

An Artist Colony in Kinugasa: “Modernization” of Painters’ Ways of Living

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Abstract

In 1918 Kinugasa was incorporated into Kyoto city, and many painters began moving into the area, transforming it into “Kinugasa Ekaki-mura (Painting Village)”. This paper will concentrate on the theme of such transformation of the Kinugasa area, focusing on aspects concerning artists who lived there, exploring their environment and social background. One contributing factor was the production of artwork, for which many painters were invited to the area one after another. Another factor was the need for a place with ample space for the production of artwork. With the initiation of the annual art exhibition sponsored by the Ministry of Education (commonly known as ‘Bunten’) in 1907, being presented with a Bunten award and exhibited at the art division of a department store became a vital part of any painter’s career and guaranteed an income for painters. By looking at the painters’ studios and residential houses, the transformation of the daily and artistic activities of painters can be seen.

要旨

1918年、衣笠地区は京都市に編入され、その後多くの画家たちがこのエリアに移住し「衣笠絵描き村」と呼ばれるようになった。本稿ではこのような衣笠地域の変貌を題材に、画家たちを取り巻く環境や社会的背景の変化を示す。画家たちが衣笠地域に居住するようになったのは、一つは師弟や同じ団体に所属する画家たちが次々と移り住んできたことである。もう一つは、絵のモチーフとなる自然に囲まれた広いアトリエを確保したいという制作面の理由がある。1907年に文部省美術展覧会が開始し、公募展に入賞することや、当時開設がはじまった百貨店美術部で販売されることが、画家のキャリアや生活の手段として大きな意味を持つようになった。画家のアトリエや邸宅の様相からは、そうした画家たちの生活や制作環境の変化を見ることができる。

Introduction

Kinugasa is incorporated into Kyoto's Kita Ward. The name *Kinugasa* is said to have come from the story about Emperor Uta using white silk to cover the mountain on a scorching summer's day to enjoy the illusion of deep winter snow. It is a *utamakura* (place with poetic associations) and was the burial site of the ancient capital. The area was also lined with temples and villas of aristocrats. During the Edo period farm fields covered the area, turning Kinugasa into the "outskirts" of Kyoto.¹⁾ However, in 1918 Kinugasa was incorporated into Kyoto city, and many painters began moving into the area, transforming it into "Kinugasa Ekaki-mura (Painting Village)". It is said that Konoshima Ōkoku (1877-1938), whose residence later became today's Ōkoku Bunko library, was the first artist to make Kinugasa his home.

This paper will be on the theme of such transformation of the Kinugasa area, focusing on aspects concerning artists who had lived there, including the environment and the social background. The title of my talk contains the word "modernization" but this is not about the modernization of artistic works or expressions. By "modernization" I wish to center on the transformation in the daily and artistic activities of painters to look at how they worked and how their works were shown.

1. The modern era of painters

Kanō School with painters serving the shogunate was the foremost school of many that existed in Kyoto, and there were also many *machi eshi* painters (painters who sold works to townspeople instead of working for patrons) who lived in the city. From the records of names and addresses of people listed by profession in the *Heian Jinbutsu Shi*, a directory of cultured people at the time²⁾ we can clearly see their distribution over the city. For instance, along the Shijō-dōri lived many Shijō School painters like Maruyama Ōkyo and Matsumura Goshun. These painters enjoyed patronage from rich townspeople living in the center of Kyoto city. Near the Imperial Palace we see a concentration of painters who served at the Imperial Palace. But how was it in the outskirts? At Okazaki in the Higashiyama area there were many literati and literati painters. Many also resided in or around temples, such as around Gion, in the north of Kyoto (Daitoku-ji temple, Kamigamo and Iwakura), and in the west of Kyoto (Myōshin-ji temple, Kita-Saga, Tenryū-ji temple and Otagi-ji temple). In this way, a great number of painters in Kyoto during the Edo period dwelled mainly close to the residences of their patrons or next to temples.

With the arrival of the modern period Kyoto city also began to change completely. The shogunate, temples and shrines who provided patronage to painters now lost their power and the Emperor also left the Imperial Palace in Kyoto. It was an epoch of extreme hardships for painters.

The many post-Meiji modernization policies were also applied in Kyoto. In terms of art, the opening of expositions and the establishment of the Kyoto-fu E-gakkō (today's Kyoto City

University of Arts) in 1880 were no doubt important undertakings.

Japan during the Meiji era was keen to attend world exhibitions held in various cities around the world in a bid to present the new Japan to the world, as well as to introduce western technologies into Japan and develop domestic industries. Back in Japan the holding of the Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai (Domestic Industrial Exposition) began in 1877 and Japan's very first art museum was added as a pavilion. It was from this time that the systems of "exhibitions" and "art museums" entered Japan and began being accepted.

Meanwhile, with the opening of the Kyoto-fu E-gakkō the art training implemented by the different schools and through master-disciple relationships was now carried out under the "school" system. After this the management of the school was transferred to Kyoto city in 1889, and thereafter underwent several renaming and system reforms. It was renamed the Kyoto-shi Bijutsu Kōgei Gakkō (Kyoto City School of Arts and Crafts) in 1894, and in 1909 the Kyoto Shiritsu Kaiga Senmon Gakkō (Kyoto City Specialist School of Painting) was established. Graduates of the school also became teachers at the school to instruct and produce many new generations of artists.

2. The establishment of Kinugasa Ekaki-mura ("Painting Village")

From the period between the end of the Meiji era and Taishō era, there was a tendency for people with specific occupations in specific industries to gather and live in the newly developed residential areas in the outskirts of Kyoto.³⁾ In the west, the so-called trendy suburbs paved way for the establishment of exclusive residential areas separated from the city center, as well as creating new middle-class lifestyles. Such trends also began to emerge in Japan after the turn of the twentieth century. This was due to the yearning for a healthy life in nature and the countryside away from the city, the cheaper tax or land prices outside the city, and other factors. From the 1910s Kyoto saw a rapid increase in the number of people moving from the city out to surrounding townships and villages.

For instance, the Yoshida and Kita-Shirakawa areas in Sakyō ward and the Tōnodan-dōri to the east of Shōkoku-ji temple became popular residential areas among many Kyoto University professors. Meanwhile, many teachers and officials chose to live in the residential area next to Takano-gawa River. The Shimogamo area is considered an upscale neighborhood even today, but in the Taishō era it was an area full of academics from Kyoto University and Sankō (Third High School under the old system of education), as well as painters. In regards to the painters living there, they included Kanokogi Takeshirō and Fukuda Heihachirō, and the area became known as "Japan's Barbizon".⁴⁾ In this way, communities with a concentration of people with professions that emerged in the modern era, namely university professors and Western-style painters, gradually formed in the outskirts of Kyoto.

In the midst of this, many painters began to move to Kinugasa — a fact that would later lead to Kinugasa becoming dubbed as the "Painting Village". I would thus like to focus on the unique

aspects of these painters who chose to live in the suburbs.

Kinugasa village was incorporated into Kyoto city in 1918 following the expansion of Kyoto city area to become part of Kamigyō ward. Prior to that, in 1905 Fujimura Ganjirō, who was the managing director of the company Kyoto Men Neru, began developing a residential area here. This became known as Kinugasa-en. Thereafter the Kinugasa area would gradually be developed into a residential area.

In 1918, the year Kinugasa was incorporated into Kyoto city, the Nikkatsu Taisyogun Satsuei-syo⁵⁾ was established there. After this more film studios were built, and with the opening of the Arashiyama Railway Kitano Line in 1924 improving public transport, the number of commuters who worked at the film studios nearby also increased. Particular increase could be seen after the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923, when film studios in Tokyo were relocated to Kyoto. With period and modern drams also now being produced in Kyoto, the area saw the gathering of many actors and production staff.

It was just after the development of Kinugasa-en had begun that Konoshima Ōkoku moved to Kinugasa to live. Konoshima was born into a merchant family in Sanjō-Muromachi district in Kyoto. In 1912 he purchased a land at Kinugasa-Komatsubara (Tōji-in Higashimachi, Kita ward today) and began building his residence the following year. In December 1913 he moved there from Muromachi-Mikura chō, where he had been living until then. He is said to have been the very first painter to move into the Kinugasa area. He would remain living there until his death in 1938.

Besides Konoshima, writer Shiga Naoya also lived in the area for about four months between 1914 and 1915. In 1917 Tsuchida Bakusen had a painting studio built on the west side of the north block, making this a rather early residential building in the area, since it is believed that the development of this part facing Ichijō-dōri did not take place until around 1925. It was not until after the 1930s when the area became full of housing. In this way, the Kinugasa area began to be developed as a residential area in the 1910s.

In 1924 the architect Motono Seigo designed his own residence and had it built at Tōji-in Kitamachi. The residence (not open to the public) located next to Ritsumeikan University remains nearly unchanged from its original state today.⁶⁾

Many artists, in a wide sense, that included not only painters but also people related to the film industry and architects gathered in and around Kinugasa, transforming the area into an ultramodern, stimulating area.

3. The “modern” life of painters

So what was behind the move by many painters to relocate to Kinugasa?

One factor had to do with production of artwork for which many painters were invited to the area one after another. As pointed out by previous research,⁷⁾ with artists like Tsuchida Bakusen and Murakami Kagaku moving to the area, artists of the Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai (National Creative

Painting Association) followed suit and arrived in the area within a short period. Besides that, there were also cases where disciples followed their masters to the area, as in the cases of Kikuchi Hōbun and Keigetsu and their students Dōmoto Inshō and Tōkyūsha. As a result of this, even Japanese painters who had no association with these painters also moved into the area.

Another factor was the need for a place with ample space for the production of artworks. With the start of the annual art exhibition sponsored by the Ministry of Education (commonly known as 'Bunten') in 1907, being presented with a Bunten award became a significantly vital part of any painter's career. If a painter's work was selected to be exhibited at the Bunten, it would be bought by entities such as art divisions of department stores, which were becoming established at the time. This also guaranteed income for painters.

The emergence of art museums that provided exhibition space greatly transformed painting appreciation in Japan. Prior to the modern era in Japan, space for appreciating painting was found in the *tokonoma* (alcove) and tea ceremony rooms. Apart from using hanging scrolls to decorate the wall, another way of appreciating art was to hold artworks in one's hand, such as viewing of *emakimono* (illustrated scrolls). In these cases there were limitations on the size of artworks being produced. However, in the case of an art museum, there was plenty of space to display works of art in glass cases. With this it became necessary to increase the size of works to correspond to the displaying space. Not only that, works by other painters could also be exhibited at the same time. Under such conditions, painters began maximizing the size of their artworks without regard to the subjects of their paintings. Upon viewing the first Bunten Okakura Tenshin sensed the danger in such manner of art creation.⁸⁾ At this first Bunten there were no regulations on the size of artworks submitted, and it was not until the eighth exhibition in 1914 that regulations on size were first laid down (as of August 10th, 1914⁹⁾). Nevertheless, many artists began desiring to have studios that could accommodate the production of large works.

Production and exhibition of artworks also greatly differed between the pre-modern and the modern era. During the Edo period, artists often held *sekiga* (impromptu drawing gatherings) where they would create calligraphic works and paintings right in front of a *shogakai* (meeting for extemporary painting and calligraphy)¹⁰⁾ or their patrons. In the modern era, however, artists ceased this type of performance and art museums and exhibitions became venues where paintings were displayed and where the viewing of such works was (and had to be) concentrated. For artists, the act of painting became something done within personal space.

For example, Takeuchi Seihō (1864-1942) was living at Oike-Aburanokōji at first, but as he was unable to create large works there he began using a studio at the nearby Inaba Yakushi (Byōdō-ji temple) instead. Later in 1911 he purchased a second residence in Kyoto's Saga area and built his Kachū-an.¹¹⁾

The studio at Ōkoku Bunko measures 64 tatami mats and is a single-room space without any pillars in the middle. It was designed to let light in mainly from the verandas facing the south and the west, as well as from the high windows above the studio. Today glass doors are installed, but

originally there were no glass doors; there used to be an open veranda, with *shōji* sliding doors on the inner side. The eaves are extended to prevent direct sunlight from entering. There was a pond in front of the studio half below the west side of the veranda—this is believed to have been purposely designed so that light reflecting from the pond would also enter the studio.

Meanwhile, the Hakusasonsō Hashimoto Kānsetsu Garden & Museum in Sakyō ward was originally built as a studio where Hashimoto Kānsetsu (1883-1945) could create his art. Inside the 10,000 m² land one finds a residential house built between the Taishō and early Shōwa period, three studios for creating Nihonga paintings, a tearoom, a *jibutsu-dō* (a room where a private Buddha statue or ancestor tablet is kept) and other buildings. The Zonkorō studio measures 52 tatami mats.¹²⁾ It shares some common aspects with the studio at Ōkoku Bunko, including ample studio space, a large pond in front of the studio, and the fact that sunlight is let in through the opening facing the pond on the east side of the north-south positioned building.¹³⁾

It appears that creating a pond by the studio was trendy at the time. Around 1914 Uemura Shōen (1875-1949) also had a two-storey studio the size of 14 tatami mats built to the south of her house at Ainomachi-Takeyamachi-agaru in Nakagyō ward. The studio was surrounded by a ditch all around, in which were kept goldfish, carps, crucian carps and other types of fish. She also had two panels of paper screens and glass screens placed in the east, west and south sides of the studio, leaving only the north side separated from the outside with a wall. It seems this was intended for the adjustment of natural lighting.¹⁴⁾

The studio also served as a place for art education. Apart from the painter's own productions, students also sketched models and worked on their paintings, among other activities. For instance, according to Edward S. Morse who visited Kōno Bairei's art school during early Meiji period, about 20 students would come at eight in the morning, every day except on Sundays.¹⁵⁾ In order to accommodate such educational function, ample space was thus necessary. On the other hand, Uemura Shōen prohibited others, including her own family, from setting foot inside her studio, and refused to show it to the media.¹⁶⁾ There were, therefore, also artists who considered their studios utterly private spaces.

Why did artists come to have such large studios? Life for artists was extremely severe right after Japan had entered the Meiji period. Kōno Bairei, Imao Keinen, Kishi Chikudō and the young Takeuchi Seihō got by through designing sketches and patterns for Yūzen dyeing and embroideries. The market for the so-called *shinga* or contemporary Nihonga art began to take shape after the establishment of Mitsukoshi kimono store's art division immediately after the opening of Bunten.¹⁷⁾ Artists who resided in Kinugasa were competent in that their works won Bunten awards and they founded their own art groups. They received substantial requests to exhibit their works at private, organisational or department store art division exhibitions, as well as requests from art dealers to create works. For example, we know that Ōkoku provided works to the Sumitomo Zaibatsu, businessmen based in Osaka and Kyoto, as well as the Imperial Family (Kuninomiya-Takaō Family). During the Taishō period, the economy boosted due to World War I

military needs, which also led to an active art market. Artists entered Bunten with their masterpieces annually, while making a living by painting smaller works for exhibiting and selling at department store art divisions or Shisei-ten exhibitions.

Ōkoku Bunko also comes with a western building constructed to combine a reception room and an artwork storage together. The building is both Japanese and Western in design. The storage contains Ōkoku's own works and painting motifs, as well as his collection of Chinese books, calligraphy and paintings. The upper floor is the reception room with a *tokonoma* alcove designed into it. At the bottom of this alcove is the alcove shelf, while the lintel is designed higher than usual. Such placement is unusual and is said to be the optimal height for appreciating the alcove from a seated (on a chair) or standing position. In addition, nails can be found in the walls beside the *tokonoma* alcove to allow the displaying of hanging scrolls. One gets the feeling that much attention was given to natural lighting, as vertical sliding glass windows were installed between the south side of the room and the corridor.¹⁸⁾ It is probably that this reception room with displaying space may have been used by Ōkoku to entertain his patrons and friends. Despite being a Nihonga painter, he chose to create the *tokonoma* and *shoin* space for displaying his works and interact with the outside world in the form of a Western building instead. This could be seen as a manifestation of the enthusiastic and insatiable desire for Western knowledge and technology/techniques so common during the Taisho period.

Concluding remarks

This paper has been focusing on the social background to the emergence of the Kinugasa "Painting Village" and the conditions involving artists at the time. Unfortunately, the number of artists living in the area has dramatically decreased. However, some artist residences and studios such as Ōkoku Bunko have survived. I have heard that new projects are being started now in a bid to utilise the area as a cultural space by centering around such cultural facilities and temples and shrines. With Ritsumeikan University having a campus beside Tōji-in temple, the campus blocks the view from the temple to Mt. Kinugasa and this may perhaps be a nuisance to artists. With perhaps atonement for such sin also in mind, at Ritsumeikan we must think about our role in the culture of the Kinugasa area.

This paper is a transcript of a presentation made at "Crossing Gazes on the Landscape from Berlin and Kyoto", held on November 23, 2015. At this conference, the former residence of Konoshima Ōkoku (currently Ōkoku Bunko library) was visited and inspected via a short tour. This presentation was held at that art studio. I offer my sincere thanks for being permitted to give a presentation in such a magnificent location.

Notes

- 1) Kyoto City, ed. *Shiryō Kyōto no Rekishi 6 Kita-ku* (Historical Documents – The History of Kyoto. Vol.6 Kita Ward), 1993.
- 2) Michinaga, Ahn. *Kinsei Kindai Kyoto ni okeru Eshi/Gaka no Kyojūchi ni kansuru Shiteki Kenkyū* (Historical Study on the Residential Areas of Painters in Pre-modern and Modern Kyoto), Kansai University Graduate School of Engineering PhD thesis, March 2013.
- 3) Nakagawa, Osamu, project representative. *Kōgai Jūtakuichi Kaihatsu wo michibiita Gakujutsu, Geijutsu, Geinō ni kakawaru Hitobito no Kyojū Dōkō ni kansuru Rekishiteki Kenkyū* (Historical Study on the Residential Trends of Academics, Artists and Performers who set off Suburban Residential Development), Basic research program (C), Research Project Number 14550636, 2002-2003.
- 4) Ishida, Junichiro. “Kōgai no hakken (Discoveries in the Suburbs)”, *Kyō: Machizukuri-shi* (Kyoto: a History of City Creation” ed. by Yasuo Takahashi and Osamu Nakagawa, Shōwadō, 2003.
- 5) Makino Project, Kyoto Image Culture Archive, Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University <http://www.arc.ritsumei.ac.jp/archive01/makino/index.html> (as of October 2015)
- 6) “Motonotei”, *Kenchikuka Seigo Motono Modern Design no Senkusha*, Kyoto Institute of Technology Museum and Archives, 2010.
Kasahara, Kazuto. “Motonotei, Kuriharatei, Kyōto Kōgei Sen’i Daigaku 3-gōkan: Monoto Seigo no Modernism (Motonotei, Kurihara Tei, Kyoto Institute of Technology Building 3: Seigo Motono’s Modernism)”, Junichirō Ishida, *Kansai no Modernism Kenchiku 1920-60 Nendai, Kūkan ni arawareta Gōri/Chūshō/Kaikaku* (Kansai Modernist Architecture 1920-1960s, rationality/abstractness/reform Designed to Space), Tankōsha, 2014.
- 7) Shimada, Yasuhiro. “KYOTO Kinugasa Ekakimura’ no Koto (On ‘KYOTO Kinugasa Painting Village’)”, *KYOTO Kinugasa Ekakimura* exhibition catalogue, 2007.
- 8) *Thirdly, placement of the venue was greatly in vain. As a result, only large works would attract visitors, leading artists to compete by creating larger and larger works. And just like the salon, artworks flooding exhibitions has become a problem that is already becoming a topic of heated debate, with the likes of British Frederick and Harrison incessantly attacking this as the “problem of the salon”.*
Okakura, Tenshin. “Kōsetsu bijutsu tenrankai ni taisuru kibō”, *Taiyō*, Vol. 13 No. 16, 1907, *Okamura Tenshin Zenshū* (Okamura Tenshin Collection) 3, pp.299-304.
- 9) *Chapter II Works for exhibition*
[omission]
Article 11-2
Each work should measure at least 4ken in width. If a work is deemed inconvenient for displaying due to its height, the framing of the work should be adequately altered. [Following part omitted.]
Nittenshi (History of Nitten Exhibition) 4 – *Bunten* 4, p.635.
*1 ken converts to about 1.8 m, making 4 ken to be about 7.3 m.
- 10) A gathering at temples or a *ryōtei* restaurant for the showing and appreciation of calligraphy and paintings. Many such gatherings lasted one day, and unlike today’s exhibitions, sometimes they were lively with geisha entertainment that came with food and drinks.
- 11) Keifuku Dentetsu Railway (Randen) bound for Arashiyama. 10 minutes on foot from Randen Saga Station. (<http://www.superdollfie.net/tenshinosato/guide/#gidView>)
Currently only open to members of members-only facility Tenshi-no-sato Kachū-an and anyone accompanied by members.

- 12) The garden with a pond in the center is 7,400 m² in area and is designated a National Scenic Beauty. Numerous stone sculptures from the Heian period to Kamakura period are placed within the garden. The buildings and the garden are said to have been designed by Hashimoto Kansetsu (according to the official Hakusasonsō website).
- 13) Shimizu, Shigeatsu. “Yamanaka no Shikyo—Kyū Konoshima Ōkoku Tei no Kenchiku (Urban Residence in the Mountain—The Architecture of the Former Konoshima Ōkoku Residence)”, *Konoshima Ōkoku Exhibition*, Sen-oku Hakuko Kan, 2013.
- 14) Uemura, Shōen. *Seibisyo* p.60.
- 15) Morse, Edward S. *Japan Day by Day – 3* (Japanese translation), Tōyō Bunko, 1971, pp.86-87.
- 16) Uemura, Shōen. “Gashitsu Dangi”, *Seibisyo* pp.59-65.
- 17) Hirota, Takashi. “Meijiki no hyakkaten shusai no bijutsu tenrankai ni tsuite: Mitsukoshi to Takashimaya wo hikakushite (On the art exhibitions organized by department stores during the Meiji period)”, *Design Riron (Design Theory)* 48, 2006.
Yamamoto, Masako. “Kitamura Reisai: to Mitsukoshi Hyakkaten Ōsaka Shiten Bijutsubu no Shoki no Katsudō (Kitamura Reisai: Setting the grounds for the art section of the Osaka branch of Mitsukoshi Department Store)”, *Core Ethics* 7, 2011.
Mitsukoshi Bijutsubu 100 Nenshi (100 Years of Mitsukoshi’s Art Division), 2013.
- 18) Shimizu, Shigeatsu. “Yamanaka no Shikyo—Kyū Konoshima Ōkoku Tei no Kenchiku (Urban Residence in the Mountain—The Architecture of the Former Konoshima Ōkoku Residence)”, *Konoshima Ōkoku Exhibition*, Sen-oku Hakuko Kan, 2013, p.84.

