell at the Clock*, two young women seen from the typically Japanese elevated viewpoint (compare FIG. 8-14) sit on a veranda. One appears to be drying herself after a bath, while the

other turns to face the chiming clock. Here, the artist has playfully transformed the great temple bell that rings over the waters in the Chinese series into a modern Japanese clock. This image incorporates the refined techniques characteristic of nishiki-e. Further, the flatness of the depicted objects and the rich color recall the traditions of court painting, a comparison many nishiki-e artists openly sought.

KATSUSHIKA HOKUSAI Woodblock prints afforded artists great opportunity for experimentation. For example, in producing landscapes, Japanese artists often incorporated Western perspective techniques. One of the most famous designers in this genre was Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849). In The Great Wave off Kanagawa (FIG. 28-13), part of a woodblock series called Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji, the huge foreground wave dwarfs the artist's representation of a distant Fuji. This contrast and the whitecaps' ominous fingers magnify the wave's threatening aspect. The men in the trading boats bend low to dig their oars against the rough sea and drive their long low vessels past the danger. Although Hokusai's print draws on Western techniques and incorporates the distinctive European color called Prussian blue, it also engages the Japanese pictorial tradition. Against a background with the low horizon typical of Western painting, Hokusai placed in the foreground the traditionally flat wave and its powerfully graphic forms.



**28-13** Katsushika Hokusai, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, from *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, Edo period, ca. 1826–1833. Woodblock print, ink and colors on paper,  $9\frac{7}{8}$ "  $\times$  1'  $2\frac{3}{4}$ ". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Bigelow Collection).

Against a background with the low horizon line typical of Western painting, Hokusai placed a threatening wave in the foreground, painted using the traditional flat and powerful graphic forms of Japanese art.

# MODERN JAPAN

The Edo period and the rule of the shoguns ended in 1868, when rebellious samurai from provinces far removed from Edo toppled the Tokugawa. Facilitating this revolution was the shogunate's inability to handle increasing pressure from Western nations for Japan to open itself to the outside world. Although the rebellion restored direct sovereignty to the imperial throne, real power rested with the emperor's cabinet. As a symbol of imperial authority, however, the official name of this new period was Meiji ("Enlightened Rule"), after the emperor's chosen reign name.

# Meiji Period

Oil painting became a major genre in Japan in the late 19th century during the Meiji period (1868-1912). Ambitious students studied with Westerners at government schools and during trips abroad.

TAKAHASHI YUICHI One oil painting highlighting the cultural ferment of the early Meiji period is Oiran (Grand Courtesan; FIG. 28-14), by TAKAHASHI YUICHI (1828–1894). The artist created it for a client nostalgic for vanishing elements of Japanese culture. Ukiyo-e printmakers frequently represented similar grand courte-



28-14 TAKAHASHI YUICHI, Oiran (Grand Courtesan), Meiji period, 1872. Oil on canvas, 2'  $6\frac{1}{2}$ "  $\times$  1'  $9\frac{5}{8}$ ". Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, Tokyo.

The subject of Takahashi's Oiran and the abstract rendering of the courtesan's garment derive from the repertory of ukiyo-e printmakers and traditional Japanese art, but the oil technique is a Western import. sans of the pleasure quarters. In this painting, however, Takahashi (historical figures from the Meiji period onward are usually referred to by their family names, which come first, in contrast to earlier eras, when the second, given, name was used) did not portray the courtesan's features in the idealizing manner of ukiyo-e artists but in the more analytical manner of Western portraiture. Yet Takahashi's more abstract rendering of the garments reflects a very old practice in East Asian portraiture.

YOKOYAMA TAIKAN Unbridled enthusiasm for Westernization in some quarters led to resistance and concern over a loss of distinctive Japanese identity in other quarters. Ironically, one of those most eager to preserve "Japaneseness" in the arts was Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), an American professor of philosophy and political economy at Tokyo Imperial University. He and a former student named Okakura Kakuzo (1862–1913) joined with others in a movement that eventually led to the founding of an arts university dedicated to Japanese arts under Okakura's direction. Their goal for Japanese painting was to make it viable in the modern age rather than preserve it as a relic. To this end, they encouraged artists to incorporate some Western techniques such as chiaroscuro, perspective, and bright hues in Japanese-style paintings. The name given to the resulting style was nihonga (Japanese painting), as opposed to yoga (Western painting).

Kutsugen (FIG. 28-15), a silk scroll by Yokoyama Taikan (1868–1958), is an example of nihonga. It combines a low horizon line and subtle shading effects taken from Western painting with East Asian techniques, such as anchoring a composition in one corner (FIGS. 7-24 and 27-14), employing strong ink brushwork to define contours, applying washes of water-and-glue-based pigments, and using applications of heavy mineral pigments. The painting's subject, a Chinese poet who fell out of the emperor's favor and subsequently committed suicide, no doubt resonated with the artist and his associates. It provided a nice analogy to a real-life situation. At the time, Okakura was locked in a battle over his artistic principles with the Ministry of Education. Whether intended or not, this painting, in which the poet stands his ground, staunchly defying the strong winds that agitate the foliage behind him, was perceived as a comment on the friction between Okakura and authorities.

#### Showa Period

During the 20th century, Japan became increasingly prominent on the world stage in economics, politics, and culture. Among the events that propelled Japan into the spotlight was its participation in World War II during the Showa period (1926-1989). The most tragic consequences of that involvement were the widespread devastation and loss of life resulting from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. During the succeeding occupation period, the United States imposed new democratic institutions on Japan, with the emperor serving as only a ceremonial head of state. Japan's economy rebounded with remarkable speed, and during the ensuing half century Japan also assumed a positive and productive place in the international art world. As they did in earlier times with the art and culture of China and Korea, Japanese artists internalized Western lessons and transformed them into a part of Japan's own vital culture.

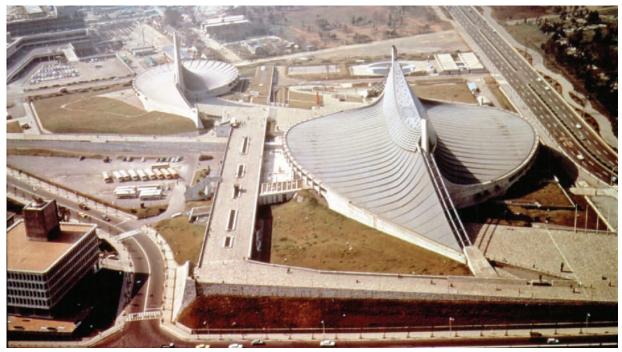
TANGE KENZO In the 20th century, Japanese architecture, especially public and commercial building, underwent rapid transformation along Western lines. In fact, architecture may be the art form providing Japanese practitioners the most substantial presence on



**28-15** Yokoyama Taikan, *Kutsugen*, Itsukushima Shrine, Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan, Meiji period, 1898. Hanging scroll, color on silk, 4' 4" × 9' 6". This Meiji silk scroll combines a low horizon line and subtle shading effects taken from Western painting with Asian features, such as strong ink brushwork and anchoring of the composition in one corner.

the world scene today. Japanese architects have made major contributions to both modern and postmodern developments (see Chapter 36). One of the most daringly experimental architects of the post–World War II period was Tange Kenzo (1913–2005). In the design of the stadiums (FIG. **28-16**) for the 1964 Olympics, he employed a cable suspension system that allowed him to shape steel and

concrete into remarkably graceful structures. His attention to both the sculptural qualities of each building's raw concrete form and the fluidity of its spaces allied him with architects worldwide who carried on the legacy of the late style of Le Corbusier (FIG. 36-56) in France. His stadiums thus bear comparison with Joern Utzon's Sydney Opera House (FIG. 36-59).



28-16 Tange Kenzo, national indoor Olympic stadiums, Tokyo, Japan, Showa period, 1961-1964.

Tange was one of the most daring architects of post–World War II Japan. His Olympic stadiums employ a cable suspension system that allowed him to shape steel and concrete into remarkably graceful structures.

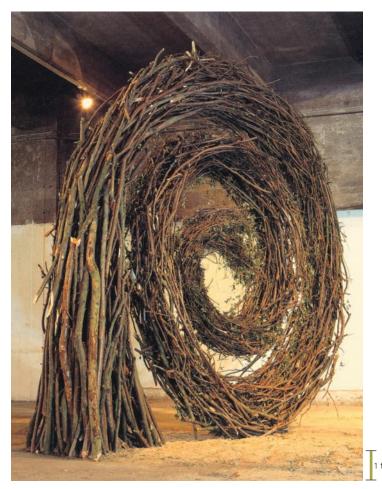


**28-17** Намара Shoji, dish, Showa period, 1962. Black trails on translucent glaze, 1'  $10\frac{1}{2}''$  diameter. National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto.

Hamada was a leading figure in the modern folk art movement in Japan and gained international fame. His unsigned stoneware features casual slip designs and a coarser, darker texture than porcelain.

HAMADA SHOJI Another modern Japanese art form attracting great attention worldwide is ceramics. Many contemporary admirers of folk art are avid collectors of traditional Japanese pottery. A formative figure in Japan's folk art movement, the philosopher Yanagi Soetsu (1889–1961), promoted an ideal of beauty inspired by the Japanese tea ceremony. He argued that true beauty could be achieved only in functional objects made of natural materials by anonymous craftspeople. Among the ceramists who produced this type of folk pottery, known as mingei, was HAMADA SHOJI (1894-1978). Although Hamada did espouse Yanagi's selfless ideals, he still gained international fame and in 1955 received official recognition in Japan as a Living National Treasure. Works such as his dish (FIG. 28-17) with casual slip designs are unsigned, but connoisseurs easily recognize them as his. This kind of stoneware is coarser, darker, and heavier than porcelain and lacks the latter's fine decoration. To those who appreciate simpler, earthier beauty, however, this dish holds great attraction. Hamada's artistic influence extended beyond the production of pots. He traveled to England in 1920 and, along with English potter Bernard Leach (1887–1978), established a community of ceramists committed to the mingei aesthetic. Together, Hamada and Leach expanded international knowledge of Japanese ceramics, and even now, the "Hamada-Leach aesthetic" is part of potters' education worldwide.

**TSUCHIYA KIMIO** Although no one style, medium, or subject dominates contemporary Japanese art, much of it does spring from ideas or beliefs that have been integral to Japanese culture over the



**28-18** TSUCHIYA KIMIO, *Symptom*, Showa period, 1987. Branches,  $13' 1\frac{1}{2}'' \times 14' 9\frac{1}{8}'' \times 3' 11\frac{1}{4}''$ . Installation view, *Jeune Sculpture '87*, Paris 1987.

Tsuchiya's sculptures are constructed of branches or driftwood and despite their abstract nature assert the life forces found in natural materials. His approach to sculpture reflects ancient Shinto beliefs.

years. For example, the Shinto belief in the generative forces in nature and in humankind's position as part of the totality of nature (see "Shinto," Chapter 8, page 211) holds great appeal for contemporary artists, including TSUCHIYA KIMIO (b. 1955), who produces large-scale sculptures (FIG. **28-18**) constructed of branches or driftwood. Despite their relatively abstract nature, his works assert the life forces found in natural materials, thereby engaging viewers in a consideration of their own relationship to nature. Tsuchiya does not specifically invoke Shinto when speaking about his art, but it is clear that he has internalized Shinto principles. He identifies as his goal "to bring out and present the life of nature emanating from this energy of trees. . . . It is as though the wood is part of myself, as though the wood has the same kind of life force."

Tsuchiya is but one of many artists working in Japan today who have attracted international attention. Contemporary art in Japan, as elsewhere in the world, is multifaceted and ever-changing, and the traditional and the modern flourish side by side.

### THE BIG PICTURE

# JAPAN AFTER 1336

### **MUROMACHI PERIOD, 1336-1573**

- The period takes its name from the Kyoto district in which the Ashikaga shoguns maintained their headquarters.
- During the Muromachi period, Zen Buddhism rose to prominence in Japan. Zen temples often featured gardens of the karesansui (dry-landscape) type, which promoted meditation.
- Muromachi painting displays great variety in both subject matter and style. One characteristic technique is the haboku (splashed-ink) style, which has Chinese roots. An early haboku master was Sesshu Toyo.

Sesshu Toyo, splashed-ink landscape, 1495

#### MOMOYAMA PERIOD, 1573-1615

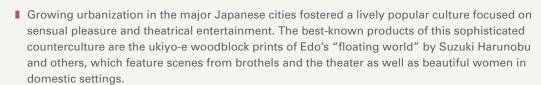
- This brief interlude between two long-lasting shogunates was dominated by three successive warlords. The period takes its name from one of their castles (Momoyama, Peach Blossom Hill) outside Kyoto.
- Many of the finest works of this period were commissions from those warlords, including Chinese Lions by Kano Eitoku, a six-part folding screen featuring animals considered to be symbols of power and bravery.
- The Momoyama period also saw the Japanese tea ceremony become an important social ritual. The tea master Sen no Rikyu designed the first teahouse built as an independent structure. The favored tea utensils were rustic Shino wares.



Kano Eitoku, *Chinese Lions*, late 16th century

#### **EDO PERIOD, 1615-1868**

- The Edo period began when the Momoyama shogun Tokugawa leyasu (1542–1616) moved his headquarters from Kyoto to Edo (modern Tokyo).
- The Rinpa School, named for Ogata Korin, emerged as a major alternative school of painting to the Kano School, which became a virtual national art academy. Rinpa works, both paintings and crafts, feature vivid colors and extensive use of gold, as in the *Boat Bridge* writing box by Honami Koetsu.



The Katsura Imperial Villa, which relies on subtleties of proportion, color, and texture instead of ornament for its aesthetic appeal, set the standard for all later Japanese domestic architecture.



Honami Koetsu, *Boat Bridge*, early 17th century

#### MODERN JAPAN, 1868-Present

- The Tokugawa shogunate toppled in 1868, opening the modern era of Japanese history. In art, Western styles and techniques had great influence, and many Japanese artists incorporated shading and perspective in their works and even produced oil paintings.
- In the post–World War II period, Japanese architects achieved worldwide reputations. Tange Kenzo was a master of creating dramatic shapes using a cable suspension system for his concrete-and-steel buildings.
- Contemporary art in Japan is multifaceted, and the traditional and the modern flourish side by side.



Suzuki Harunobu, Evening Bell at the Clock, ca. 1765



Tange Kenzo, Olympic stadiums, Tokyo, 1961–1964