

Curators of China knowledge:

Morokoshi meishō zue and Osaka-Kyoto cultural networks in late Tokugawa Japan

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Introduction¹

What does an Osaka *sake* merchant have to do with the Qing emperor? In real life, the two would have never crossed paths. Even if the latter learned about and cared to meet the former, no Japanese could normally leave the country and come back during almost the entirety of the Tokugawa period, when foreign contacts were strictly controlled. Not to mention that, at least theoretically, the *sake* merchant belonged to the bottom tier of Japan's class system (*mibun seido* 身分制度), which divided and managed the society in the Tokugawa Neo-Confucian order of samurai, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants. However, with the increasingly pivotal role that merchants occupied in the economic structure, in social and cultural life, such distinctions had become largely symbolic by the mid- to late-Edo period. When it comes to contact with the outside world, not only were they the main purveyors of the latest goods and knowledge from the continent, but they also actively leveraged their access to participate in the discourse about Chinese culture that remained central to the education of the elite. In this process, they propagated alternative interpretations of Chinese culture that deviated from the prevailing state-sanctioned perspectives. Qing culture, on the one hand, disparaged by the political elite as a degeneration from the Chinese cultural past, and on the other hand, arriving in abundance and readily accessible to commoner-merchants in Japan, became a convenient, relatively unexplored territory where the latter could assert their authority, shape their identities, and engage in status negotiations.

Commercial publishing was a major arena where such negotiations actively took place, and *Morokoshi meishō zue* 唐土名勝図会 (*Illustrated Collection of Scenic Sites in China*)² marks the pinnacle of these endeavours. First published in 1806, the book stands out as one of the few comprehensive, richly illustrated accounts detailing a territory not visitable by its Edo Japanese readers and as the only substantial commercial publication that deals with Qing China's imperial centre. The book

¹ I am grateful to Professor François Lachaud and Professor Timon Screech for their valuable feedback and suggestions, although any possible errors are entirely mine.

² The book was issued many times over the years and exists in multiple slightly different versions. One of the earliest issues of the first edition is in the collection of the Freer and Sackler Library (Call no. 752.5.O6). The copy has been fully digitalised and is accessible online: <https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/morokoshi-meisho-zue>. The following discussion about the arrangement and the physicality of the book is based on this source, referred to as the Smithsonian Copy hereafter.

immerses its readers in the Qing palace, the city of Beijing, and the capital's surrounding areas, showing not only specific sites but court life, treasured objects, local histories, and so on. The project's instigator was the Osaka-based Kimura Kenkadō 木村兼葭堂 (1736–1802), who made his money in *sake* but built a cultural reputation with his extensive collections and networks.³ Despite their wealth and influence, individuals like Kenkadō had minimal opportunities to interact with either domestic or foreign rulers under the Tokugawa political restrictions. Yet in *Morokoshi meishō zue*, the *sake* merchant, equipped with economic capital to acquire incoming Chinese books and fund publications, could claim to be the ultimate China expert, and even audaciously stand on a par with the Qing emperor.

Morokoshi meishō zue not only provides insights into the cultural geography of Qing China but also devotes significant attention to Chinese poetry and calligraphy. The collaborative project features a substantial list of contributors, the majority of whom could be described as Japanese literati (*bunjin* 文人). *Bunjin* is an ill-defined term often loosely used by modern scholars to denote a certain artistic sensibility. However, within the Edo Japanese context, at its core, it represents a trans-class, elevated identity claimed through expertise in Chinese cultural pursuits. Notably, those who actively embrace this identity are frequently individuals occupying relatively lower positions of political power, namely commoners and lower-level, provincial samurais. Interestingly, in the *bunjin* project of *Morokoshi meishō zue*, the book presents a hybrid exhibition that on the one hand, stages information extracted from a careful selection of Chinese books—especially recent Qing imperial productions, and on the other hand, displays virtuosity of contemporary Japanese practitioners of Chinese poetry and calligraphy. Neither the importance attached to the discerning citation of source materials, nor the prominence given to the art of contemporary contributors is to be found in any other projects of the same type, and both features highlight the project contributors' mastery of up-to-date Chinese knowledge and culture. What one also finds in the book is the cultural China of the past being projected onto contemporary Qing China. While many Tokugawa officials and intellectuals considered the Qing dynasty a degenerate era completely broken off from the revered Chinese cultural legacy of the past,⁴ *Morokoshi meishō zue* treated Qing China as a subject worthy of attention, a place where Chinese literary and cultural traditions continued to flourish and where contemporary situations and developments were of much interest.

The word 'curator' is used here in connection with the proposition that the arrangement of the book is conceived as an exhibition, and the analogy is most fitting in the sense of 'auteur-curator', who not only procures and interprets the

³ For a brief but comprehensive survey of Kenkadō's cultural networks and activities, see Osaka Museum of History, *Kimura Kenkadō: Naniwa chi no kyōjin: tokubetsuten botsugo nihyakunen kinen* 木村兼葭堂 なにわ知の巨人 特別展没後200年記念 [Kimura Kenkadō, Naniwa's Giant of Knowledge: A Special Exhibition Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of His Death], Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 2003.

⁴ Wai-Ming Ng 吳偉明, 'Names for China in Tokugawa Political Discourse', *Journal of Asian History* 48: 1, 2014, 70–75.

displays, but also has a prominent presence in the exhibition, which in turn enhances their persona. In this sense, *Morokoshi meishō zue* is as much a book about Qing China as it is about the curators of China knowledge, who reinforced their identities through this unique project. The book results from the joint efforts of a long list of authors, producers, and contributors, who compiled the texts, prepared the images, contributed a piece of writing or calligraphy, organised the production, and so on. They were part of the networks of cultural production centred in Osaka and Kyoto in the latter half of the Tokugawa period. Nurtured by the development of the urban economy in the region, these networks encouraged a certain level of class-crossing despite the strict social control by championing culture as an acquirable identity marker and carved out an alternative space of knowledge-making while keeping a distance from the central government. Although not a direct social commentary, the unique display and framing of Chinese culture and knowledge in *Morokoshi meishō zue* reflects the interest and taste-shaping efforts of its supporters. By analysing the content and production networks of *Morokoshi meishō zue*, this paper considers the social and political implications of the cultural and aesthetic fascination with Qing China in late Tokugawa Japan.

An Osaka-Kyoto project

Given that the book has not garnered significant scholarly attention and that many library catalogues still contain inaccurate information, it is important to begin by establishing the production history of *Morokoshi meishō zue*. The book was surely an ambitious project given its scale, the time dedicated, and the number of people involved. It measures about 26cm x 19cm and runs over 400 sheets of paper across all six volumes (*kan*), with each volume being bound into one fascicle. The book's content mainly covers the geographical area of Beijing and the adjacent administrative region known as Zhili 直隸 (lit. 'directly ruled'), starting with the imperial palace (Vol. 1) at the centre and expanding into the 'imperial city of Beijing' (*huangcheng*, Vol. 2), the 'inner city of Beijing' (*neicheng*, Vol. 3), the 'outer city of Beijing' (*waicheng*, Vol. 4), and Zhili (Vols 5 and 6). The cutting of the blocks was divided into twelve parts, assigned to two Kyoto-based block cutters and two Osaka-based ones. Each of the six volumes also commemorates the recent death of Kenkadō with the following dedication, 'In accordance with the last will of Kenkadō, Master Ki Seishuku' (Kenkadō's courtesy name).⁵ Kenkadō died on the 25th day of the first month in 1802,⁶ and the production of the book likely began in Osaka at some point around this time, if not earlier. The project was submitted for

⁵ 故蒹葭堂木世肅先生遺意. For the English translation, see François Lachaud, 'The Scholar and the Unicorn: Antiquarians, Eccentrics, and Connoisseurs in Eighteenth Century Japan', in Alain Schnapp and others, *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives*, Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013 (343–371), 359. Unless otherwise specified, all translations and transcriptions in the rest of the article are mine, and I would like to thank Fengyu Wang and Elias Bouckaert for cross-checking my reading of the cursive script in the book's *hanrei*.

⁶ Osaka Museum of History, *Kimura Kenkadō*, 208.

official approval by the chief publisher (to be discussed later) in late 1803,⁷ but the completed manuscript was not ready until 1805 or later.⁸ Part of the manuscript was sent to the Osaka Publishers' Guild in the second month of 1806, and the first edition of the book was jointly issued by thirteen publishers in Osaka, Biyō 尾陽 (Nagoya), Edo (Tokyo), and Kyoto in the following month, as soon as the Guild approved the publication.⁹ The distribution covered the country's most important book markets, and some of the most active publishing houses of the period, such as Kawachiya 河内屋 of Osaka, Suharaya 須原屋 of Edo, and Eirakuya 永楽屋 of Biyō, can be found on the list.

Several contributors and their roles in the project have been credited in the book's back matter. Three Osaka-based painters/book illustrators were responsible for the images: Okada Gyokuzan 岡田玉山 (1737–1808), Oka Yūgaku 岡熊嶽 (1762–1833), and Ōhara Tōya 大原東野 (1771–1840). Okada was also in charge of compiling the texts. Arai Meimon 荒井鳴門 (1775–1853), a scholar of Chinese Studies (*Kangaku* 漢学) trained in Osaka, copyedited the texts, and provided additional contents written in regular script. Ōmura Ansai 大邨安載 (?–?) is credited as the calligrapher of the cursive script, the style in which most of the book's main texts are written. The project's chief publisher and the owner of the blocks was Asa Bunkan 浅文貫 /Asai Bunkan 浅井文貫 (c.1771–?). Newly independent from the leading Osaka publishing house, Kawachiya Kihei 河内屋喜兵衛, he operated as Kawachiya Kichibei 河内屋吉兵衛 and was also known by his studio name Ryūshōdō 龍章堂.¹⁰

⁷ The Smithsonian Copy contains a copyright page following the cover of the first volume, reading: 'submitted for official approval in the twelfth month of the third year of Kyōwa [, the year of] *mizunotoi*, issued across the country in the third month of the third year of Bunka [, the year of] *hinoetora*' 享和三年癸亥臘月上輪官准 文化三年丙寅三月海宇發行. See Fig.8.

⁸ Not only are two of the three prefaces and the postscript by the publisher dated to this year, but the calligraphy of Yagi Sonsho 八木巽所 (1771–1836), placed towards the end of Vol.5, is also dated to the year 1805.

⁹ Ōsaka tosho shuppangyō kumiai 大阪図書出版業組合 [Osaka Book Publishers Association], ed., *Kyōho igo Ōsaka shuppan shoseki mokuroku* 享保以後大阪出版書籍目録 [A Catalogue of Books Published in Osaka after the Kyōho Era], Tokyo: Ōsaka tosho shuppangyō kumia, 1936, 186.

¹⁰ Asai Bunkan gained independence from the leading Kawachiya publishing house, Kawachiya Kihei 河内屋喜兵衛, at the age of 29 (Japanese reckoning) in 1799 (Kansei 11). His successors inherited both names of Ryūshōdō and Kawachiya Kichibei, and the publishing house was active in Osaka well into the Meiji period. See Imai Miki 今井美紀, 'Shoshi Kawachiya Kichibei to Hashimoto Kōha — Bakumatsuki Ōsaka shuppan shihon no ichi sokumen' 書肆河内屋吉兵衛と橋本香坡—幕末期大坂出版資本の一側面 [The Bookshop Kawachiya Kichibei and Hashimoto Kōha: An Aspect of Osaka Publishing Capital in Late Tokugawa Period], in *Nihon kindai no seiritsu to tenkai: Umetani Noboru kyōju taikan kinen ronbunshū* 日本近代の成立と展開：梅溪昇教授退官記念論文集 [The Formation and

The features listed above make the project remarkable but not strikingly unusual. In 1780, Akisato Ritō 秋里籬嶋 (c.1733–1812), a commoner-literatus active in Kyoto, working with the Osaka-based illustrator Takehara Shunchōsai 竹原春朝 齋 (1764–1801) and the Kyoto-based publisher Yoshinoya Tamehachi 吉野家為八 (?–c. 1810), came up with several innovative strategies and created a sensation in the publishing market with *Miyako meisho zue* 都名所図会 (*Illustrated Collection of Famous Places in the Capital*).¹¹ The genre of *meisho zue* 名所図会 (lit. ‘illustrated collection of famous places’) soon became widely popular, and the Kyoto-Osaka region remained its core centre of production even as other places started creating their own *meisho zue*.¹² *Morokoshi meishō zue* followed many of the genre’s conventions and successful strategies. The number of people stressed and credited in the book’s front and back matters underscores the collaborative, and to a large extent, research-intensive nature of the work, while the actual number of contributors to the project even exceeds far beyond the given list, a point which will be discussed in detail later.

Many of the makers of *Morokoshi meishō zue* were also part of the larger network of *meisho zue* production in Osaka and Kyoto at the time. For example, Gyokuzan worked with Ritō on *Sumiyoshi meishō zue* 住吉名勝図会 (*Illustrated Collection of Scenic Sites Associated with Sumiyoshi*) and *Ise sangū meisho zue* 伊勢参宮名所図会 (*Illustrated Collection of Famous Places on the Ise Pilgrimage*), published in 1794 and 1797, respectively, several years before taking on the leading editorial role of *Morokoshi meishō zue*.¹³ The other illustrator of *Ise sangū meisho zue* was Shitomi Kangetsu 薺関月 (1747–1797), who was also the illustrator for the 1799 *Nippon sankai meisai zue* 日本山海名産図会 (*Illustrated Collection of Famous Products from the Mountains and Seas of Japan*), another project loosely following the genre convention and closely associated with Kenkadō, who wrote the preface of the book and, if not directly responsible for the content, likely provided reference materials from his

Development of Modern Japan: Essays in Honor of Professor Noboru Umetani’s Retirement], Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1984, 79–80. Note that there is a mistake in Imai’s conversion of Kansei 11 from Japanese calendar to Gregorian calendar, which is corrected here. For the details of the operation and development of the Kawachiya group, see *Shinshū Ōsaka shishi* 新修大阪市史 [Newly Compiled Gazetteer of the Osaka City] vol.4, Osaka: 1990, 760–766.

¹¹ Robert Goree, *Printing Landmarks: Popular Geography and Meisho Zue in Late Tokugawa Japan*, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2020, 2–4, 36–39, 65–68.

¹² For *meisho zue* and its popularity, see Goree, *Printing Landmarks*, 2, 24–26, 255–259. The terms *meisho* 名所 (lit. ‘famous places’) and *meishō* 名勝 (lit. ‘scenic sites’) have slightly different meanings, but the different choice in the title does not always reflect in the book’s content, and books with both types of titles tend to follow the same genre convention. Following Goree’s practise, this paper translates the titles of the different books as literally as possible but will simply refer to the genre as *meisho zue*. For a brief account on the subtle differences between the terms *meisho* and *meishō*, see Goree, 264.

¹³ Goree, *Printing Landmarks*, 256–257.

extensive libraries and collections.¹⁴ In 1804, around the time of the production of *Morokoshi meishō zue*, Kawachiya Kihei, the leading house of the Kawachiya group and the most prominent publisher in Osaka at the time, purchased the blocks and hence the rights to print a number of *meishō zue* from the bankrupt Yoshinoya in Kyoto, reflecting, on the one hand, a continued market interest in the genre, and on the other hand, the Osaka-based Kawachiya group's takeover as the leading publisher of *meishō zue*.¹⁵

Blessed with the popularity of the genre and the expertise of seasoned book producers, *Morokoshi meishō zue* nonetheless had to define its unique selling point in the face of a competitive market already overflowed with numerous domestic *meishō zue*. Experts of Chinese culture in the region were called in to support the project. The three prefaces, written in Sinitic language (*kanbun* 漢文) and in three varied calligraphic styles, were all by well-known scholars running private academies of Chinese Studies in Kyoto and Osaka at the time. Their involvement suggests some of the target audience that the book wanted to appeal to. Okuda Shōsai 奥田尚齋 (1729–1807) and Haruta Ōtō 春田横塘 (1768–1828) both taught in Osaka.¹⁶ Minagawa Kien 皆川淇園 (1735–1807) had a very successful private school of Chinese Studies in Kyoto, which received support from three different regional lords (*daimyō*) and whose register kept a remarkable record of 3,000 students across different social strata.¹⁷ Chinese literary and cultural cultivation was still a pursuit motivated by elitist aspiration, but with the commercialisation of education and popularisation of knowledge, the social and economic profiles of its potential clientele could be very diverse. On the flip side, the penetration of Chinese learning across social strata in the region prepared the interest in publications like *Morokoshi meishō zue*. It was only natural for one to develop a curiosity for the current situation

¹⁴ Goree lists *Morokoshi meishō zue* as a 'quasi meishō zue' and *Nippon sankai meisan zue* as a 'de facto meishō zue' to suggest their respective differences from but close association with 'bona fide meishō zue', see Goree, *Printing Landmarks*, 256–257. For more on *Nippon sankai meisan zue* and its connection with *Morokoshi meishō zue*, see Annick Horiuchi, 'Composition and Genealogy of the *Nippon sankai meisan zue* (1799)' 『日本山海名産図会』(一七九九)の成立事情と系譜を辿って, *Nihon kenkyū* 日本研究 65, 31 October 2022, 137–140. A fully annotated translation of *Nippon sankai meisan zue* in French is accessible via OpenEdition Books. See Annick Horiuchi and others, trans., *Guide illustré des produits renommés des monts et mers du Japon*, Paris: Collège de France, 2020, <https://books.openedition.org/cdf/8393>.

¹⁵ Kawachiya Kihei owned copyrights of at least 10 titles of *meishō zue* at the beginning of the 19th century. For the transfer of copyrights and a list of *meishō zue* associated with the Kawachiya group, see *Shinshū Ōsaka shishi*, Vol.4, 745.

¹⁶ 'Okuda Shōsai' 奥田尚齋, in *The Biographical Dictionary of Japan* 日本人名大辞典, Tokyo: Kodansha, 2001, Japan Knowledge Lib., <https://japanknowledge.com/lib/en/display/?lid=5011061154150>, accessed 27 September 2023; 'Haruta Ōtō' 春田横塘, in *The Biographical Dictionary of Japan*, Japan Knowledge Lib., <https://japanknowledge.com/lib/en/display/?lid=5011061323990>, accessed 27 September 2023.

¹⁷ W.J.T. Boot, 'Chinese Scholarship and Teaching in Eighteenth-Century Kyoto', in Matthias Hayek and Annick Horiuchi, eds, *Listen, Copy, Read: Popular Learning in Early Modern Japan*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014, 237.

in China when Chinese language and culture were part of the desired curriculums and popular discussions.

What was considered as ‘China’ could be vast and varied for Japanese people of the Tokugawa era. From state ideology to popular imagination, there clearly was a distinction between the cultural China of the past and the Qing state, with the former often being associated with civilisation and the latter often (but not always) being dismissed as ‘barbaric’.¹⁸ Although *Morokoshi meishō zue* specifically focuses on Qing China, the more generic and timeless term, *Morokoshi* 唐土 (lit. ‘the land of Tang’, but the term doesn’t point towards a specific historical era in Edo usage),¹⁹ is chosen for the title and used throughout the main texts. No noticeably condescending tone towards the contemporary Qing state is found even in the three prefaces whose authors’ careers revolve around being guardians of Chinese culture. This strong interest in Qing China as a concrete political, geographical, and cultural entity anchored in the present, on the one hand, and the editorial decision to frame this entity in a timeless concept of China not completely divorced from past glory, on the other, are observed throughout the book and will be discussed in more detail later.

Featuring a distant land rather than the familiar domestic city such as Kyoto, which many had visited and even more had examined in detail through the many practical or virtual guidebooks like *Miyako meisho zue*, however, *Morokoshi meishō zue* faced yet another challenge. Since the very selling point of *meisho zue* lies in its promise to deliver a convincing simulation of real travel, the reliability of a book featuring a land that nobody could visit in person was called into question. Minagawa Kien’s preface underscores this scepticism:

Some doubted: ‘As for other pictorial accounts of scenic sites, [what is depicted] all belongs to our land. Following the images, it is possible to seek the realities; visiting the people, it is possible to investigate its credibility. As for what is depicted in this pictorial account, the land is foreign and the things far away, [thus] there is no way to examine the facts or verify the credibility [of the book]. How can one know whether

¹⁸ For an account of such distinctions between ‘civilised’ and ‘barbarian’ in political discourses, see Ng, ‘Names for China’, 70–79; For the distinction between contemporaneous ‘Qing’ and the ‘advanced Chinese civilisation’ in popular discourses, see Suzuki Keiko, ‘The Making of Tōjin: Construction of the Other in Early Modern Japan,’ *Asian Folklore Studies* 66: 1/2, 2007, 85–87.

¹⁹ For the various Tokugawa names for China and their nuances, See Ng, ‘Names for China’, 61–66. For the historical usage of the term ‘*morokoshi*’ and its nuances, see Ronald P. Toby, *Engaging the Other: ‘Japan’ and Its Alter Egos, 1550-1850*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019, 120, 196, 229, 239. For Edo-period primary sources that used various names for China, see Satō Saburō 佐藤三郎, *Kindai nitchū kōshōshi no kenkyū* [Research on the History of Modern Sino-Japanese Interactions], Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983, 28 – 33. Satō’s analysis of 48 pieces of castaway literature where the land of China was mentioned shows that 2/3 of them used a variation of ‘Tang’ 唐 (Japanese readings: *kara*, *morokoshi*, *tō*) to refer to contemporary (mostly Qing) China.

there are non-existent places or fictional mountains, rivers, palaces, or temples?’²⁰

Kien tackles this suspicion by pointing to the Chinese books consulted. In the same preface, he writes:

As for this book, [...], its records and interpretations come from books such as *Shilüe*, *Huidian*, and *Shengdian*. [This publication] used them as the source, listing [items] one by one and explaining [things] in detail. Its effort in compiling and telling [information] can be called diligent. [...] This book, with its detailedness in records and translations, the comprehensiveness of its illustrations, and furthermore, its time-consuming [editorial] work as well as hard work in cutting the blocks, [when] examined, you can know that it is not a baseless made-up account. As for famous places of our land, even those in the remote territory, I may be able to visit them in person. Then their pictures and records can sometimes be abandoned. As for what this book tells pictorially, the land cannot be visited, and the things cannot be examined in person either, therefore for those who wish to understand the land and the scenery to widen their knowledge, this is a must-go-to book that cannot be abandoned. How can this be considered the same as other pictorial accounts?²¹

The specific titles given in Kien’s preface, namely, *Shilüe*, *Huidian*, and *Shengdian*, were all recent publications produced by or closely associated with the Qing court, which will be unpacked in the following section. In answering the scepticism towards the book’s trustworthiness, Kien further points out that the unique value of the book lies exactly in the fact that Qing China is not a visitable place, and hence the best way to know about it is through Chinese books, now interpreted, illustrated, and repackaged in the accessible format of a commercially published picture book for the Japanese audience. The writing of the book is ‘shallow and vulgar’ (*senzoku* 淺俗), as Okuda Shōsai put it in his preface, a common expression used to denote vernacular and plain language into which more classical, literary, or complicated writings are translated in Edo publishing.²² Consisting of *kana* syllabary and Sinitic characters glossed over with *kana* pronunciation, the text

²⁰ 或疑: 如他名勝圖繪, 並皆我土之所有。按其圖, 可以推其實; 訪其人, 可以究其信焉矣。如此圖繪, 壤異物復, 實無可由推, 信無可由究焉。則安知其中無有無何有之鄉、烏有之山川宮觀乎?

²¹ 如是書 [...] 其紀譯之所出, 並皆用識略、會典、盛典諸書, 以為其據, 而細舉縷列, 曲委詳盡, 其輯述之功, 可謂勤矣。[...] 此書以其紀譯之詳, 圖像之悉, 且以其用工之費日, 鏤板之費力, 度之, 尔可以知其非無據妄撰者也。且夫如我土諸名勝, 雖在遠僻之境者, 吾或可以躬詣而親訪焉。則其圖象也, 紀述也, 有時可以廢焉矣。如是書所圖述, 地已不可得躬詣, 事又不可得親訪, 則其於或欲識之風土景勝, 以博其智者也, 此其為必用不可廢之書者。寧與彼諸圖繪, 可同日而論也乎哉?

²² Rebekah Clements, *A Cultural History of Translation in Early Modern Japan*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, 35–37.

is indeed close to the style of popular self-study textbooks produced during this period to meet the increasing demand of those who sought at least a basic level of Chinese literacy but did not have access to private tutors or prestigious institutions.²³ Like these self-study textbooks, *Morokoshi meishō zue* boasts a certain level of scholarly seriousness with the authority of its Chinese sources, but makes the accessibility its selling point.

The emphasis on Chinese books is echoed in the postscript by Bunkan, with a slight twist:

Recently, there have been many precious and rare books coming to the East [Japan]. Hence, [I] have gathered several sets of those with illustrations and recruited fine craftsmen and copyists, to select and depict what could be entertaining for the eye, which accumulated to several volumes. [I] have spent many years of efforts [on the project], almost exhausting my family assets to [make] the finely cut blocks, which are results of painstakingly dedicated efforts.²⁴

Like Kien's preface, the postscript repeatedly emphasises the Chinese source materials consulted and the hard work put into the production. Instead of the accuracy and the scholarly seriousness, however, the emphasis is more on the book's entertaining effect. There was a preference for source materials with images among the 'many precious and rare books' that arrived in Japan, and the editorial decision was selective, choosing what would be interesting to the curious eye of its Edo readers. Bunkan was of course writing from the publisher's rather than the scholar's stance, and his different perspective further confirms that the book was meant to address a wide range of readership.

Consistent through both texts, however, is the strong emphasis on the 'recent', 'rare', and 'precious' Chinese books, the access to which made the project possible in the first place and the editorial interpretation of which made *Morokoshi meishō zue* a valuable book, whether for those who wish to 'widen their knowledge' or those who simply want to find something 'entertaining for the eye'. These books conglomerated in Osaka and Kyoto throughout the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, gathered by wealthy collectors like Kenkadō, read by scholars and students who operated or attended the region's fast-growing private academies, and disseminated by active commercial publishing houses who made Japanese editions of imported Chinese books one of their specialisations.²⁵ *Morokoshi meishō*

²³ Clements, *A Cultural History*, 117–119.

²⁴ 近世珍篇奇冊東來者殊夥，因輯合其有圖釋者數部，募良工摹手，寫取於入目為翫者，積而為數卷，費多年之力，殆傾家貲以繡梓，苦心精力之所致。

²⁵ For a partial list of Kenkadō's collection of imported Chinese books, see Osaka Museum of History, *Kimura Kenkadō*, 153–167. For private academies in Kyoto, see Boot, 'Chinese Learning', 225–247. For private academies in Osaka, see Testuo Najita, *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan: the Kaitokudō Merchant Academy of Osaka*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997 and Kobori Kazumasa 小堀一正, *Kinsei Ōsaka to chishikijin shakai* 近世大坂と知識人社会 [Early Modern Osaka and the Society of Intellectuals], Osaka: Seibundō, 1996. For the

zue is a notable new product that extended the success of *meisho zue* production in Osaka and Kyoto by featuring a territory thus unchartered and still unvisitable, the detailed account of which is only achieved with the region's combination of intellectual resources and cultural specialties.

Copied from the imperial library

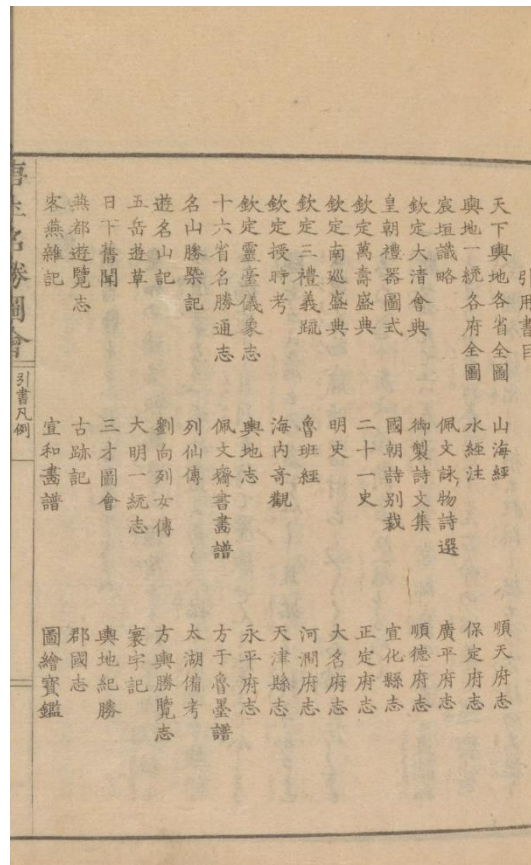


Figure 1 Bibliography page, *Morokoshi meishō zue*, Vol.1, 1806. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives.

A distinctive feature of *Morokoshi meishō zue* is not only that the book bases its content almost entirely on Chinese books, but also that it puts a great emphasis on these sources. An extensive bibliography (fig.1) of 51 Chinese books consulted is given at the beginning of the book, right after the prefaces and before the reader's instructions (*hanrei* 凡例). Although the extensive bibliography also includes some old classics such as the mythological *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (*Classic of Mountains and Seas*), already established between the fourth and the third century BCE, and *Xuanhe Huapu* 宣和畫譜 (*The Xuanhe Catalogue of Paintings*), the painting catalogue of Emperor Huizong of the Northern Song (1082–1135) established in 1120, the majority of the 51 titles are Ming-Qing publications. They are arranged into three

development of commercial publishing and the republication of imported Chinese books in Kyoto and Osaka, see Peter Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century*, Leiden: Brill, 1998, 194–199.

rows. Roughly speaking, the first row contains recent (Ming-Qing) cultural geographical accounts covering Beijing and its surroundings, as well as books detailing the life and institutions of the court. The most prominent places in this row are reserved for the grand publishing projects produced by or associated with the Qing court. The second row mainly includes sources on history, literature, and arts, which includes both older sources like *Shanhai jing* and *Xuanhe Huapu*, but also Qing courtly publications such as *Yuzhi shiwen ji* 御製詩文集 (*Collection of Imperial Prose and Poetry*) and *Peiwenzhai shuhua pu* 佩文齋書畫譜 (*Peiwen Studio Compendium of Calligraphy and Painting*). The third row starts with a long list of local gazetteers from the periphery of Beijing and includes a few older (pre-Ming) cultural geographical accounts, as well as other less prestigious sources at the end.

The *hanrei* goes into detail about which specific part of the book consulted which Chinese sources and why the bibliography is put in such a prominent place:

The downscaled images at the beginning are complete maps of the territory [based on] *Yudizhi* and *Yitongzhi*. The locations of the capital are [based on] *Chenhuan shiliu*. The part on Zhili [the province surrounding Beijing] [is based on] various local administrative gazetteers. The items on the rites, music, ceremonies, and public affairs [of the court] are [based on] the two sets of *Shengdian* as well as *Daqing huidian*. Objects and clothing are based on *Liqi tushi*, *Lingtai yixiang zhi*, among others. Down to [all details such as] past events, figures, residences, mountains and waters, grass, and trees, etc., [we] checked various useful books, compared their similarities and differences, and cross-referenced one another, [making sure that] not even a tiny bit is made up. As evidence, the books cited are documented at the beginning.²⁶

When examining this text together with Kien's preface, Bunkan's postscript, and the bibliography, it becomes evident that not just any Chinese books, but the recent and expansive publishing projects associated with the Qing court are the ones proudly and repeatedly highlighted. The hierarchical ordering of the bibliography, especially in its first part, is clearly echoed in the various other texts. The first two titles given on the bibliography page, *Tianxia yudi gesheng quantu* 天下輿地各省全圖 (*Complete Maps of All Provinces in the Empire*) and *Yudi yitong gefu quantu* 輿地一統各府全圖 (*Complete Maps of All Prefectures in the Unified Territory*), abbreviated as *Yudizhi* and *Yitongzhi* in the *hanrei* text cited above, are identified as the basis for Qing maps in the book. It is not clear which specific collections of Qing maps were consulted, but the titles and the maps themselves reflect the updated borders and administrative units of the Qing empire, and their claims to the exhaustiveness of

²⁶ はじめ じゆくづ よち せんづよち しいつとうし けいし いち しんゑんしりやく ちよくれいぶ しょうふし
 始の縮圖ハ輿地の全圖輿地志一統志。京師の位置は宸垣識略。直隸部ハ諸州府志。
 れいがくまいしく じしきもく にぶ せいでんをよ だいしんゑんでん きざいふく れいきづしきれいだいざしやうしとう
 禮樂祭祀公事式目ハ二部の盛典及び大清會典。器財衣服ハ禮器圖式靈台儀象志等にもとづ
 き。こ じんぶつきよさんすいさうもくとう をよ うよう しょうしよ てら いどうかうかん ひし ごしやう すごし
 故事人物居處山水草木等に及ぶまで有用の諸書に照し異同校考し彼此を互證し毫も
 づきん しやうこ いんよう しょうもく はじめ ろく こと すごし づきん しやうこ いんよう
 杜撰せざる。徴に引用の書目を首に録する事しかり。し毫も杜撰せざる。徴に引用
 の書目を首に録する事しかり。

the information and the territory's unity also suggest the sources' likely imperial provenance. The next reference on the bibliography page, *Chenhuan shilüe* 宸垣識略 (*Digest Guide to the Imperial Enclosure*), already mentioned once as *Shilüe* in Kien's preface, is credited as the source for the sites of Beijing in the book's *hanrei*. The book is a sixteen-volume account of the history, culture, and geography of Beijing, and the earliest surviving edition dates to 1788.²⁷ In 1796, shortly after the book was published in China and only a few years before the making of *Morokoshi meishō zue*, one set of the book was imported and it was noted as a new title arriving for the first time in Japan.²⁸ The book itself is not an imperial production and its compiler Wu Changyuan 吳長元 (?-?) held no official post. However, it is largely based on two earlier accounts on Beijing that are closely associated with the Qing court: *Rixia jiuwen* 日下舊聞 (*Hearsay of Old Matters from under the Sun*), which the famous scholar-official Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629–1709) completed in 1687 by consulting the imperial library and archives, and *Rixia jiuwen kao* 日下舊聞考 (*Investigations about Hearsay of Old Matters from under the Sun*), a much more expanded supplement and commentary to Zhu's work, compiled upon imperial order and completed in 1774.²⁹ The older source of *Rixia jiuwen* is also acknowledged in the bibliography, but put at a much later point, only as the fifteenth book on the list, whereas the imperial *Rixia jiuwen kao* was probably not available to the makers of the Japanese book and hence not cited.³⁰ To the makers of *Morokoshi meishō zue*, the more recent *Chenhuan shilüe* that consulted both *Rixia jiuwen* and the imperial *Rixia jiuwen kao*, is a more important source than the slightly dated account of *Rixia jiuwen*, although the latter is authored by a much more famous scholar.

Sources four to ten in the bibliography are all doubtlessly Qing imperial productions, as identified by the words *qinding* 欽定 ('imperial endorsement') and *huangchao* 皇朝 ('imperial dynasty') in their titles. Furthermore, the roles of the Kangxi Emperor (1654–1722) and the Qianlong Emperor (1711–1799), both well-known for their cultural projects, clearly emerge. Qianlong, who died only three years before Kenkadō, was contemporaneous with the makers of *Morokoshi meishō zue*, and his publishing projects represented the latest authoritative information about Qing China. This section includes the two sets of *Shengdian* and *Huidian*, mentioned in both Kien's preface and *hanrei*, as well as the additional two titles given in *hanrei*. *Qinding wanshou shengdian* 欽定萬壽盛典 (*Imperial Endorsed the Grand Ceremony of the Imperial Birthday*) most likely referred to the one compiled

²⁷ 'Chenhuan shilüe', The Palace Museum, <https://www.dpm.org.cn/ancient/yuanmingqing/149509.html>, accessed 01 January 2023.

²⁸ Ōba Osamu 大庭脩, *Edo jidai ni okeru tōsen mochiwatashisho no kenkyū* 江戸時代における唐船持渡書の研究 [Research on Books Brought by Chinese Junks in the Edo Period], Suita: Institute of Oriental and Occidental Studies, Kansai University, 1967, 731.

²⁹ Ulrich Theobald, 'Rixia jiuwen and Rixia jiuwen kao', China Knowledge, 13 Nov 2013, <http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Science/rixiajiuwen.html#rixiajiuwenkao>, accessed 01 January 2023.

³⁰ The same source in Ōba's book cited above mentions that *Rixia jiuwen* (1687) was first imported to Japan in 1757, and Ōba's rather extensive collection of data has another mention of the book, being auctioned among booksellers as late as 1858, but there is no data concerning the importation of *Rixia jiuwen kao* (1774); See Ōba, *Edo jidai*, 655, 729.

during the Kangxi reign (1661–1722), also known as *Wanshou shengdian chuji* 萬壽盛典初集 (*The First Collection of the Grand Ceremony of the Imperial Birthday*), rather than the Qianlong-edition that largely modelled after the former, a point which will be returned to later.³¹ *Qinding daqing huidian* 欽定大清會典 (*Imperially Endorsed Collected Statutes of the Great Qing*) was also first begun during the Kangxi reign and became largely updated and expanded during the Qianlong reign, and it is not very clear which edition the Japanese makers referred to. However, *Qinding nanxun shengdian* 欽定南巡盛典 (*Imperially Endorsed Magnificent Record of the Southern Tours*) clearly documents Qianlong’s inspection tours to the south in 1751, 1757, 1762, and 1765.³² The other two titles already mentioned in *hanrei* are *Qinding lingtai yixiang zhi* 欽定靈台儀象志 (*Imperially Endorsed Treatise on Astronomical Instruments at the Imperial Observatory*) and *Huangchao liqi tushi* 皇朝禮器圖式 (*Illustrations of Imperial Ritual Paraphernalia*). The former is a manual of the imperial observatory established by the Jesuit missionaries Johann Adam Schall von Bell (Ch. Tang Ruowang 湯若望, 1591–1666) and Ferdinand Verbiest (Ch. 南懷仁 Nan Huairen, 1623–1688) and compiled in 1674 by a team led by Verbiest himself. The astronomical devices still featured prominently in imperial visual projects during the Qianlong period, found in compendia such as the following book in the bibliography, *Huangchao liqi tushi*. *Liqi tushi* is a quintessential Qianlong project: first completed in 1759 by an editorial team led by Prince Yunlu 允祿 (1695–1767), the book was meant to set the standard for all types of imperial ceremonials following the Qianlong Emperor’s reform.³³ The remaining two titles in this section of the bibliography, *Qinding shoushi kao* 欽定授時考 (*Imperially Endorsed Treatise on the Instruction of All Seasons*) and *Qinding sanli shuyi* 欽定三禮疏義 (*Imperially Endorsed Commentaries to the Three Ritual Classics*), are also both ‘imperially endorsed’ and produced during the Qianlong reign. It is also worth noting that the books put in this first and most important part of the bibliography are often richly illustrated, especially the two sets of *Shengdian* and *Liqi tushi*, and many of the images in *Morokoshi meishō zue* are direct appropriations of these Qing imperial sources. All these titles are found across Edo book trading records, although it is hard to reconstruct their clear importation history and monetary value at the time due to the lack of surviving data from the turn of the nineteenth century. A piece of information concerning a well-known contemporary book collector, Matsura Seizan 松浦静山 (1760–1841), *daimyō* of Hirado, attests to the

³¹ For a comparison of the two *Wanshou shengdian*, see Chen Pao-chen 陳葆真, ‘Kangxi huangdi Wanshou tu yu Qianlong huangdi Baxun wanshou tu de bijiao yanjiu’ 康熙皇帝《萬壽圖》與乾隆皇帝《八旬萬壽圖》的比較研究 [Comparative Study of Paintings Showing Birthday Celebrations of Emperor Kangxi and Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Period], *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly* 30:3, 2013, 45–122.

³² Ulrich Theobald, ‘*Rixia jiuwen* and *Rixia jiuwen kao*’, *China Knowledge*, 15 Nov 2013, <http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Historiography/nanxunshengdian.html>, accessed 01 January 2023.

³³ For details of the book and its production, see Yu-chih Lai 賴毓芝, ‘“Tu” yu Li: Huangchao liqi tushi de chengli jiqi yingxiang’ 「圖」與禮：《皇朝禮器圖式》的成立及其影響 [‘Illustrations’ and the Rites: The Formation of *Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Imperial Qing Dynasty* and Its Influence], *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 [The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly] 37:2, 2020, 1–8.

prestige of these books. Both *Daqing huidian* and *Wanshou shengdian* are found among the nine titles that Seizan newly acquired from a Nagasaki official in 1786, as well as on the 1802 list of 132 titles from his collection that he intended to present to Shōheizaka Gakumonjo 昌平坂学問所, the shogunal Confucian academy in Edo.³⁴

Although it's not unusual for early modern Japanese books to appropriate older sources or for other *meishō zue* to cite their reference materials, the repeated emphasis on the books consulted in *Morokoshi meishō zue* is quite extraordinary. The significance of Chinese sources is underscored not simply because they serve as an alternative guarantor of authenticity when actual travel is unfeasible, but also because of the grandeur of the publishing projects themselves. These projects encapsulate extensive resources, knowledge, and collective efforts, involving a diverse array of contributors ranging from lesser-known literati and Confucian scholar-officials to Jesuit missionaries, Manchu emperors, and princes. The makers of *Morokoshi meishō zue* considered them valuable repertoires of Qing life and viable channels to gain an understanding of the many facets of Qing China, whether for knowledge or for entertainment. Access to these highly prized Chinese books shows both the Japanese makers' financial capacity to acquire and possess them in the first place, and their ability to read and interpret them for the Japanese audience. The preference for the recent, updated, and contemporaneous works commissioned by the court, possibly present in Japan only in limited numbers by this point (although most likely issued by a non-official publisher), not only further demonstrates the makers' privileged access to valuable sources of China knowledge but shows an acute awareness of the current cultural and political situations in the realm beyond Japanese borders. While the inclusion of older, pre-Qing sources, connects the contemporary Qing state with the cultural China that extends from the past to the present, a point that will be revisited later.

Although Chinese sources have been stressed repeatedly in *Morokoshi meishō zue*, it is clear, even just from the bibliography page, that these sources were filtered by the Japanese makers' selection and ordered according to their value judgement. Imperially authored, commissioned, or endorsed publishing projects of the Qing court, particularly the many gigantic enterprises of the Qianlong Emperor can be seen as 'soft power' efforts akin to those pursued by modern nation-states.³⁵ While the radius of the Qing emperor's intended power projection would extend to Japan,³⁶ once they arrived at the shore, the power to interpret these books shifted to

³⁴ Iwasaki Yoshinori 岩崎義則, 'Book Collecting by a Literati Daimyo in Early Modern Japan, and the Exchange of Information: An Investigation into Catalogues of the Rakusaidō Collection in Hirado Domain', *Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University* 7, 2022, 90.

³⁵ Lawrence Chang, 'Soft Power and the Qing State: Publishing, Book Collection, and Political Legitimacy in Eighteenth-century China', PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014.

³⁶ Kai-wing Chow, 'Shuji shichang yu guojia chubanye: Dianbanshu zai Riben de liutong' 書籍市場與國家出版業：殿版書在日本的流通 [The Book Market and the National Publishing Industry: Circulation of Editions of the Imperial Printing Office in Japan], presented at the International Academic Conference on Court Texts and Cultural Exchange in East Asia 宮廷

their Japanese owners, who had the domestic market rather than the foreign emperor to please. Repackaged into *Morokoshi meishō zue*, Qing imperial books lost their political gravity and became sources of knowledge and amusement for whoever wanted to buy the product. Duplication was never so much the goal as was selective reproduction and interpretation. The following section will analyse this transformation.

Putting (Qing) China on display

Both born out of the commercial and urban culture of the late Tokugawa period, the popularity of *meishō zue* coincided with that of public displays. In fact, the genre had a close connection with these early forms of exhibition, especially the practise of *kaichō* 開帳 (lit. 'curtain opening'), when temples took out their treasured objects from behind the curtains for public viewing, a practice which started in the seventeenth century and was part of a larger exhibiting phenomenon that became popular in the second half of the eighteenth century.³⁷ *Misemono* 見世物 (lit. 'shows' or 'exhibitions'), ephemeral and carnivalesque shows often featuring the novel and the unusual and frequently taking place at make-shift venues and costing close to nothing, reached an even wider crowd.³⁸ Starting from the second half of the eighteenth century, the display of imported objects became increasingly frequent,³⁹ and the phenomenon of *misemono* reached its zenith from the 1800s on.⁴⁰ This larger interest in displaying the 'foreign' is clearly echoed in *Morokoshi meishō zue*.

The most striking type of display in *Morokoshi meishō zue* is perhaps that of the Qing emperor and empress (figs 2 & 3), introduced right after the site plan of the imperial palace. The curtains pull apart to reveal the figures in both images, a quite literal form of *kaichō*. The figures are adorned by all sorts of imperial symbols to denote their status, but their features are generic and unidentifiable. The images are put in small round frames, and the accompanying texts function like exhibition labels, denoting what the images are and explaining the details of the clothing. The texts identify the images as showing the emperor in his official clothing for the

典籍與東亞文化交流學術研討會, The Palace Museum, Beijing, July 2013, 8, cited in Chang, 'Soft Power', 103.

³⁷ See Goree, *Printing Landmarks*, 108–110. For more discussions of exhibitions in late Tokugawa period, see Kornicki, 'Public Display and Changing Values. Early Meiji Exhibitions and Their Precursors', *Monumenta Nipponica* 49:2, 1994, 167–196.

³⁸ Markus, 'The Carnival of Edo: *Misemono* Spectacles from Contemporary Accounts', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45:2, 1985, 499–541.

³⁹ Timon Screech, *The Lens within the Heart: The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Later Edo Japan*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002, 8. Markus' article cited above also includes several contemporary accounts describing Western objects being presented at *misemono* shows.

⁴⁰ Markus, 'The Carnival of Edo', 505.



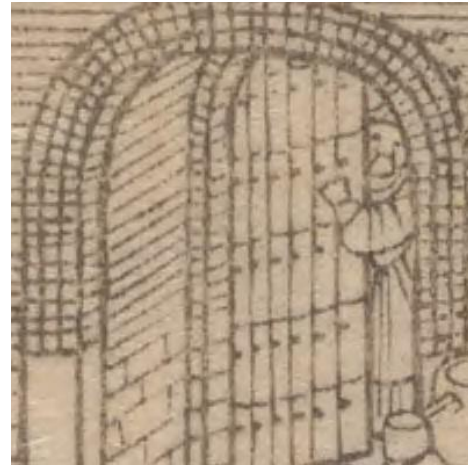
Left: Figure 2 Page showing the Qing emperor, *Morokoshi meishō zue*, Vol.1, 1806. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives.



Right: Figure 3 Page showing the Qing empress, *Morokoshi meishō zue*, Vol.1, 1806. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives.

summer and the empress in hers for the winter, the detail of which is taken from *Liqi tushi*. Rather than being concerned with dressing the right person for the correct occasion, as was the point of the Chinese publication, the Japanese book dressed the figures up to show some variation for its readers. The Qianlong Emperor would not have been pleased with how his project and image were appropriated, but that was clearly not a concern to the Japanese makers of the book. The Qing emperor and empress are displayed as objects to study, curios to amuse. The Japanese makers showed very little regard for the political agenda behind the Qing imperial publications that they referenced, but instead, treated the source books as a pool of information and images that they could freely choose from, not for faithful reproduction, but creative interpretation.

The exposition-nature of the book is further exemplified in the image of the Meridian Gate 午門 (fig.4). Several Qing imperial sources cited at the beginning of the book must have provided the materials for this collage: textual descriptions of the rituals are found in *Huidian*, images of specific objects can be found in *Liqi tushi*, and, most importantly, the richly illustrated *Wanshou shengdian* provided further textual sources as well as many graphic elements appropriated in the Japanese image. In Bunkan's advertisement attached to the Smithsonian Copy, he announces that a set of six volumes of *Wanshou shengdian tuhui* 萬壽盛典圖會 (*Illustrated Collection of the Grand Ceremony of the Imperial Birthday*) is under preparation for publication. The advertisement describes the details of the celebration of the Kangxi Emperor's sixtieth birthday, which suggests the reference book cited in the bibliography page is most likely the Kangxi-era *Shengdian*, namely *Wanshou shengdian chuji*. *Chuji* was completed in 1717 and consists of 42 volumes, with the last two volumes composed of images spanning over 140 sheets of paper.



Left: Figure 4 Pages showing the Meridian Gate, *Morokoshi meishō zue*, Vol.1, 1806. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives.

Right: Figure 5 Detail from the page showing the Meridian Gate, *Morokoshi meishō zue*, Vol.1, 1806. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives.

The images document the celebration of the Kangxi Emperor's sixtieth birthday across the city, unfolding at the Gate of Divine Prowess 神武門, the northern gate of the Forbidden City, and ending at the Garden of Delightful Spring 暢春園, an imperial garden at the north-western side of Beijing.⁴¹ The celebration does not pass the Meridian Gate at the south, but various elements in the Meridian Gate image of *Morokoshi meishō zue* can be identified in the Qing pictorial account of the imperial birthday, ranging from the palatial gate and its architecture to the decorated elephants and the palanquins. In the Japanese image, these objects are labelled with added cartouches, with the text at the upper right corner serving an explanatory function, while the seal of Gyokuzan at the lower left claims his curatorial role over this assemblage. Despite the book's emphasis on its reliable Chinese sources, there is no hiding that they were reimagined for the Japanese audience. It is thus not too surprising that even in this majestic scene, one could find a person comically peeping out from the half-open side gate (fig.5), something hardly possible to have taken place either at the site or in the Chinese books showing the site. Yet the insertion of the anonymous 'spectator' looking, and more commonly, pointing at something is a recurring pictorial trope found in *meishō zue*, which serves to direct the viewer's attention and encourage their participation.⁴² The peeping man also reminds the viewer that what they are looking at would have otherwise been off-limits, echoing the allure of *kaichō* and other forms of public displays of the Tokugawa period.

Turning the page, one finds zoomed-in details associated with the site (fig.6), as if the peeping figure is now stepping out of the site and taking the viewer to admire specific objects isolated in a display case. On the left-hand side are detailed drawings of two objects, *rigui* 日圭 and *jialiang* 嘉量, measures for time and volume and thus imperial symbols representing the establishment of standards for

⁴¹ For details, see Chen, 'Kangxi huangdi', 51–69.

⁴² Goree, *Printing Landmarks*, 131–133.

everything under the emperor's rule. Illustrations of these objects were placed on each side of the Meridian Gate in the previous image. On the right-hand side of the page is a poem by the Qianlong Emperor, rendered by the calligraphy of Kenkadō in seal script. The whole set is framed by an intricate border of dragon design, which evokes the frontispiece of Qing imperial publications. Here, the *sake* brewer meets the emperor. Kenkadō, in a different script following the poem, accompanied by two of his seals, steps forward and acts as the tour guide. He tells the viewer that what they are looking at is the Qianlong Emperor's poem commemorating the announcement of new calendar at the Meridian Gate and projects his own image by identifying himself as the calligrapher. The choice of the seal-script alludes to Kenkadō's reputation in the world of seal carving,⁴³ yet the artistic quality of his calligraphy does not stand out from the rest of the book, which includes works (in Vols 2 and 4) by famous calligraphers such as Ichikawa Beian 市河米庵 (1779–1858). As with Qianlong's poem, chosen not so much for its literary achievements as for its symbolic significance, status takes precedence over art in the consideration of this part of the book.

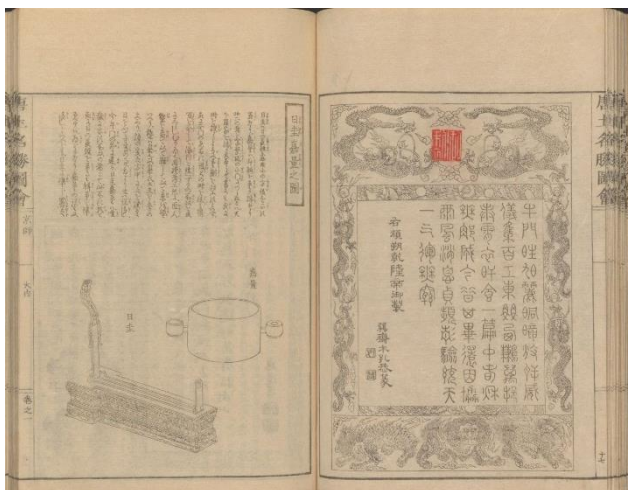


Figure 6 Pages showing Kimura Kenkadō's calligraphy and objects associated with the Meridian Gate, *Morokoshi meishō zue*, Vol.1, 1806. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives.

In this virtual audience between the *sake* brewer and the emperor, the former is put at least on equal footing with, if not a superior position to, the latter. The imperial poem is rendered through the calligraphy of Kenkadō, whose active voice guides the reader through this exhibition of Qing China, while the emperor sits wherever and however the Japanese makers of the book see fit. Imperial symbols are reproduced, but as objects to look at and specimens to study, not because they carry much actual political weight. It is worth noting, however, despite its rather free manipulation of Qing sources, the book does not present Qing life through an intentionally caricatured or derogatory lens. The interest lies in looking at and understanding the 'foreign' rather than reproducing the differences to support racial and ethnic claims.

⁴³ Osaka Museum of History, *Kimura Kenkadō*, 129–130.

Descriptive, observational, comprehensive, and often full of trivial details, this almost proto-ethnographic approach in showing foreign culture is also part of a larger publishing phenomenon in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Departing from the systematic ordering of the outside world based on generic anthropo-classification often found in the encyclopaedias of the early eighteenth century, such as the famous *Wakan sansai zue* 和漢三才図会 (*Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopaedia*), the new publications of the era responded to increased foreign contacts that challenged the established Tokugawa stability with much more detailed portrayal of specific foreign groups.⁴⁴ Accounts about foreign territories and people were in full demand, reflecting political as well as popular concerns, whereas the ability to generate such detailed accounts was limited to those few who had access to information about the outside world when foreign contacts were still tightly controlled.

A case in point is reports on Russia derived from the adventures of Daikokuya Kōdayū 大黒屋光太夫 (1751–1828). Caught in a storm in 1783, the captain ended up being a castaway in the Russian Empire and returned to Japan after almost a decade's sojourn. Interrogated by government officials as soon as he arrived in Edo and subsequently interviewed a few more times, Kōdayū's experience and reportage provided the basis for several accounts about the situation in Russia, which were then produced and circulated as manuscripts.⁴⁵ Among them, *Hokusa bunryaku* 北槎聞略 (*Brief Report on a Northern Raft*), produced by Katsuragawa Hoshū 桂川甫周 (1751–1809), a shogunal physician and a prominent scholar of Dutch Studies (*Rangaku* 蘭学), enjoyed a relatively wide circulation although it was never put into print.⁴⁶ Hoshū also prepared images for this rich account of Russian life. *Hokusa bunryaku furokuzu* 北槎聞略附録図 (*Accompanying Illustrations to the Brief Report on a Northern Raft*), the two scrolls now in the collection of the Waseda University Library, include images of Russian clothing, Catherine the Great's portrait, coinage, microscope, tableware and cutlery, vanity items, and so

⁴⁴ For the publishing market's response to a growing curiosity of the outside world, see Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period*, Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006, 223–227; Horiuchi, 'Composition and Genealogy', 143. For the anthropo-classification and systematic ordering of the world of a previous epoch, see Ronald P. Toby, 'Imagining and Imaging "Anthropos"', in *Engaging the Other: 'Japan' and Its Alter Egos, 1550–1850*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019, 74–102.

⁴⁵ For a more recent critical edition of the book, see Sugimoto Tsutomu 杉本つとむ, ed., *Hokusa bunryaku: eiin kaidai sakuin* 北槎聞略: 影印・解題・索引 [Brief Report on a Northern Raft: Reprints, Commentaries, and Indexes], Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 1993. A French translation of the book by Gérard Siary, accompanied by the translator's introduction, is also available. See Gérard Siary, ed., *Nauffrage & Tribulations d'un Japonais dans la Russie de Catherine II* [Shipwreck & Tribulations of a Japanese in the Russia of Catherine II], Paris: Editions Chandeigne, 2004.

⁴⁶ For how manuscripts could be used to disseminate politically sensitive information, with specific examples where Kōdayū's accounts were circulated, see Kornicki, 'Manuscript, Not Print: Scribal Culture in the Edo Period', *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 32:1, Winter 2006, 31–32.

on.⁴⁷ The isolated images portray objects in a matter-of-fact manner against an empty background and cover a wide array of contemporary Russian life. The selection and presentation of objects in *Hokusa bunryaku furokuzu* share some similarities to those found in *Morokoshi meishō zue*, and Kenkadō himself possessed at least two manuscripts in his collection that were connected to Kōdayū's Russian accounts, of which one is illustrated.⁴⁸ There was clearly no lack of interest in *Hokusa bunryaku*; nevertheless, the book never saw publication, possibly due to official restrictions. Although Hoshū further enhanced his authority on Western matters with *Hokusa bunryaku* and Kōdayū enjoyed a somewhat celebrity status among elite circles of Dutch Studies, Kōdayū and his fellow Russian-returnee were officially declared dead and confined to the shogun's Herb Garden year-round, save for special occasions.⁴⁹

Accounts on Qing China faced less scrutiny, possibly because it was already considered part of the 'known world', with official efforts primarily focused on denouncing its civilisation rather than imposing widespread censorship. One curious book, *Shinzoku kibun* 清俗紀聞 (*Recorded Accounts of Qing Customs*), which became available on the market shortly before *Morokoshi meishō zue* and possibly inspired the latter, underscores the dilemma between popular demand and official stance.⁵⁰ The book was produced in Nagasaki under the supervision of the then Governor of the city (*Nagasaki bugyō* 長崎奉行), Nakagawa Tadateru 中川忠英 (1753–1830), and first published in Edo in 1799. *Shinzoku kibun* claims to have derived its content from interviews with Chinese merchants in Nagasaki, the port town where they were confined, and details life and customs of coastal provinces of Southeast China, mainly Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Fujian, where these merchants came from. It was no coincidence that Tadateru happened to be one of the inspectors (*metsuke* 目付) to have first interrogated Kōdayū upon the latter's arrival in Edo in 1793, and the question-and-answer format of *Shinzoku kibun* resembles that of the reports related to Kōdayū. The book's many prefaces, including one written by the head of Shōheizaka Gakumonjo, Hayashi Jussai 林述齋 (1768–1841), states that Qing China, unlike previous Chinese dynasties, is a degenerate era that offers little for the Japanese to learn, and that it was only for the practical, administrative purpose of better managing the Chinese merchants in Nagasaki that this book about their customs was produced. All three prefaces in *Shinzoku kibun* express a similar view,

⁴⁷ 'Hokusa bunryaku furokuzu' 北槎聞略附録図, Waseda University Kotenseki Sogo Database, https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko08/bunko08_j0021/index.html, accessed 03 September 2023.

⁴⁸ Osaka Museum of History, *Kimura Kenkadō*, 102.

⁴⁹ Reinier H. Hesselink, 'A Dutch New Year at the Shirandō Academy. 1 January 1795', *Monumenta Nipponica* 50:2, Summer 1995, 191–192, 207–208.

⁵⁰ Like *Morokoshi meishō zue*, this book was also issued multiple times by different publishers across the years. The following discussion is based on the fully digitalised version of the 1799 edition in the collection of Waseda University Library. The copy is accessible online via the Library's Kotenseki Sogo Database:

https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/wo07/wo07_03522/index.html.

albeit with some nuances, of the degeneration of the Qing. Jussai was especially harsh with his criticism:

Nowadays, the style of the ancient emperors' rites, writings, headdresses, and garments has all been swept away. The [Qing] customs of [wearing] braided hair and [eating] food of pungent odour have been immensely sinking in. Then it is perfectly fine not to investigate the customs and traditions of that territory.⁵¹

Yet *Shinzoku kibun* transcends the realm of administrative reports with its inclusion of many lively, detailed, and often trivial images of contemporary Southeastern Chinese life and it enjoyed a wide circulation via commercial publishers in Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo, reaching far beyond those who had the practical need to manage the Chinese merchants in Nagasaki. The disapproval expressed in Jussai's preface betrays the anxiety that, in fact, the latest knowledge about Qing China was in demand, which is probably why *Shinzoku kibun* was commercially produced in the first place, regardless of what the prefaces claimed. In the same preface written by Jussai, this inadvertently becomes evident:

I noticed that the youths from families of high-ranking officials and the upper-class sometimes became accustomed to being frivolous and extravagant, valuing objects and treasures from faraway places. That is to say, [they] appreciate every clever object from the Wu [Chinese] junks, imitate everything novel the Qing people do, and boast about themselves thinking that there are no better elegant trends or cultural pursuits than this.⁵²

Contrary to what the state and its Neo-Confucian elites tried to uphold, latest culture from Qing came with the Chinese junks and was sought after as 'elegant', a term many wanted to reserve only for the high culture of a past China. In Osaka and Kyoto, Qing-period publications, including newly edited classics, art-historical writings, imperial cultural projects, etc., filled the bookshelves of the learned community.⁵³ Capitalising on the market's thirst for detailed knowledge of contemporary Qing China, much like Tadaderu, and leveraging their access to Chinese books without the same constraints imposed by Tokugawa state ideology, producers of *Morokoshi meishō zue* did not frame Qing China within the realm of 'barbarism', as the shogunal Confucianists insisted. Rather, they looked at the

⁵¹ 今也先王禮文冠裳之風，悉就掃蕩。辯發腥膻之俗，已極淪溺。則彼之土風俗尚，真不問可也。

⁵² 余觀今之達官貴游子弟，或輕佻奢侈是習，而遠物珍玩是貴。即一物之巧寄賞吳舶，一事之奇模擬清人，而自詫以為雅尚韻事莫此過焉。

⁵³ In addition to Kenkadō's partial collection of imported Chinese books cited in footnote 27, for case studies of reception of Ming and Qing calligraphic books in Osaka and Kyoto, see Inada Atsunobu 稲田篤信, 'Setsukodō Jitsusan no kenkyū: kinsei chūki kamigata niokeru Min-Shin shogakusho no juyō' 『拙古堂日纂』の研究: 近世中期上方における明清書学書の受容 [A Study of the *Diary of Setsukodō: the Reception of Ming and Qing Calligraphy in Kamigata in the Middle of the Early-modern Period*], *The Journal of Kanbun Studies in Japan* 日本漢文学研究 3, 2008, 107–118.

country under the new regime with full interest, not only for its continuation of Chinese culture, but also for its latest developments.

While the Qing propagandistic undertone is largely scraped away, imperial spectacles that embellish many of the courtly publications get reproduced in *Morokoshi meishō zue*, which are themselves visual attestation to a high level of political and cultural sophistication. Among all the source materials to choose from, the makers of *Morokoshi meishō zue* also had a clear interest in two types of scenes that figured prominently in Qing imperial visual projects: multi-ethnic conviviality and technological advancements. Both set the image of Qing China apart from that of previous Han-Chinese dynasties yet demonstrate that the present regime was anything but ‘barbaric’. The grand banquet thrown to foreign domains in the first volume, for example, makes sure to include as many visually distinctive attires as possible, showing the Manchu, Han, Mongolian, European, and other cultural elements that are all pictorially united in this Qing imperial event. The proceeding text that introduces the venue and the event has the following annotation that lists the ‘foreign domains’, echoing the image’s visual inclusiveness:

The term ‘foreign domains’ refers to the kings and dukes of various foreign countries, including Mongolia, Joseon [Korea], Annam [present-day Vietnam], Ryukyu, Western Oceans [Europe], Siam [present-day Thailand], Myanmar, and Sulu [in present-day Philippines].⁵⁴

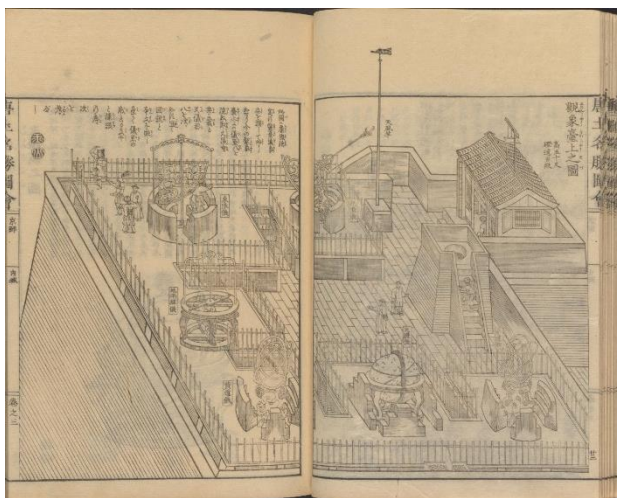


Figure 7 Pages showing the Imperial Observatory, *Morokoshi meishō zue*, Vol.3, 1806. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives.

Another example is the image of the imperial observatory (fig.7) established by the Jesuit missionaries, directly copied from the earlier mentioned *Lingtai yixiang zhi*. While showing an interest in the astronomical devices following the Chinese original, the Japanese image also creates a lively scene by adding people at work to the observatory. Most of them are dressed in Qing official robes, except for the two figures on the upper-left side, who are portrayed in the same attire as the Dutch

⁵⁴ ぐわいばん もうこ てうせん あんなん りうきう せいよう せんら めんてん そろく とう もろノのぐわいこく
外藩とは蒙古、朝鮮、安南、琉球、西洋、暹羅、緬甸、蘇祿、等の諸外國の
わうこう いふ
王公を謂。

found in Japanese popular art during this period, possibly representing the two Jesuit missionaries who headed the observatory successively. This is followed by pages of detailed drawings and annotations of individual devices at the observatory, with the texts being copied from *Daqing huidian*. Allusions to both sources, one being a practical manual compiled by the Jesuits-led science team and the other being a collection of Qing imperial statutes, convey the same message as delivered in the modified Japanese illustration of the observatory: the ‘Western’ science brought by the Europeans becomes an integral part of the Qing empire.

This rather positive, if not entirely dignified view of China under the Qing rule is quite remarkable given the prevailing criticism of the country by Tokugawa officials and intellectuals. It is even more remarkable to think that anyone who got a copy of the book could enter this exhibition of the Qing imperial world, walking up close to the emperor and his concubines and examining his favourite objects in detail, when portrayal of the shogunal life was one of the biggest taboos during this period, strictly censored in the Japanese publishing market.⁵⁵ Or perhaps, it is exactly because the life of the Japanese ruling elite was largely veiled from public view that an opportunity to look at that of a foreign emperor became even more desirable. In the late Tokugawa climate of increased tension between access and control, administrators of information largely dictated what could be seen and what they chose to show came to define them in return. The following section will discuss how the makers of *Morokoshi meishō zue* further inserted themselves in this book-formatted exhibition of China.

An elegant gathering with the emperor

While it is not unusual to find poetry in other *meishō zue*, cited mainly for its content to evoke a site’s literary and cultural associations,⁵⁶ *Morokoshi meishō zue* features Chinese poetry, all written in a distinctive calligraphic style, as core displays. Framed by an intricately designed border and often occupying a whole page, they occur every few pages across all six volumes of the book, almost at the frequency of the illustrations. They become recurring exhibits on display as much as the emperor’s court, territory, clothing, gardens, and so on. Furthermore, most of the poems were authored by Qing scholar-officials, contemporaneous with the book’s Japanese contributors or of the recent past, and in many instances by the Qianlong Emperor himself. Most of the calligraphy, on the other hand, came from the hands of people active in Osaka-Kyoto cultural circles at the time, or somehow connected to them through shared literary and cultural interest in Chinese-style poetry or

⁵⁵ For a general account of book censorship during the Tokugawa period, see Kornicki, *The Book in Japan*, 324–358; The section on the ‘prohibition of unorthodoxy’ during the Kansei era (1789–1801) and the specific censorship policies issued in the subsequent years, especially concerning the prohibition of depiction of any real warriors after 1573, is particularly relevant to the discussion here, see 339–342; It is worth noting that the policy was issued in response to the widely popular *Ehon taikōki* that accounted the story of Tokugawa Ieyasu’s chief rival Toyotomi Hideyoshi, illustrated by *Morokoshi meishō zue*’s chief illustrator and compiler, Okada Gyokuzan and produced only a few years prior to *Morokoshi meishō zue*.

⁵⁶ For an example of use of citation in *meishō zue*, see Goree, *Printing Landmarks*, 90–92.

calligraphy. The prominence of these poetry-calligraphy works is confirmed in the book's *hanrei*, which highlights them as one of the main attractions:

[We] referenced poems of the past and present, and in particular, [we] asked for the calligraphy of the famous masters of the recent times in our country, and clearly specified their signatures at every instance. It is as if [we] gathered the distinguished talents of the bosom friends who are thousands of years apart and who follow one another across thousands of miles, is it not pleasant?⁵⁷

This way, the Japanese calligraphers and the Chinese poets selected are brought together in a virtual elegant gathering despite their difference in time or space, and, especially in the case of the emperor, also in status. The signatures and seals accounted for a total of over seventy calligraphers,⁵⁸ which include almost everyone that the book's paratext has identified as a major contributor, from the project's instigator to the illustrators, preface-writers, copyeditor, and its publishing manager: Kenkadō, Gyokuzan, Yūgaku, Tōya, Shōsai, Ōtō, Kien, Meimon, and Bunka. The curators of the Qing exhibition also made sure to come forward and display their own literary taste and calligraphic talents.

Furthermore, there is a network of over seventy 'famous masters of the recent times', whose involvement makes them all, to varying degrees, contributors to the collaborative publishing project. This network of people largely overlaps with regular participants in Osaka-Kyoto literary and artistic gatherings of the time, and Kenkadō himself was a central figure in hosting and organising these events.⁵⁹ From 1792–1798, regular exhibitions of 'new calligraphy and paintings' were held every Spring and Autumn in Higashiyama, Kyoto, and surviving fragments of the exhibition records are dotted with familiar names from *Morokoshi meishō zue*: Kien, Kenkadō, Yamaoka Geppō 山岡月峯 (1760–1839), Totoki Baigai 十時梅厓 (1749–

⁵⁷ 古今の詩を徴するごとに、殊に吾邦近時諸名家の書を請、ことごとく落款を明かにする。千歳の知音千里に接踵の風流を集覧せば亦愉快ならずや。

⁵⁸ I counted a total of seventy-seven different names across all six volumes of the book, excluding all the cases where it is possible to identify that the same person appeared under a different name. To trace down each individual and to make sure that none of these seventy-seven names were in fact a sobriquet of the same person would unfortunately have to be a separate project of its own. Also note that not every contributing calligrapher is necessarily Japanese. One exception is Chen Jingshan 陳景山 (?-?), a Qing Chinese hailing from Fujian and active in Nagasaki for some time, who contributed two pieces of calligraphy to the book (in Vols 3 and 4).

⁵⁹ For a general account of Kenkadō's involvement in literary and artistic gatherings, see Osaka Museum of History, *Kimura Kenkadō*. The type of painting-and-calligraphy gathering known as *shogakai* 書画会 that started in Kyoto during the eighteenth century and quickly spread to the rest of the country is particularly relevant here, see Kornicki, 'Public Display and Changing Values', 172–174; Andrew Markus coined the word 'celebrity banquets' to describe their increasingly public and commercial nature, see Andrew Markus, 'Shogakai: Celebrity Banquets of the Late Edo Period', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53:1, June 1993, 135–167.

1804), among others.⁶⁰ Similarly, a surviving record from a 1803 exhibition in Osaka lists equally familiar names such as Yūgaku, Shōsai, Shinozaki Ōdō 篠崎応道 (1736–1813), Okada Hankō 岡田半江 (1782–1864), Morikawa Chikusō 森川竹窓 (1763–1830), and so on.⁶¹ These gatherings could also take place virtually in the form of an assemblage of artworks, with contributions from each of the participants, either accompanying an ephemeral gathering, or in substitution for one. The painting-and-calligraphy album in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum (Accession no. EA1964.95) is one such virtual gathering produced in 1801 and its close affinity with *Morokoshi meishō zue* confirms that part of the book was conceived as a similar project in printed format. Produced shortly before *Morokoshi meishō zue*, the album features paintings and calligraphic works by thirty different artists, which was made possible through Kenkadō's network.⁶² Many of the contributors to the Ashmolean album, mostly Osaka-based artists, but also including a few Kyoto-based ones, could be found among the contributing calligraphers of *Morokoshi meishō zue*. Both the album and the book serve the purpose of claiming and reaffirming their contributors' elevated *bunjin* identity through the promotion of their literary and artistic talents in Chinese-style painting, poetry, and calligraphy. While the album is a unique collector's item and sits on the fine arts end of the spectrum, the printed book, due to its reproducibility and affordability, has the potential to enhance the fame of these self-posed masters in ways that neither a physical exhibition nor an album could achieve.

Another striking fact about the poetry-calligraphy in *Morokoshi meishō zue* is the pairing of Chinese authors with Japanese calligraphers. The first volume, whose content centred on describing Qing court life, began with the Qianlong Emperor's poem written by Kenkadō, as discussed in detail before. The rest of the poems in this volume are all by scholar-officials that served at the Qing court, including Mao Qiling 毛奇齡 (1623–1716), Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629–1709), Shen Deqian 沈德潛 (1673–1769), and Shi Runzhang 施閏章 (1618–1683), while the calligraphy was all by Osaka-based literati in the Kenkadō circle, who all contributed to the Ashmolean album, namely, Ōdo, Shōsai, Baigai, Fujii Genshuku 藤井元肅 (1760–1810), Geppō, and Chikusō. Following the conventions of painting-and-calligraphy albums, where the first place is reserved for the most important figure in the (virtual) gathering,

⁶⁰ Tanabe Nahoko 田邊菜穂子, 'Aimi Bunko zō 'shin shoga tenkan mokuroku' honkoku to kaidai (jō): kanseiki no Kyōto shogadan to Minakawa Kien' 相見文庫蔵『新書画展観目録』翻刻と解題(上): 寛政期の京都書画壇と皆川淇園 [Transcription and Commentary of the 'Catalogues of New Calligraphy and Paintings Exhibitions' in the Aimi Bunko Collection(I): The Kyoto Calligraphy and Painting World in the Kansei Era and Minagawa Kien], *Bunken tankyū* 文献探究 [Investigation into Historical Documents] 41, March 2003, 56–73.

⁶¹ Nahoko, 'Aimi Bunko zō 'shin shoga tenkan mokuroku' honkoku to kaidai (ge)' 相見文庫蔵『新書画展観目録』翻刻と解題(下) [Transcription and Commentary of the 'Catalogues of New Calligraphy and Paintings Exhibitions' in the Aimi Bunko Collection (II)] *Bunken tankyū* 42, March 2004, 93–107.

⁶² Janice Katz, *Japanese Paintings in the Ashmolean Museum*, Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2003, 108–117.

Kenkadō assumed the role of the Qianlong Emperor in *Morokoshi meishō zue* and his friends the places of Qing officials.

Why did the makers of *Morokoshi meishō zue* insert themselves and their associates so firmly and conspicuously into a book about Qing China? A general appreciation for Chinese-style poems and calligraphies cannot explain their ubiquity and prominence, and certainly not the biased preference for Qing poets and the careful pairing between the Chinese poets and the Japanese calligraphers. The criticism towards the recent Qing-trend, as expressed in Jussai's writing, provides some valuable insights. The influx of Qing culture created a market for products that capitalised on the new stimulation, yet it also triggered attacks on its acceptability as a respectable manifestation of Chinese culture, particularly from those firmly rooted in the establishment of the Tokugawa elite. Advocating for the Qing accomplishments in poetry and calligraphy, the quintessential arts of Chinese refinement, the makers of *Morokoshi meishō zue* defended against potential accusations of vulgarity associated with the Qing. Further, they transformed the Qing-period sources that they acquired into strategic assets to negotiate for a cultural position among the elite. By pairing themselves with people they esteemed as Qing masters of Chinese arts, they aligned the expertise in the most updated knowledge about contemporary China with the authority in defining the latest Chinese-style refinement.

Culture is power

The self-proclaimed experts of China, closely associated with *Morokoshi meishō zue*, arose from the cultural climate of Osaka and Kyoto in late Tokugawa Japan. Despite the shift of the political centre to Edo, Kyoto remained an important hub for culture and learning and maintained its historical significance in introducing and interpreting Chinese culture. More importantly, with the nearby city of Osaka developing into an economic metropolis, its newly rich residents channelled their wealth into cultural pursuits: collecting, publishing, exhibiting, reading, learning, and so on. Cultural industries in the region, ranging from private academies to art exhibitions and commercial publishing, also prospered, catering to the urban residents with varying levels of affluence and literacy. Occupying an advantageous location on the waterways through which recent imports from Nagasaki travelled to Edo and the rest of Japan, Osaka merchants were some of the first to lay their hands on the latest goods from the outside world, and the Osaka-Kyoto networks of cultural production were quick to turn them into commodities for the growing domestic market.

Chinese books, for example, once scrutinised and selected by shogun's representatives upon their arrival in Nagasaki, could end up in bulk in the private library of a wealthy collector.⁶³ Kenkadō's rich collection was one of his most important personal marks, and his residence in Osaka functioned as a library and

⁶³ For a detailed account of how this process is carried out, see 'The Discovery of Banned Books' and 'The Inspectorate of Books', in Ōba Osamu 大庭脩, *Books and Boats: Sino-Japanese Relations and Cultural Transmission in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, translated by Joshua A. Fogel, Portland, Me.: Merwin Asia, 2012, 40–68, 69–83.

museum that received up to 40,000 visitors, according to the detailed diary that he kept over the course of over twenty years, with the clear intention for his name to live on.⁶⁴ In fact, the knowledge he acquired was so impressive that it was claimed that even a China-born monk of Ōbaku, a new school of Zen Buddhism established by Ming émigrés in Japan in the seventeenth century, which continued to serve as an important conduit for updated continental culture throughout the eighteenth century, directed people with questions about China to Kenkadō as a better source of authority.⁶⁵ It is clear from this one man that having access to accurate and current information about contemporary China could serve as a distinguished identity marker. Furthermore, people from all social classes can be found in the Kenkadō network and visiting his place. Knowledge never granted the Japanese literati the same upward social mobility as their Chinese counterparts theoretically had through civil examinations, but shared cultural aspirations connected people across social divides. In 1789, the brewing quota in Osaka was reduced to 1/3 in response to the Great Tenmei Famine (1782–1788) and Kenkadō's business (which he owned, but did not operate) was punished for breaching the new law.⁶⁶ In 1790, Kenkadō left Osaka and took shelter with Mashiyama Sessai 増山雪齋 (1754–1819), the *daimyō* of Nagashima in Ise, with whom he had built a friendship over the years based on their shared cultural interests.⁶⁷

Kenkadō epitomises the interplay of wealth, knowledge, and power that lies at the core of the cultural networks during this period. Not only was cultural identity, manifested through possession of knowledge, acquirable regardless of one's social standing, but it was also an empowering asset that could dissolve the social hierarchies at least in certain circles and spaces.⁶⁸ Equipped with both knowledge and wealth, these networks also generated a wide range of cultural offerings that catered to diverse audiences, rivalling in depth and scale those produced by groups of higher social-political standing. By doing so, they also promoted different aesthetic and intellectual propositions from those closer to the

⁶⁴ For the critical edition of the diary, see Mizuta Norihisa 水田紀久, Noguchi Takashi 野口隆, and Arisaka Michiko 有坂道子, eds., *Kanpon Kenkadō nikki* 完本兼葭堂日記 [Daily Notes of Kenkadō: Complete and Unabridged], Tokyo: Geika Shoin, 2009.

⁶⁵ This is an anecdote from Kenkadō's epitaph by Mashiyama Sessai. In the same epitaph, Sessai eulogised Kenkadō as 'the forefather of Chinese-style refinement' 唐山様風流之祖. For the full text of the epitaph and its interpretation, see Mizuta, 'Tōzan-yō furyū no so dōshō dōki — Mashiyama Sessai kō to Kimura Kenkadō' 唐山様風流之祖 同床同机 — 増山雪齋侯と木村兼葭堂 — [The Grandfather of Chinese-style Refinement: Sharing the Same Bed and the Same Desk: Lord Mashiyama Sessai and Kimura Kenkadō], in Kansai University Research Center for Naniwa-Osaka Cultural Heritage Studies ed., *Kinsei Ōsaka no gakugei* 近世大坂の学芸 [Learning and Arts in Early Modern Osaka], NOCHS Occasional Paper 4, Osaka: 2007, 12–16.

⁶⁶ Osaka Museum of History, *Kimura Kenkadō*, 6, 22.

⁶⁷ Mizuta, 'Tōzan-yō furyū', 1–21.

⁶⁸ For how social mingling is possible in different types of cultural or aesthetic networks, see Lachaud, 'The Scholar and the Unicorn', 348; Najita, *Visions of Virtue*, 286–287; Goree, *Printing Landmarks*, 19.

shogun's central government. Yet as Terrence Johns argues in his analysis of Dutch Studies circles, cultural salons were not only places of relative egalitarianism, but also sites where serious 'social manoeuvring' took place as participants displayed and performed their possession of cultural capital in its intangible or objectified form.⁶⁹ The same analysis applies to the gatherings of the 'Chinese Studies' circles. In the virtual space of *Morokoshi meishō zue*, the Osaka merchant and his fellows took their respective positions by mingling with the Chinese emperor and his retinue in the sophisticated foreign palace, exchanging the 'high' art of Chinese calligraphy, painting, and poetry, and promoting the latest art that they collected, practised, and advocated for as elegant. For the early nineteenth-century Japanese readers of the book, they became the extended audience invited to this performance of culture, the possession of which is advertised as available for purchase in the materialised form of the book.



Figure 8 The copyright page, *Morokoshi meishō zue*, Vol.1, 1806. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives.

More thorough and meticulous bibliographic comparisons of all extant copies might help clarify the book's circulation across its many printings, but for now, it is safe to say that the book reached a wide readership in the early- to mid-nineteenth century. The direct evidence is found in the surviving copies. The Smithsonian Copy is identified as one of the first issues of the first edition as it contains the frontispiece with two publisher's seals in red and the copyright page with another red seal of Bunkan (fig.8).⁷⁰ This copy also contains the back matter with all thirteen initial co-issuing publishers of the book, as well as advertisement pages listing Bunkan's upcoming publishing projects, including five more sequels to

⁶⁹ Terrence Jackson, 'Social Decorating: Dutch Salons in Early Modern Japan', *Studies on Asia* 3: 4. 2007, 62–82.

⁷⁰ The two seals on the frontispiece reads 'fine copy cross-checked, newly published in the Bunka era' 善本照合 文化新刊 and 'Newly cut and issued by the Ryūshōdō bookshop in Shinsaibashi, Naniwa [Osaka]' 浪華心齋橋龍章堂書坊新刻發兌, respectively. The seal on the copyright page reads 'Publication of Asa Bunkan, if reproduced [without permission], [the owner] is determined to combat [counterfeit products] [even if it is] thousands of miles away' 淺文貫之梓如有翻刻千里必究. See footnote 8 for the transcription and translation of the rest of the text on the copyright page.

Morokoshi meishō zue and the illustrated book of the Qing imperial birthday, *Wanshou shengdian chuji*. The overall quality of the copy is very fine: the cover is dark yellow with embossed dragon-and-sea-water patterns; Qing maps in the first volume are printed with red outlines in correct register; replicas of Qing imperial seals in red are found in the space where they are promised to be (for example, see fig.6). Later issues/editions would differ from the Smithsonian Copy in one or more ways. One example is in the collection of the Marquand Library of the Princeton University ('Princeton Copy', fully digitalised, Call no. 1722.686). In the Princeton Copy, one of the co-publishers, placed as the second from the left, is switched from Kitamura Sōshichi 北村総七 (Smithsonian Copy) to Kawachiya Nisuke 河内屋仁助; following Bunkan's advertisements, there is an additional one-page advertisement of Yanagihara Kihei 柳原喜兵衛 (a different name of Kawachiya Kihei). The cover is pale yellow with the back exposed; the frontispiece does not come with any publisher's seals and the copyright page is missing altogether; red outlines on Qing maps are off-register; and none of the Qing imperial seals are in place. The ongoing market interest explains the presence of numerous distinctive versions, especially the coarser later prints, which can still be found in known collections today. Regarding the social profile of the book's readers, the diversity matches the book's quantity. On the higher end of the spectrum, it is known that the Hirado *daimyō* Matura Seizan had a set of the book in his library.⁷¹ On the other hand, the presence of possible seals of different book rental shops (*kashihonya* 貸本屋) suggests the book's circulation among lower levels of the society.⁷²

Another surviving piece of material evidence illustrates how the book was used for the acquisition of cultural capital that could be publicly displayed. In the collection of the British Museum, there is a late Edo period (1800–1860) *netsuke* (Accession no. F.1230) carved with the landscape of the Kunming Lake in the Summer Palace 頤和園昆明湖, which is directly taken from an image in the fourth volume of *Morokoshi meishō zue*. The printed image is itself based on the illustration of Mt. Dengwei 鄧尉山 in Suzhou in *Nanxun shengdian*, the book that documented the Qianlong Emperor's southern inspections. Despite this rather complex web of image circulation, the *netsuke* is unmistakably and intentionally referencing

⁷¹ *Rakusaidō zō washomoku* 楽歳堂蔵和書目 [Japanese Books in the Collection of Rakusaidō], manuscript, Matsūra Historical Museum.

⁷² The black round or rectangular seals with the location name or the shop name stamped on early modern Japanese books are likely to be those of book rental shops. See Horikawa Takashi 堀川貴司, *Shoshigaku nyūmon kotenseki wo miru shiru yomu* 書誌学入門 古典籍を見る・知る・読む [Introduction to Bibliographic Studies: Seeing, Knowing, and Reading Antiquarian Books], Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2010, 99. The Smithsonian Copy contains a rectangular black seal, reading 'Izumibashi, main shop, Tsuji' 和泉橋 本店 辻. Another copy in the collection of the Cambridge University Library (Accession no. FB.221.48-50, 'Cambridge Copy') bears a black seal in round shape, possibly from a book rental shop in present-day Kyushu. The seal is not fully intelligible, but the location name 'Bungo' 豊後 can be identified. The Cambridge Copy belongs to a different issue from both the Smithsonian Copy and the Princeton Copy.

Morokoshi meishō zue. The inscription incised on the back of the *netsuke* identifies Gyokuzan as the creator of the image, in almost exact wording and layout as the credit line given at the beginning of each volume of the book. A wearable piece of ornament, the *netsuke* is both a material manifestation of the cultural capital embodied in the book and could facilitate the performative exchange of culture shared among the book's readers.

It is important to revisit the fact that *Morokoshi meishō zue* offered a distinctive perspective on Qing culture, which was quite uncommon prior to its publication on the Japanese book market. Commercially published projects like *Morokoshi meishō zue* both responded to the diverging cultural and aesthetic tendencies in the late Tokugawa period and further shaped the evolving cultural and social landscape, the political significance of which is affirmed by the counter actions of the shogunal government. If the importation, collection, and dissemination of books outside of the shogunal sphere laid the foundation for such cultural endeavours, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century also saw the intensified measures taken by the Tokugawa government in centralising knowledge. Censorship of the Osaka publishing market reached a new level of severity in the last decade of the eighteenth century.⁷³ The early nineteenth century saw several important personal or regional libraries being confiscated. In 1803, less than one year after Kenkadō passed away and as *Morokoshi meishō zue* was still in production, the Tokugawa government procured his collection of books and sent them to the Shōheizaka Gakumonjo.⁷⁴ The official institution was recently set up in 1798 to rule out unorthodox teachings of Confucianism. In 1808, Ichihashi Nagaaki 市橋長昭 (1773–1814), *daimyō* of Ninjōji domain in Ōmi province (in present-day Shiga Prefecture) gave up thirty sets of treasured Song- and Yuan-editions Chinese books to the shogun's Confucian temple, Yushima Seidō 湯島聖堂.⁷⁵ In 1822, Ichikawa Beian, mentioned earlier as a contributing calligrapher to *Morokoshi meishō zue*, who was better remembered as a prominent advocate of the new Chinese-style calligraphy inspired by Qing works known as *kara-yō* 唐様, with a substantial following of over 5,000 students, also donated his extensive collection of Chinese paintings, calligraphy, rubbings, and relevant books to Shōheizaka Gakumonjo.⁷⁶ The renowned collection of Mori Takasue 毛利高標 (1755–1801), *daimyō* of Saiki domain in Bungo province (in present-day Ōita Prefecture) and a close friend of Kenkadō, entered the shogunal library of Momijiyama Bunko in 1827. This collection, known as Saiki Bunko 佐伯文庫, gained fame for its massive holdings

⁷³ *Shinshū Ōsaka shishi*, 752–757.

⁷⁴ Inoue Tomokatsu 井上智勝, 'Kenkadō no zōsho nitsuite' 兼葭堂の蔵書について [On Kenkadō's Book Collection], in Osaka Museum of History, *Kimura Kenkadō*, 151.

⁷⁵ Inoue, 'Kenkadō no zōsho', 152.

⁷⁶ Tsukamoto Maromitsu 塚本磨充, 'Ichikawa Beian to Tō kishō: Edo jidai kōki ni okeru Meisei bunjin bunka to seitōha juyō no shosō' 市河米庵と董其昌: 江戸時代後期における明清文人文化と正統派受容の諸相 [The Acceptance of Chinese Orthodox School Painting and Ming-Qing Literati Culture in the Edo Period], *Bijutsushi ronsō* 美術史論叢 [Studies in Art History] 36, 2020, 4–6.

and its wealth of fine and rare Chinese and Korean books. In response to the significant acquisition, Momijiyama Bunko erected a new building to accommodate the collection.⁷⁷

Following the confiscation of Kenkadō's library, the planned publication of five more sequels to *Morokoshi meishō zue* to cover the entirety of China, as announced in Bunkan's advertisement attached to the book, was never realised. But the publishing house Kawachiya Kichibei continued to be active well into the very end of the Edo period, serving as a support and information network for scholars like Hashimoto Kōha 橋本香坡 (1809–1865), a prominent advocate for the restoration of the imperial power and the overthrow of the shogunate.⁷⁸ An even more radical dissenter that came out of the cultural and intellectual environs of Osaka in the last era of the Edo period was Ōshio Heihachirō 大塩平八郎 (1793–1837), a close contact of the same publishers and a former Tokugawa retainer who, selling his books for funding, started an uprising with his students that fundamentally shook the Tokugawa stability.⁷⁹

As the nineteenth century unfolded into a new international world of wars and imperial expansions, the enthusiasm for the arts of Chinese literati that swept across Japan in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century faded into a short-lived episode of a bygone era.⁸⁰ Independent, apolitical, and interested in rhetoric of reclusiveness,⁸¹ the Japanese literati are often considered as a small group of self-indulgent gentlemen who were not particularly progressive, aspiring for an idealised lifestyle that they projected onto the image of a cultural China. Nonetheless, as this paper has demonstrated, this aspiration could be as much intellectual as it was aesthetic, addressing current changes as much as romanticising the past, and generating social reactions rather than perpetuating the cliché of self-refinement. By advocating this cultural movement that diverged from the state ideology and disseminated through commercial publishing, they actively participated in a quiet but fundamental social transformation that anticipated upcoming political changes.

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⁷⁷ Inoue, 'Kenkadō no zōsho', 152.

⁷⁸ Imai, 'Shoshi Kawachiya Kichibei', 92–93.

⁷⁹ Najita, *Visions of Virtue*, 293–300.

⁸⁰ Jeong Kyung Jin 鄭敬珍, *Kōsasuru bunjin sekai: Chōsen Tsūshinshi to Kenka gashūzu ni miru Higashi Ajia kinsei* 交叉する文人世界: 朝鮮通信使と兼葭雅集図にみる東アジア近世 [Intersecting Literati Worlds: the Early Modern East Asia as Seen through Korean Envoys to Japan and the Painting of an Elegant Gathering at Kenkadō], Tokyo: Hosei University Press, 2020, 152–153.

⁸¹ Lachaud, 'The Scholar and the Unicorn', 348; Jeong, *Kōsasuru bunjin sekai*, 152–153.

different interest in how updated source materials from Ming-Qing China became appropriated and capitalised through the Japanese publications.

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